

**Matthew 23:37-39:** O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! <sup>38</sup> See, your house is left to you desolate. <sup>39</sup> For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

**Intro:** These last several weeks, we've seen Jesus curse, condemn, & warn the scribes & Pharisees because of their wicked hearts & their wicked lives that are absolutely contrary to what Jesus taught in His great sermon on the mount. Jesus began His public ministry with the sermon on the mount, proclaiming in **Matt 5:20:** "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes & Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Here, in Matt 23, on the last week of Jesus' life, & in His last public teaching before He dies, He warns & pleads with the scribes & Pharisees again, showing how they have fallen short of obeying everything He has commanded. These words in Vs. 37-39 are Jesus' last recorded public words to Israel. & of course His disciples & the crowds are listening in, so Matt 23 is a blasting critique of how these leaders have utterly failed to live out what Jesus taught in the sermon on the mount. Jesus calls the Jewish religious leaders out for not living according to the will of God: not according to Jesus' will & teaching. They not only miss the main thing! They kill the main thing! The main thing in life is keeping the main thing the main thing: Jesus is the main thing. They look on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart: so pursue true, heart religion in Christ. False teaching & ungodly living is wicked, deadly, & damning. Flee from it, & pursue the pure doctrine of Christ & the pure life in Christ.

Today, we see Jesus' love, compassion, patience, & mercy-heart as He laments the hard-heartedness of the Jewish leaders & their children & their refusal to joyfully receive Him as Messiah, Savior, & LORD. Behold the love, compassion, patience, & mercy-heart of Jesus, imitate Him & cling to Him as Savior & LORD & never let Him go, for He will never let you go!

### **1. Jesus' Intense Love And Compassion**

**Matthew 23:37:** O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!

**a. What does Jesus mean by "Jerusalem"?: R. T. France:** Jerusalem symbolizes the nation whose capitol it is.  
- **Craig Blomberg:** Jerusalem [refers] to the corrupt leadership of the people.

**V. 37:** How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! [Jerusalem refers to the corrupt leadership, their children are the Jews, the nation of Israel.]

**b. See Jesus' intense love & compassion:** Jesus shows His intense love for God's people by calling out to Jerusalem twice – "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" **2 Samuel 18:33:** the king was deeply moved & went up to the chamber over the gate & wept. & as he went, he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

- **Luke 10:38-42:** a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. <sup>39</sup> And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet & listened to his teaching. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him & said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." <sup>41</sup> But the Lord answered her, "**Martha, Martha,** you are anxious & troubled about many things, <sup>42</sup> but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

- **Luke 22:28-32:** You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, <sup>29</sup> & I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, <sup>30</sup> that you may eat & drink at my table in my kingdom & sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>31</sup> "**Simon, Simon,** behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, <sup>32</sup> but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

**c. Jesus shows this intense love & compassion for wicked sinners:** Think about how bad Jerusalem & her children have been! They kill the prophets & stone those God has sent to them, over & over again!

**Stephen: Acts 7:51-52:** You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart & ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. <sup>52</sup> Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed & murdered . . .

Beloved, see Jesus' love for these wicked, sinful, hypocritical, self-indulgent, lawless, blind, snakes & children of vipers who are leading people to hell by their false teaching & false living as they do everything to be seen by men! They have all the blood of all the prophets on their hands – they are murderers! Yet see Jesus' love for them! Beloved, how much more does Jesus love you: His blood bought, adopted sheep. Oh, the deep, deep love of Jesus!

- **Romans 9:1-3:** I am speaking the truth in Christ – I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit – <sup>2</sup> that I have great sorrow & unceasing anguish in my heart. <sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were accursed & cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

- **Luke 19:41-44:** And when he drew near & saw the city, he wept over it, <sup>42</sup> saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup> For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you & surround you & hem you in on every side <sup>44</sup> & tear you down to the ground, you & your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

- **D. A. Carson:** To speak faithfully of the wrath of God, very often what we most urgently need are tears. A few years ago on a radio talk show with a large audience in Chicago, the host asked several guests to discuss whether anyone could be saved apart from Jesus. Three pooh-pooed the idea in graphic terms. The fourth was a Jewish-Christian believer on the faculty of Moody Bible Institute. His ethnic background was known by everyone there, so when it was his turn to speak, the host baited him by asking him if he thought his fellow Jews could be saved apart from Christ. This Christian brother began to weep, and then to sob quietly, uncontrollably. After a minute or two, the host said that he had never heard a more compelling reason to become a Christian. So we teach the wrath of God, for faithfulness to Scripture demands it; and we follow Jesus and learn to weep over the city. **GOSPEL!**

**C. S. Lewis:** God has infinite attention to spare for each one of us. You are as much alone with Him as if you were the only being He had ever created.

Behold the love, compassion, patience, & mercy-heart of Jesus, imitate Him & cling to Him as Savior & LORD & never let Him go, for He will never let you go!

