

The Wrong Side of Gods Judgement

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Date: 14 February 2010

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[0 : 00] Let's turn again to Luke chapter 21. I know it's a long chapter, but as we're working our way through Luke, I just want us to go through this chapter again by way of overview.

And I think it has been important for us to work through a gospel, because all the gospels are different, but they do highlight and focus the life of Jesus.

Many other passages tie everything together, but each gospel writer brings their own unique perspective. And this is a wonderful gospel where we've been following the life of Jesus.

But today we find him in more prophetic mood as he is nearing, just coming on the very, as it were, the very threshold of the cross. And we find Jesus at the beginning, as he's been, since he came to Jerusalem, he's been in the temple so much of the time teaching.

And we find at the beginning that Jesus looked up and he saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box. And he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins.

[1 : 12] These were the smallest coins that you could get. So in the temple, there were 13 collection boxes or 13 collection things that they were, they looked actually like upturned trumpets.

And people used to put their money in there. And it wasn't that Jesus was saying, well, I'm going to stand and see how much people are putting in. And he was just in the temple and he was, he just noticed people putting in.

And he saw all types of giving and some of the people who were giving were very wealthy. Now, some people think that Jesus is condemning the giving of the rich.

That is, there is no condemnation here at all. There isn't condemnation. Jesus is contrasting something. He's not condemning. The Lord doesn't condemn giving to himself.

So we're not to think for one moment that there is condemnation from Jesus at all. But the thing is that the rich people who were giving, and they were giving plenty, that this, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box.

[2 : 26] Because what Jesus is highlighting here is this woman's giving, which was totally different. This woman put in these two tiny coins.

And Jesus says that she put in more than all the others. And he goes on to show how. Now, if we were to do a money check, and you were to count all the money, and put it side by side, you would say to yourself, well, what Jesus is saying doesn't make sense.

Because she had only these two, the two tiniest coins that you could get, which amounted really to, as we see, to very, very little. But the thing was that the rich people, they had given, as it were, a token out of their plenty.

While she, this poor woman, had given the total out of her poverty. And that was the difference. These had given a token out of their plenty, out of their riches, while she had given the total of her poverty.

She was really poor. And she ended up giving all that she had. And that is why Jesus is saying that she, this woman, that she gave more.

[3 : 45] And this poor woman has put in more than all of them. All of them together. All these rich people together. And I think that's why we must always be slow to judge.

We're always making judgments about all kinds of things. The Lord sees how we give. Not just in monetary terms, but in all ways.

What do we, do we give? Yes, of our money. Do we give of our time? Do we give of our talents? Do we give of our home? Do we give of our life? Do we give to the Lord all that he has given us?

He is looking for this back. How do we give? How much do we give? Do we give at all? Or do we only give a little? We see here that the Lord knows how much we give.

And there is no doubt about it, but that this woman would have received a reward. And I believe, it doesn't tell us, but I believe she would even have received a reward in this life. Because we've got to remember that the Lord is no man's debtor.

[4 : 52] The cattle on a thousand hills belong to him. So this woman is giving so sacrificially. And the Lord is taking note of that.

Now, just with regard to giving, I'm going to say four things that the Bible tells us how we ought to give. And there's four different things, and just by this, we're told, first of all, when we give, we're to give willingly.

In 1 Chronicles, we're told, then the people rejoiced because they had given willingly, for with the whole heart they had offered freely to God.

So, when we give, we're to give willingly. Secondly, we are to give proportionately. Again, we go to Deuteronomy, and this is what we're told. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you.

So we're to give willingly. We're to give proportionately. Then we're told that we're to give cheerfully. We're told that in 2 Corinthians. Each one must give as decided in his own heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

[6 : 12] And finally, worshipfully. Again, we're told in Proverbs, honor the Lord. And when we honor the Lord, that is by worship.

Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce. So we've got to remember that these are the four things with regard to our giving willingly, proportionately, cheerfully, and worshipfully.

And then, from verse 5 to the end, we have Jesus turning and moving into, as we would say, into prophetic mode. And he does so because people are highlighting the grandeur and the beauty of the temple.

And it was. It was one of these things. You know, you maybe go to certain places and you look and you say to yourself, that is so amazing. And people can sometimes find with, supposing you went, for instance, to the likes of St. Paul's Cathedral.

