

Matthew 23:13-39

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[0 : 0 0] Take your Bibles, go into the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew chapter 23. Matthew chapter 23. We'll finish up the 23rd chapter of the Gospel of Matthew this morning. We'll be in verses 13 through 39.

13 through 39 of Matthew chapter 23. We've looked at this passage, at least the beginning of this passage last week, and in beginning this chapter, we saw the reality that this is Christ's final public speech.

This is his final words delivered publicly. Now, we're not counting those seven sayings of Christ on the cross because that's very public for sure. He was there, and that's a whole different study.

You have to get all four Gospels together, and you see the final words of Christ as he is on the cross. A gentleman by the last name of Pink did a great series of the seven sayings of Christ from the cross many years ago.

Still worth reading. Still worth listening to the messages of that. But his final public discourse is recorded for us in Matthew 23. Starting in the 24th chapter, he leaves Jerusalem.

[1 : 1 1] He begins his time with his disciples. His one-on-one time, if you will. It's not necessarily one-on-one. It's one on a few.

But his small group time where he is preparing them for what's about to happen. Now, there is a great contrast between the last things Jesus says publicly and the last thing he says privately.

Great contrast. Which when you read the 23rd chapter of Matthew, you should be reminded of that contrast because it really does matter where you stand with Jesus when it comes to an end.

If you're just one of the crowd who likes to hear him, then he delivers this message. Or if you're one of those who have committed your life to follow him, then he delivers that message. There's a great contrast between the last thing he says publicly and the final words he offers to his people privately.

If you want to see his final sayings of what he says to a group, the small group that have committed their lives and hearts to following him, because even before he declares them in John 13, he tells Judas Iscariot that he can leave.

[2 : 1 8] He gives him permission to do what he is about to do, that is to betray the Son of Man. So then starting as soon as Judas leaves, Jesus begins speaking to the small group privately.

And John 14, 15, and 16 record those conversations. They start in the upper room. They continue as they make their way across the valley and even past the temple.

And then they continue even as they get up to the Garden of Gethsemane. And these final sayings of Christ privately, so comforting. So comforting. A lot of comfort there that Jesus was reassuring, undergirding, re-entrusting himself to his followers before their darkest moment.

Yet the last thing he says publicly is anything but reassuring. It is one of rebuke, chastisement, and correction.

Because where you stand with Christ matters. In the end, where you stand with Christ absolutely matters. So if you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read with one another the word of God found in Matthew chapter 23, starting in verse 13.

[3 : 36] But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people. For you do not enter it yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers. Therefore you will receive the greater condemnation.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

Woe to you, blind fools, who say, whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing, but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated. You fools and blind men, which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold, and whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing, but whoever swears by the offering on it, he is obligated.

You blind men, which is more important, the offering or the altar that sanctifies the offering. Therefore whoever swears by the altar, swears both by the altar and by everything on it, and whoever swears by the temple, swears both by the temple and by him who dwells within it.

[4 : 50] And whoever swears by heaven, swears both by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law, justice and mercy and faithfulness.

But these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. You blind fools who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence.

You blind Pharisees, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

So you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous and say, if we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.

So you testify against yourselves that you are the sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up then the measure of the guilt of your fathers. You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?

[6 : 16] Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes. Some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous bloodshed on earth, from the blood of the righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

Surely I say to you, all these will come upon this generation. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you are unwilling.

Behold, your house is being left to you desolate, for I say to you from now on, you will not see me until you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Let's pray.

Lord, we thank you for this day. God, we thank you for your word. Pray that it would speak to our hearts with power and authority. That it would move beyond every distraction and every hindrance.

And Lord, that it would fulfill its purpose for which you've sent it out. And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated. Not necessarily the last thing you wanted to hear from he who sits on the throne of all eternity.

[7 : 42] Matthew has been lifting up Christ to us throughout the gospel. Matthew's reality is that Jesus is the king of kings and Lord of lords.

