

Matthew 23:37

by Chuck Smith

God's love and mercy are offered to all, but refusal of these gifts leads to judgment and desolation.

Scripture: Matthew 23:37

Topics: "Rebellion Against God", "God's Mercy and Judgment"

Description

Chuck Smith reflects on Jesus' lament over Jerusalem, emphasizing the city's history of rebellion against God and the rejection of His prophets. Despite their wickedness, Jesus expresses a deep desire to gather and protect His people, illustrating God's grace and mercy. Smith warns that refusal to heed God's call leads to desolation and loss of divine favor, as seen in the consequences faced by Jerusalem. He highlights the ongoing persecution of believers and the importance of recognizing one's need for salvation. Ultimately, the sermon calls for repentance and acknowledgment of Jesus as the Messiah, especially in times of crisis.

Transcript

Our Savior's Lament

I. The cry of the Master, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem." A. His description of Jerusalem, "Thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee." 1. In the parable of the householder who planted the vineyard and let it out to the husbandmen. He sent his servants at the time of harvest to receive the fruit from it. Some they beat, some they killed, some they stoned. 2. Those of Jerusalem are thus identified as the wicked husbandmen. 3. In spite of their wickedness, He still called unto them. 4.

Looking back in their history, it was one of continual rebellion against God. JER 2:30 In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction: your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion. JER 11:7 For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day [that] I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, [even] unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey my voice. JER 11:8 Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded [them] to do; but they did [them] not.

B. People often ask, "Why did God choose Israel as the nation upon which to bestow His favor? Probably for the same reason that He chose me and you. 1. Perhaps to show the exceeding greatness of His grace and mercy to a people who were stubborn, self-willed and rebellious. 2. Perhaps to demonstrate His great

patience. DEU 7:6 For thou [art] an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that [are] upon the face of the earth.

DEU 7:7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye [were] the fewest of all people: DEU 7:8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 3. Here the Lord sort of intimates that He choose them just because He loved them and desired to show His faithfulness to keep His promises.

Though man may fail, God will not fail. C. Note that which He desired to do for them was good. 1. Gather their children together as a hen gathereth her chicks under her wings. 2. What a picture. a. Whenever their was a potential danger, the little chicks flee to the mother hen who ruffles out her feathers and all the little chicks disappear underneath. b. Their they not only receive protection, but they are warm and comforted by their nearness to her body. 3. The Lord is saying that He wanted to protect, comfort, and warm them. 4.

It speaks of the closeness and intimacy that He was desiring. DEU 7:9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he [is] God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; DEU 7:11 Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them. DEU 7:12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers: DEU 7:13 And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee.

DEU 7:14 Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. JER 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. 5. God loves you and desires only the best for your life. 6. The scriptures say, woe unto him who strives with his Maker. a. How foolish it is for a man to strive with God. You are fighting against your own good. b. God's will is the best thing that could ever happen to you.

II. Their rebellion against God's will. "And you would not."

A. In verse 35 He mentions how long He had been trying to prevent the great calamity that was going to come upon them.

MAT 23:35 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 Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

MAT 23:36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

1. The slaying of the righteous by the wicked began with Cain killing his brother Abel.

2. It continued through the killing of the priest Zechariah.

2CH 24:20 And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you.

2CH 24:21 And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the LORD.

3. There again the case of the Lord calling to them, but their refusal to listen, and the slaying of the righteous servant of the Lord.

4. Jesus was here predicting that it would continue through that generation.

MAT 23:34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and [some] of them ye shall kill and crucify; and [some] of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute [them] from city to city:

5. It continues to the present time. The Servants of Jesus Christ are persecuted by the wicked world, and worldly governments.

a. In China our brothers in Christ who refuse to submit to the government controlled state church are being beaten, imprisoned, and

slain.

b. In Iran in the past couple months ministers of the gospel were executed.

c. Godless governments always turn against the servants of Jesus Christ.

d. Godless societies are marked by tyranny, and the Christian message is always one of respect for individual freedom and liberty.

III. The result of their refusal to be gathered to the Savior, "Your house is left unto you desolate."

A. You are going to lose the privileges that have been given to you by God.

1. You will be driven from this land that God had given to you.

2. They would lose God's favor, and see the other side of His nature.

3. His grace spurned, they would receive His judgment which they deserved.

JER 18:17 I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.

4. This is always true. God offers His love, grace and mercy to man.

a. He is very patient, for He is not willing that any should perish, but that all might come to repentance.

b. But if one steadfastly refuses His love, mercy

and grace, they leave a righteous God no alternative but to give them the justice they deserve.

B. So it has always been, and so shall it ever be. History is replete with the illustrations of this truth.

C. Jesus had presented Himself to them as their Messiah when a couple days earlier He had entered the city on the donkey.

He would have gathered them together and given them protection and safety, but they would not.

1. They have made their own bed, they must now lie in it.

2. Judgement and desolation awaits them.

D. They will not see Him again until they are so desperate that they will be calling for Him. "Blessed is He that comes in the name of Jehovah."

E. Today Israel is facing one of the greatest crisis of its history since its rebirth.

1. The nation is greatly divided.

2. If the old adage of divide and conquer is true, then Israel is about to be conquered by its enemies, for they are divided to the extent that civil war is a real possibility.

3. The return of the Golan heights to the Syrians will not come without great protests by the settlements.

4. Their only hope for the future is for the return of the Messiah, it will be a glorious day when they acknowledge that, and they will be saying, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of Jehovah."

5. The interesting thing is that is the only way you will ever see Him, when you acknowledge your need and cry unto Him for His help and salvation.

6. I sometimes think that He allows us to get to the place of hopelessness and desperation so that we will call on Him.

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