And just looked at the structure and the architecture and looked in at the grandeur of it. And you would say to yourself, well, this really. It would be almost impossible to go to the likes of a building, like St. Paul's, and just glance at it.

[7 : 25] And then just walk away. It's just, it's the kind of thing, you're just amazed at the structure. Well, the temple was like that. And they were, it was the kind of place people would come, not only just to worship, but people looked at it.

It was, it was, there was magnificence all over it. And so, they're highlighting just how magnificent. And Jesus turns to the people, and in a very solemn and somber way, he tells them that there will come a time when there won't be one stone left on another.

Complete destruction. And Jesus is showing, in this particular, as he has done, he's been moving through this right throughout the gospel.

But he is bringing it, it's kind of a clearer focus. Rejection always carries a price. The Jews, Jerusalem as a seat, was going to reject him.

Jerusalem was going to destroy him. Well, you cannot reject Christ without paying a fearful price. And Jerusalem were going to pay a fearful price for what they had done.

[8 : 38] The Jews were going to pay a fearful price. They were going to end up on the wrong side of God's judgment. And that's the worst place that any person can be. And you make sure, my dear friend, that you don't come on to the wrong side of God's judgment.

Because that's what happened in the Jews' experience. They came on to the wrong side of God's judgment. For years, Jesus had appealed to them. He'd preached to them.

He'd invited them. He had done everything he could. But still, they rejected him. And Jesus goes on to show what this rejection, what it's going to involve.

And so, Jesus is here in prophetic mode. And he uses the style that you often find in the Old Testament. Where Old Testament prophets often linked prophecies at various stages together.

There would be prophecies that would be fulfilled in the not-too-distant future. And then, in the same, almost as it were, in the same prophecy, there would be prophecies that were going to be fulfilled away, far away in the future.

[9 : 52] And sometimes, when prophecies were given like that, it was very hard to work out what was. And sometimes, you think it's all one. But when you go through the Bible, and through the Old Testament, and then come into the New Testament, and come into life, you see just this very thing happening.

And that's what Jesus is doing. He prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem. He prophesies what's going to happen to the Jews.

But then he also moves on, and he prophesies right into our own day and to the coming of his return. And when prophecy is, when the nearer prophecy is fulfilled, it's like an added impetus. It's like an added guarantee that what has been prophesied further away will also be fulfilled. And this is what you find that that's one of the ways that prophets worked in the Old Testament.

And this is exactly what Jesus is doing. He's linking the future, the near and the distant, as it were, almost together. And so Jesus, first of all, he prophesies regarding the destruction of the temple.

[11 : 06] And, of course, there couldn't be the destruction of the temple without the destruction of Jerusalem. Now, when Jesus, he warns from verse 7 to 9 against being led away from the truth.

And he says there's going to be a lot of people who are going to come. And they're going to say they've come in my name. But they're imposters. They're not true. And, you know, in the history of the church, there have been loads of people who have come about, sometimes very charismatic people.

And people who seem to be doing great and mighty wonders and miracles. And everybody's saying, this is a passion. Look at what he's doing. Jesus says, don't be deceived. There's going to be people right throughout history.

And they're going to make claims to be my representative, to be in my place. In fact, some of them will even make out that they are Christ's themselves.

So, you know, there's nothing like being grounded in the truth. And, you know, the more we're grounded in the truth, the more discernment people have.

[12 : 11] Where you know what is true and what is not. You can't teach someone discernment. But the Lord does teach people discernment.

The Holy Spirit gives God's people a discerning spirit. So that you know, it's like a gut reaction. What is real and what is not.

And that is as we are buried, as it were, in the truth. And living close to the Lord. And then Jesus shows how there will be a breakdown, as it were, in international relationships.

And there's going to be wars between kingdoms and nations and disruption everywhere. But he also shows it's going to be tough for the Christian. That it's going to be hard for the Christian.

But the thing is that the Christian is going to be bearing witness for Jesus through the persecutions and through the trials. And again, that's what's happened.

[13 : 12] You look at the history. You look at church history. And you will see this very pattern. Where people, you can look at it in Scotland in the covenanting times.

And you can see it. It doesn't matter what period you pick up. You will see that the Christian has borne testimony to Christ in the most difficult and hostile situations.

Not long after Jesus prophesied this, the apostle Paul was a classic example of that. Paul was bearing testimony in all the different trials he faced.