He is so much more than just a good man. He's so much more than a rabbi. He's so much more than a prophet. He is the son of God. He is the king of kings and Lord of lords.

He is fully man and fully God. He is Emmanuel, God in the flesh. And the last thing this king says in public is what we have just read.

Some have testified to this as being the seven woes. And you read it and you say, well, wait a minute. There are actually eight woes there. And you're correct. Because in the original text, verse 14 was not included.

It was probably added later because it's also in Mark and Luke. So don't let it kind of, don't say, well, that's extra biblical. That's not scriptural. It is. It has scriptural authority. But we do know that clearly at this time, he pronounces the seven woes that we have and could have very well pronounced the eighth woe.

[8 : 50] So either seven or eight. It is a passage of woe, which woe is not a word that we use very much, like, ah, I'm filled with woe and sorrow. It is to be filled with sorrow and pain and discomfort and discord.

It is to be moved in the bowels, one would say, with anger and even some compassion. It is so much more than just losing one's temper. It is to be broken over the reality of the conditions which exist.

And here he is declaring those conditions to be present within the religious people, the people that we would most likely not expect to be there.

We would be okay if it was a crowd full of Gentiles, even though we're included in the Gentiles because the Gentiles had never had the word of God entrusted to them. And we could have seen that.

Or maybe if it was the Herodians who supported King Herod's dynasty when all of his wickedness, only simply because Herod promoted their business and they were enriched in Herod's dynasty.

[9 : 51] So they supported Herod in spite of who he was. Or maybe the Sadducees who really liked the Romans because the Romans made their life easier and the Romans gave them opportunity for advancement in society.

And they weren't really even concerned about the resurrection because they didn't believe in the existence of hell. They didn't believe in the existence of heaven. They just thought that when you died, you died and that was it. So we could understand if it was the Sadducees.

But no, who we find here are the Pharisees. The Pharisees who were trying so hard with all of their effort to please the God of the Old Testament and trying to live out legalistically things to at least to the best of their standards and perfection.

And yet this is the crowd we find when Jesus offers his final discourse. This is the people that he turns to face and more than likely from the text and even into the 24th chapter, he is on Temple Mount.

He is the lamb that is about to be slain for the sin of mankind. He has been inspected. This is Passion Week and people have questioned him and they've beheld him. They've looked upon him to see if there'd be any fault in him, to see if there's any sin in him.

[11 : 04] And they have not found any. And he is presenting himself at Temple Mount and he is there for all to see. And there in their own front door, Jesus chastises them.

And he rebukes them. And this is the last thing he says publicly. And he says it for everybody to hear. He is not in the inner court of the temple.

He is more than likely at this point in the court of the Gentiles, which would be, that's where everybody could go. When you came up Temple Mount, there would be the court of the Gentiles, which is where everybody was welcomed.

And then there is the court of the ladies. You have to go through the veil. And that's where Jewish men and women were welcomed. And then you go a little bit further and there's the court of the Jewish men where only the Jewish men were allowed together.

And then you go a little bit further and then only the priests were able to go. And then you go a little bit further and there's the Holy of Holies where the high priest went once a year. So the closer you got to the presence of God, the less people were welcomed into his presence.

[12 : 08] But Jesus is saying this out here where everybody can hear it. He has made this public knowledge. And he's put it on display. And he probably angered them to no end.

We know from this point on, they conspire with Judas and they offer him some money. Sure, they get upset. But did this speech upset them or did the truth behind the words that he say convict them?

Now we see here in our text the sorrows of religious falsehood. The sorrows of religious falsehood. And I know I'm being a little preachy and going a little long this morning, but just stay with me.

The word hypocrisy that is used repeatedly throughout this text means to put on a fake face. In the days of Christ, in the early days, even following the days of Christ, all plays and all actors in a play were men.

Women had no role in plays and men would play the part of both men and women. And most plays usually only had a small number of men, some only one. And to change characters, they would simply just hold up a different face in front of theirs, a different mask.

[13 : 22] They didn't go to the back and have all these different costumes. They would just put a different mask on. And all of a sudden, they were transformed before the audience from this person to that person. And they would move forward throughout the play that manner.

And the word hypocrisy was used for changing of characters. And Jesus uses this word to declare that they're putting on a mask in front of everybody, that they're not really who they appear to be.

That they are playing the part of something that in reality, they have no reason to declare as their own. And he speaks of the sorrow of this. And really, they're playing this part as religious people.

But this religious mask or this religious hypocrisy is not one that has no harm and it is okay. Really, Jesus pronounces the woe over it because it is one which is filled with sorrow.

There are a number of sorrows that come from religious falsehood. And these sorrows are not realities that were just present in the days of Christ and in the days of the Pharisees.

[14 : 24] These are the same sorrows that are present today when people declare to be people of God walking in religious falsehood. Putting on a face, if you will.

Some of us put on a pretty good Baptist face. Some of us put on a good other face. And some of us this face. And some of us that face. When it's okay to be authentic. And it's okay to be real.

And what God looks at is the reality of the condition of the heart, not the appearance of the face. And not the mask that is put upon there. And we see the sorrow that comes from that.

The first sorrow that we come to in our passage is that religious falsehood is always a cause for stumbling. It is always a cause for stumbling.

But let us be careful because the falsehood is not necessarily a cause for stumbling to the individual. The sad reality is, the sorrow of it is, is that it is a cause of stumbling for others.

[15 : 27] Look at what our text says. It says, But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you're living out this falsehood. And he says, Because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people.

You shut off the kingdom of heaven from people. The wording there has a very intentional meaning. It was something that would really upset you.

It would be as if we were walking out the front door together. You and I both were walking out the door and you were right behind me. And I stopped just short of the door and I didn't go in because he says, For you yourselves do not enter in.

So I stopped just short of the door. Here in just a little bit, when we dismiss, most of you will go out the front door, some will go out the others. But what if, as you were coming to the front door, because, now, you're not going to have to worry about this, because when we stand there, my wife always stands closest to the door, right?

So, she's a lot sweeter than I am. So you see her before you, after you see me. But what if the day I decided to change positions with her, and I might do it just to mess with you, probably not.

[16 : 25] But, so what if I was a little bit closer to the door and I wasn't going out the door, but right before you stepped out the door, I slammed the door in your face. So it kind of makes you mad a little bit, right?

This is the word picture that Christ is giving. You shut off the kingdom of heaven from other people. You slammed the door of the kingdom of heaven in their face. For you yourselves do not go in, and look at what it says, and you do not enter in yourselves, and you do not allow those who are entering to go in.

Notice this. Jesus says, there are people seeking to enter the kingdom of heaven, yet the hypocrisy and the falsehood of the Pharisees was slamming the door in their face and hindering them from going in.

Because what were they doing? They were trying to remove the Savior, right? We don't need Christ. We just need more laws. We need more regulations. We need more legalism.

We need more effort. We need more work. We need more labor. We don't need a Savior. We just need to do better ourselves. And by doing that, they're slamming the door because they're becoming a cause for stumbling.

[17 : 38] And he says that you travel over land and sea to make one proselyte. Now this is almost, it's hard to say, right? He says you travel over land and sea. He says it's not your efforts. It's not that you're not doing good.

It's not that you're not out trying to win the masses because he speaks of the reality that the Pharisees were trying to win the masses and they were proclaiming this law of works and self-righteousness.

And he says, yet when you go over land and sea and you make one proselyte, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you yourselves. That when you convert him to your ways, he is twice as worse as you are.

Because religious falsehood becomes a cause for stumbling. So here's the application that we must ask ourselves.

If we converted people to our ways, where would they be in relation to the kingdom of heaven? Would they be benefited?

[18 : 44] Or would they actually be twice as far removed from it? See, religious falsehood is a great cause for stumbling.

Charles Spurgeon once said in a prayer that he offered in Metropolitan Tabernacle there in London. He was crying out in prayer and he said, Lord God, if men and women must be condemned to a Christless eternity called hell, then may they have to leap and jump over our bending knees and our pleading bodies as we seek to rescue as many as we can.