And Paul got to preach the gospel in front of Herod Agrippa. In front of Festus. In front of Felix. And indeed in front of Caesar.

All these men of huge significance and importance. Paul on trial. Because of the gospel. He was brought and he had to stand and, as it were, fight for his life.

[14 : 14] But Paul was fighting. In fighting for his life, he proclaimed the gospel. And he told them what the gospel was about. So Jesus is saying this is part of the way. That the gospel will spread.

And then the Lord gives a wonderful promise regarding these situations. And he says, look, don't worry. You don't need to be saying to yourself, what am I going to say? I'm on trial here.

How am I going to say? I'm not very good at speaking. I'm not very eloquent. What am I going to say? Jesus says, don't worry. When you go in there, the Lord will give you the words.

The Lord will give you the words. I will give you a mouth and wisdom. Which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. Now some people think that this means that in all speaking for the Lord, you don't need to prepare.

And some people have actually said, oh, a minister doesn't need to make any preparation. All you do is you go into the pulpit and you let go. And the Lord will guide you and he will give you the words to say.

[15 : 17] Well, at one level, there is no question whatever that in our preaching, there are times that we're led away. And the Lord is very clear that the Lord takes us sometimes into paths and directions that we hadn't planned and hadn't prepared.

And things open up before you. As you preach, that happens all the time. But our duty and our obligation is to prepare. This is the most important work in the whole world.

And how dare we not prepare. The promise is not for the pulpit. This promise is for the courtroom. And it's absurd to take. And that's what some people do.

They take. They misappropriate promises. And they say, oh, the Lord has promised. Because he hasn't, as we say, promised that that's what he'll do in the pulpit. But it's promised to us in the courtroom.

And then we find that Jesus is saying, irrespective of how much the Christian will suffer, they will not ultimately be lost.

[16 : 21] The Lord is a horse of them. Your salvation is absolutely guaranteed. And then Jesus goes on then to talk about the destruction of Jerusalem. And that before the destruction of Jerusalem, there will be signs.

And he gives a warning. That there will be signs. And there will also be the warning when you see, as it were, hostile troops approaching.

Watch out. Now, with regard to the signs, it tells us in verse 11 there, there will be great earthquakes and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.

The historian Josephus tells us that there was a comet that hung over Jerusalem for a long time just before its destruction.

And it was, as it were, in the shape of a sword pointing down over the city. And a lot of people were really made afraid through that. This may very well be part of what Jesus is talking about, that there were going to be signs.

[17 : 27] And here was this in the heavens, like the sign of a sword hanging over Jerusalem. That's what, as we say, the historian Josephus tells us.

And Jesus warned the people, as this time was approaching and they were seeing enemy troops coming, get out of Jerusalem. If you're out of Jerusalem, whatever you do, don't go into the city. If you're in the city, get out. Don't be in the city. And again, we're told from history that the believers in Jerusalem actually did that.

And they escaped over the Jordan. So that when Jerusalem was destroyed, the Christians were out of it. And we're told it was a fearful destruction.

There was a brutal savagery. Jerusalem was completely destroyed. And Jesus, that's why in verses 23 and 24, he talks there about the pregnant women and the nursing infants.

[18 : 29] And I think what Jesus is highlighting here is that the most tender scenes that we can normally meet in life, where you would see a mother feeding a little baby, that normally hits home into any person's heart.

It's one of the most tender, loving scenes that you can get. Well, there was going to be no mercy. No mercy. In fact, these scenes which should produce softness and tenderness in heart, there would be none.

They would be wiped out. They would be put to the sword. Babies, mothers, everybody. The city destroyed. And again, Josephus, the historian. Now, some people have accused him of exaggerating.

Apparently, he sometimes exaggerated. His figures were that 97,000 were taken captive and nearly a million were put to death.

Whether these figures are exaggerated or not, what did take place was the most fearful destruction. And it need not have happened.

[19 : 39] Because as we said earlier, Jesus is saying, rejection carries with it a fearful price. And you know, this is a picture of what will take place for those who reject Jesus.

You cannot reject Jesus and not pay for it. It's a most solemn, challenging thing in the whole world. And history, you go through the Bible, go through history, and it shows you cannot, you cannot defy

and reject the Lord.