What he was saying was, Lord, may we try to get in their way to stop him from going there. But the sad reality is, is sometimes religious people get in their way the other direction and cause them to go there.

A sorrow of religious falsehood. See, it is utmost important. This is why Paul would say to examine yourselves, to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

You say, well, why do I need to work out my own salvation? It's not that you're going to work for your salvation, right? Salvation is a gift imparted to you for none are saved by works, lest any man shall boast.

[20 : 09] It is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. The same man wrote that too. And it is given to us, not on my works, lest any man should boast. It's nothing that I have done, but once he has put it in me, once I am saved and redeemed and I understand it, he says, I need to work it out with fear and trembling.

Why? Because the reality of what I possess is going to be the gospel that the multitudes witness. And may it not be lived out in falsehood to cause others to stumble, but rather may it be a door opener to cause others to go in.

And we see this. Religious falsehood often becomes a cause for stumbling. The second sorrow we see of religious falsehood is that it is really central to this.

It is simply a concern for self. Religious falsehood is a concern for self. That 14th verse is included in our text, so we read it.

He says, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrite, because you devour widows' houses. The wording here is that the widow was casting themselves upon the concern of the religious multitudes and looking to them to be someone that would help them out, but yet, rather than helping them out, they helped themselves, right?

[21 : 24] They took the widow's houses, they took all that she owned, they took all of her possessions, and they enriched themselves from the loss of the widow. And because of her need, they benefited. And then he says, And you make long prayers for a pretense just so you can be heard.

And you do all of these things for yourself. And he goes on a little bit further and starts talking about the oaths and says, Well, it's okay to swear by the temple as long as you don't swear by the goat of the temple.

And you can even swear by the altar as long as you don't swear by the offering on the altar. And he says, What are you talking about? Which is better, the goat or the temple that sanctifies the goat or the offering or the altar that sanctifies the offering?

And the reason they were doing this, see, they were creating loopholes in their faith because they could walk around and say, Well, I declare to you by the temple that I will do this. But see, their loophole was they didn't say by the goat of the temple, therefore they didn't necessarily have to do it.

Falsehood. They were declaring it. Well, if I just said, I declare to you by the altar, as long as they didn't say by the offering on the altar in their mind, they had created a way out, right?

[22 : 27] They can make promises they never intended to fulfill. They can declare words that sounded great and proper, but yet in their own mindset and even in their own heart, there was no ambition for them to ever bring these things about.

This is why I understand this. Our words matter. What we say matters, and that's why I'm always trying to clear this. If I remember, I will get some, right? Because these things are important in how we say it.

That two-letter word, if, is a big word in our family because I always kind of throw it in there that if. It's very small in posture, but it is big in permanence, right? It means something. It has implications because everything revolves around that, but yet we see here they had created a way to sound righteous the whole time knowing they weren't going to be righteous.

because it was all about themselves. Appearances. And he goes on and talks about these, cleaning the outside of the cup and the dish, but not worrying about the inside because of appearance.

And now you need to understand this is right before Passover, right? Right before Passover. One time a year, the Jewish people would gather together.

[23 : 39] One time a year. And at one time a year, they would gather for a purpose. Now they gathered throughout the year a multitude of times, but for this thing, they did it once a year. For once a year, they would get together and they would whitewash or plaster the tombs in the area.

If it was a tomb in the ground, they would plaster the stone that was covering it. If it was a tomb in a cave, they would plaster the stones that were covering it. We just praise God for the sound of babies, right? It's okay.

You can look at those babies when they cry, they're speaking in tongues and that's the only tongues we accept here, okay? Not saying that God can't move you, but we don't need an interpreter for that because we know what that means.

That means I need some attention, mama. That's what that needs. The Bible says that anybody speaks in tongues, let there be an interpreter also. So I'll be the interpreter there and that's okay. So we just say glory, hallelujah, thank you, Lord, for that.