And so there was this horrific destruction in 70 AD. It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

And then Jesus moves on and he moves on to his return and probably where we are today. And he says again, there's going to be signs. Verse 25, there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars and on the earth.

Distress of nations and perplexity. Now, you read the end of this verse. And this is not speak about the likes of the tsunami. Distress of nations and perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves.

[20 : 54] If you've seen footage of just what happened at the tsunami. And all the thousands upon thousands and thousands that were killed through it.

It's fearsome. Well, you can see there's going to be all these things happening. Because the world is in upheaval. Let's remember, my dear friends, when Adam sinned.

When Adam fell. And the curse came upon Adam. It came upon the world as well. And we're told in the scripture that the creation, the very creation is groaning. People wonder, why are there earthquakes?

Why are there volcanic eruptions? Why are there all these natural disasters? It's because of sin. Sin affected the natural creation as well. The whole world came under God's curse.

And sin has rippled right through everything. But just as with man. Man, God will gain victory in the end.

[21 : 54] And even although our body will die, it will rise again. You know, in Christ, it's going to be even better in the resurrection. And there's going to be new heavens and a new earth.

God will take the glory to himself. He will not lose the victory. Satan won't ultimately triumph. No matter how things may appear. But Jesus tells us that there's going to be fear in the world because of what is coming.

People fainting with fear and with foreboding at what is coming in the world. And you know, in a sense, that's kind of where we are today.

A few years ago, the world was so much more settled. And maybe when I talk about the world, maybe we're talking more about the Western world and of our own world of what we're used to. But these last few years, and particularly in very recent time, things have changed. There's a growing financial insecurity about life.

[22 : 58] There's an increased threat of terror where there isn't the feeling of security there used to be. There's a whole thing about climate change and global warming and all these kind of things.

And people are living with an element of fear. Just as Jesus says. And he says it's going to get worse. It's not going to get better. People often think, oh, it's going to get better.

You know, naturally speaking, as we move and technology and science advances, and we should surely be learning to live together by now.

But no, it's not getting better. And Jesus is showing that these fears and all these things are going to get worse. But Jesus says something to the church. He says, These things are telling us that the Son of Man is coming.

Now, when these things begin to take place, how are we to react? Are we to be crippled by fear? No, he says, straighten up. Raise up your heads.

[24 : 09] You should have no fear in your heart. Because your redemption is drawing near. Others may be crippled by fear.

But you've got no reason to fear, Jesus says. What you've seen is a fulfillment of what I've said. People think the world is out of control. Jesus is saying, no, I've told you all this.

This is what's going to happen. This should assure you. And it's bringing the day when mortality will be swallowed up of life. Where mortality will put on immortality.

Where we will go to be with him. And Jesus is saying, don't be afraid. And when Jesus tells us not to be afraid, he has good reason to tell us not to be afraid.

However, Jesus, after giving such a full and indeed loving warning, tells us that we all need to be on guard. Stay awake, he says. Because this day, the day of Jesus' return, it's going to come upon you suddenly like a trap.

[25 : 16] Now, I think we all know, we've all seen a mousetrap. And you know how quickly it shuts. It's like that. You don't get a moment. It's just, it's instant.

Well, that's what Jesus is. That's how I'm coming back. Just like when that trap is sprung. But I will return like that. Don't be caught off guard. Don't be caught unaware.

Read the signs. Watch. Be ready. I'm coming soon. As we read this, my friends, how do we react to it? Are we going to push it away?

The Jews did. But they couldn't prevent the words of Jesus from being fulfilled. You may push it away. You will not be able to prevent the words of Jesus being fulfilled.

Seek Jesus in order that he will be your friend. And don't find yourself on the wrong side of God's judgment. Let's pray. Oh, Lord, oh God, we give thanks for these words.

[26 : 20] Words that are challenging. Words that are solemn. Words that can in many ways be disturbing. And yet words that speak to us of God's control.

And God's wisdom and knowledge. We pray then, Lord, for the faith to live out our days.

Persuaded. That however things may appear in this world.

That for God's people, it's going to be bringing in eventually an even better day. Oh, Lord, help us then to put our trust in thee. Do us good and keep us.

Bless us richly. Bless our homes and our families. Guide us and go with us every step of life's way.

Take us home safely, we pray, and forgive us our sin.

In Jesus' name. Amen.