But anyhow, one time a year, they would gather together and they would white plaster the tombs. And they would do that if it was a big tomb in a cliff or in a rock there, they would plaster the stone. If it was on the ground, that was more important.

[24 : 39] They would plaster it and they would do that so that people wouldn't walk across them. Now that wasn't necessarily out of respect for those that were buried in the tombs. That was so that those people would not be defiled by touching an unclean tomb.

And they would plaster them and say, well, hey, be careful here. There's this whitewashed stone. That way you know this is a tomb. It's got dead man's bones in it and you don't want to step on that because that will make you unclean.

And the time of year they did that was immediately before Passover so that everybody could be clean during Passover. Which just so happens to be the same time Jesus is standing up and saying, you're like these whitewashed tombs all around.

See, Jesus also put himself in context. When he gave an illustration, everybody knew what he meant. He said, you've been walking around and you see all these whitewashed tombs? That's what you are.

You look good on the outside, but inside you're full of dead men's bones. And the only thing you're concerned about is how good you look on the outside because that plaster only looked good a short time of the year.

[25 : 41] Because when the rain fell, it kind of washed off a little bit. And he said, you're just whitewashing yourselves and you're making yourselves look good because religious falsehood is revolving around a concern for self.

Mark my word, my friend. And every religious falsehood that you'll ever find throughout history has one similar trait. When man cannot find what he wants in the word of God, he goes out and creates it.

When man so wants to do something or so wants to live in such a way or so wants to act such a way and cannot find a clear declaration for it in the word of God, he goes out and creates it for himself.

See, the reality is this, my friends. When we begin to take the word of God and we use the word of God as a springboard instead of a foundation, we're in trouble.

When we start with the word and see where it takes us rather than resting on the word and stay where it leaves us, we're in trouble. Religious falsehood says, well, I know it says this, but I think I can also do this, this, this, this, this, and begins to build something and this, this, this, and this all have one central element and that is me, me, me, me.

[27 : 00] It is a concern for self because what you find when you open up 66 books called the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, what you find is this isn't a book about you.

It's a book about him. You find who you are in this book and who you are usually is not that good. I see myself in the word and I see all my faults, my stumblings, my failures, and my shortcomings.

I see where I rebel, I see where I revolt, and I see where I'm revolting. I see where I mess up and I misstep. I see all the problems that I have and I'm confronted with all the issues that are present within me.

I don't see that there are bad things that I do. I see the reality that I am a bad person on the inside. That's what I see of me. But then I'm introduced to someone other than me, the one who is perfect, the forerunner before the saints, the one who died in my place.

The Bible says that if I will quit looking at me and I'll look to him, if I'll stop making it about me but I make it about him, then who I am begins to change because it's no longer about me because false religion is always about me.

[28 : 12] True faith is always about him. And when I quit telling my story and I begin to tell his story, then all of a sudden his story, which was recorded in his story, becomes my story.

And no longer when you hear about me, hopefully you don't see me, but you see him because see, I've seen enough of me by the time I get to the book of Malachi. When I read Genesis to Malachi, I've seen about all of me I need to see.

And when I open up the Old Testament, you say, well, the Old Testament ain't no good. It don't make me feel good. You're right. It's not supposed to make you feel good. It's supposed to let you see who you are from the beginning. It's supposed to see that you were created to rule, but you have been ruled over.

It's supposed to show you that you were created to be perfect, but you have become imperfect. It's supposed to be there to show you that you were supposed to have authority, but now there is an authority over you and that authority is sin.

And it is to show you that you get enough of you from Genesis to Malachi. And I praise God that by the time I get to Matthew, it's no longer about me. It's no longer about the people he uses.

[29 : 11] It's all about Jesus because we need someone to step in and make me better. I don't know about you, but I needed someone to step in. By the time I get to Malachi, and I don't know how many times I've read it.

I've read it a lot. And every time I read it, I don't see anything good about me. And I'm not boasting and I'm not bragging. I'm just saying, I've tried to find some good stuff about me in the Old Testament and I haven't found it yet.

And every time, by the time I get to Malachi, I can't wait for the forerunner to come. I can't wait for the one who's going before the king of glory. I can't wait for the one who's gonna set the hearts of the fathers back to the children and the hearts of the children back to the fathers the way it was supposed to be.

I can't wait until someone shows up and then all of a sudden, Zechariah's in the temple and he's all messed up and all of his failures. He doesn't even believe God can hear him when he prays, even though he's offering the incense that says that God hears him when he prays.

And he's sitting there with all of his faults, with all of his failures, with all of his mess ups, not believing the word. And God says, hey, Zechariah, let me tell you something. It's not about you.

[30 : 16] I'm about to do something. And I'm so glad that true faith has nothing to do with me, but it has everything to do with Christ. So when I'm walking in a religion that's about me, I'm walking in falsehood.

Because one of the sorrows of religious falsehood is it's all about you and it's all about me. And I've had enough of me.

Even after I've been redeemed and saved, I still had enough of me. I don't want that anymore. Not only do we see that as a sorrow, and we'll make our way very quickly, it is also, religious falsehood is a continuation of sin.

It is a continuation of sin that is simply saying it's just doing what man has always done. There's nothing new under the sun. Nothing. Nothing new under the sun. We don't get very far into the book of Genesis before man begins to create a religion that's about themselves.

We don't get far at all. We meet Cain and then later Tubal Cain and all these people who are raising up this religion that's about themselves and all this falsehood there.

[31 : 28] But it is just a continuation of sin because Jesus says you build the tomb and you adorn the offerings or the monuments of the prophets and those who have been slain and the righteous and you're there.

He says, you testify about yourselves. Did you notice that? He says, you just testify. He says in verse 31, so you testify against yourselves that you are the sons of those who murdered the prophets because what he says is the prophets have been Cain you adorned their tombs you say, oh if I had been there in the days of my fathers I wouldn't have done it.

Jesus said, you just testify about yourself that you are the sons of those who did it. And by sons he doesn't mean bloodline he just means in the same thought line right in the same process. He said, you are the byproduct of those who did it before and he said, and just to validate that to you I'm going to send you prophets and scribes and wise men and you're going to crucify some you're going to murder others you're going to stone them you're going to drag them out so that all of the righteous blood from the ages now stay with me this is good stuff right here all of the righteous blood of the ages will rain down upon you because you are just continuing what has already been done.

He says from the blood of Abel now you know Abel, right? We talked about Cain just a minute ago Abel was the first murderer in all of scripture, right? That's the first time blood was ever shed no it's not it's not the first time blood was ever shed the first time blood was ever shed that's when Jesus I mean when God had to skin an animal to create clothing for Adam and Eve that's the first time blood was shed it was the first time blood was shed in scripture was to atone for man's mistakes the first murder is when Cain killed Abel right?

So stay with me there so we know Abel and then he begins to announce he says so from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Berechiah whom you murdered between the temple and the altar you say well who is Zechariah the son of Berechiah well I don't really have the time or you would get frustrated if I took you the time to go through all that genealogy but I just want you to understand that way when you study scripture I didn't say if I said when you study scripture you will know that Zechariah's father is not Berechiah Berechiah is his grandfather okay you have to see that because when you open up the book of 2 Chronicles you will find a man named Zechariah who was killed between the altar and you will find that Zechariah is the grandson of Berechiah there's nothing wrong with that to say the son that just means the lineage or the seed of because I hate to tell you this but you are also the seed of your grandparents you are not just the seed of your parents you are the seed of your grandparents and it just presses on through there so Zechariah is killed now while this is so important the first book of the Hebrew Bible is Genesis right in the beginning and the first murder recorded in the Hebrew Bible is Abel

[33 : 59] Cain killed Abel the last book in the Hebrew Bible not your Bible the Hebrew Bible because Jesus was speaking to Hebrew people Matthew's writing to Hebrew people right and they would have used the Hebrew Bible the last book in the Hebrew Bible 2nd Chronicles the last murder recorded in the Hebrew Bible Zechariah what is Jesus saying from every murder recorded in the Old Testament from the first one to the last one you are going to be guilty of them all because you are just continuing the sin of the men who went before you see religious falsehood is just a continuation of sin so many people think they are doing something new when they are just playing the same old tune over and over again it is just a continuation and friend listen to me the only way to break the cycle is to walk in truth and righteousness and to surrender to the Savior last thing we see here the sorrow the cause of stumbling the concern for self a continuation of sin last thing where Jesus laments here and it is the care shunned or neglected

Jesus stops and he turns and he says oh Jerusalem Jerusalem he's lamenting now you need to understand when he says Jerusalem he probably means all the nation of Israel it's this mourning over all the people of Israel he says oh Jerusalem Jerusalem there in verse 37 who kills the prophets and stone those sent to her how often I wanted to gather your children together the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings okay here you see the desire of Christ how often I wanted to stay with me people how often I wanted to do this yet what does it say it says the care shunned and you were unwilling and you were unwilling what you have here in this verse is the joining of the divine sovereignty and human responsibility it is the coming together of divine sovereignty and human responsibility now I know some of you start sweating when I get to this because you don't like to think about this

God is sovereign that is no one comes to Christ lest he be drawn by the Father salvation is completely the work of him and him alone you don't come because you made a decision you came because he worked on your heart and he drew you to yourself because man left to his own ways wants nothing to do with the righteous God man wants everything to do with himself God is sovereign he knows who is going to be saved and he knows when they're going to be saved Paul refers to that as the elect and the predestined and we're not here to get into all the terminology of the word but God absolutely knows who's going to be saved and when they're going to be saved because if he did not then he would not be God because there would be something he did not know and you just have to rest at that so God is sovereign there's divine sovereignty but I want to assure you of this there are none that are willing that will not be saved you say define that for me and explain it to me we can't there are none who are going to be cast into a crisis eternity called hell who were unwilling in heart to respond because Jesus says you weren't willing the reality is that there are none that will be in hell who do not deserve to be there because all have fallen short of the glory of God all have sinned but when we get to heaven there are a whole lot in heaven who don't deserve to be there that's just the reality none of us deserve to be there so you meet this where the divine sovereignty and human responsibility kiss unwilling because the only way man is willing is when he has this pulling and this drawing and yet

Jesus here says you're unwilling you're neglecting it sometimes our heart breaks and you say well what about those or what about the multitudes who are dying God's not fair we're friends the reality is in our heart they're unwilling anyway because naturally all of us in our heart are unwilling you just have to reconcile that we're not that good a people he's a great savior he is marvelous they shunned it they pushed it aside Jesus said I would but you don't want me to and since you don't want me to look at what it says behold your house is being left to you desolate that is in your false religion and in your pride and in your efforts you want nothing to do with me so I'm going to give you your way you shunned me you don't want anything to do with me so I'm leaving you go down to chapter 24 your house is being left to you desolate

Jesus said you want me to leave you alone okay I'll leave you alone see where we're at in the last days really matters you said well how do I know if God is calling me to himself how do I know if he's calling me to be saved how do I know if he wants me to give my life to him how do I know what friend the only question am I willing is God drawing me in my heart do I really want to surrender to his lordship do I want to give him control of my life am I willing to do that have I come to the end of myself if the answer is yes then yes he's called you I don't want that and there'll be a day where he leaves you you want him to leave you alone the sorrow of all sorrows is this there will be a day where he leaves man alone and that's

[40 : 02] Christless eternity referred to as hell and we see this the sorrow of religious falsehood let's pray we thank you we thank you for your word god I know that it's not always pleasant but lord it's always true so lord I pray that you would speak to our hearts and minds i pray that in your divine sovereignty you would draw to yourself god i pray that you would break our hearts lord that you would mold us and shape us to be the people of truth to be people who walk in righteousness lord help us to respond as your spirit leads us in spirit we give you all the freedom to do so at this moment and we ask it all in christ and amen so

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[43 : 57] Thank you.