## **2. Jesus' Strong Desire For All Of His People To Be Saved**

**Matthew 23:37:** How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!

**a. Jesus deeply desires to save all His people:** Jesus is God, & God deeply desires all people to be saved!

- **Ezekiel 18:23, 33:11:** Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, & not rather that he should turn from his way and live? . . . <sup>33:11</sup> Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

- **2 Peter 3:9:** The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

**b. Why aren't all people saved? 1) Because sinners reject God's mercy: V. 37:** you would not!

- **Acts 7:51:** You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart & ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.

- **J.C. Ryle:** Let us understand that the ruin of those who are lost is not because Christ was not willing to save them, nor yet because they wanted to be saved, but could not. But because they would not come to Christ.

- **Matthew Henry:** It is wholly owing to the wicked wills of sinners that they are not gathered under the wings of the Lord Jesus. On the judgment day when men & women stand to rebuke God [saying:] “How can you condemn me?” The word will come: “You were unwilling. You have foregone Me in this life, you now forego Me in eternity.”

2) Because God has not chosen them to be saved: **Matt 22:14:** For many are called, but few are chosen.

- **Matt 11:25-26:** At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven & earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise & understanding & revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

- **Matt 13:10-11, 13-16:** Then the disciples came & said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" <sup>11</sup> And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given . . . <sup>13</sup> This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, & hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. <sup>14</sup> Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: “You will indeed hear but never understand, & you will indeed see but never perceive. <sup>15</sup> For this people's heart has grown dull, & with their ears they can barely hear, & their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes & hear with their ears & understand with their heart & turn, & I would heal them.” <sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes, for they see, & your ears, for they hear.

- **Matt 24:22:** And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

**c. How is God's sovereign choice to save whom He pleases (& that is clearly not everyone!) & His desire for everyone to be saved reconciled?:** God has two wills: a sovereign will & a moral will; a will of decree & a will of command. According to God's sovereign will of decree, He has chosen an elect to save from before the foundation of the world. But according to God's moral will of command, He desires every single person to be saved.

**Joseph: Genesis 50:20:** As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

**Jesus: Acts 4:27-28:** for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod & Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles & the peoples of Israel, <sup>28</sup> to do whatever your hand & your plan had predestined to take place.

- **John Piper** (“Are There Two Wills in God?: Divine Election & God's Desire for All to Be Saved”): Therefore I affirm with John 3:16 & 1 Timothy 2:4 that God loves the world with a deep compassion that desires the salvation of all men. Yet I also affirm that God has chosen from before the foundation of the world whom he will save from sin. Since not all people are saved we must choose whether we believe (with the Arminians) that God's will to save all people is restrained by his commitment to human self-determination or whether we believe (with the Calvinists) that God's will to save all people is restrained by his commitment to the glorification of his sovereign grace (Ephesians 1:6,12,14; Romans 9:22-23). This decision should not be made on the basis of metaphysical assumptions about what we think human accountability requires. It should be made on the basis of what the scriptures teach. I do not find in the Bible that human beings have the ultimate power of self-determination. As far as I can tell it is a philosophical inference based on metaphysical presuppositions.

- **John MacArthur:** God is utterly sovereign & therefore fully capable of bringing to pass whatever He desires (cf. Is 46:10) – including the salvation of whomever He chooses (Eph 1:4, 5). Yet, He sometimes expresses a wish for that which He does not sovereignly bring to pass . . . Such expressions in no way suggest a limitation on the sovereignty of God or imply any actual change in Him (Nu 23:19). But these statements do reveal essential aspects of His divine character: He is full of compassion, sincerely good to all, desirous of good, not evil – & therefore not delighting in the destruction of the wicked.

**d. Jesus desires to save His people just like God desires to save His people: 1 John 4:8:** God is love.

- **Ex. 19:4:**[God spoke of] what I did to the Egyptians, & how I bore you on eagles' wings & brought you to myself

- **Isa. 31:5:** Like birds hovering, so the LORD of hosts will protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver it . . .

- **Ps. 36:7:** How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

- **Ps. 91:1-4:** He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. <sup>2</sup> I will say to the LORD, "My refuge & my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." <sup>3</sup> For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler & from the deadly pestilence. <sup>4</sup> He will cover you with his pinions, & under his wings you will find refuge

**Psalm 91:** Who with God Most High finds shelter, In th' Almighty's shadow hides.  
To the LORD I'll say, "My Refuge!" In my God my trust abides.  
From the fowler's snare He'll save you, From the deadly pestilence.  
Cover you with outspread pinions, Make His wings your confidence.

**e. Jesus' love is like that of a mother hen protecting her chicks: Matt 23:37:** How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings . . . . [Google "Animal Mothers Protect Babies"]

**Mothers love their babies!:** August 30, 2021, CBS News Article: Mother fights off mountain lion to save 5-year-old son: A mother saved her 5-year-old son from a mountain lion after it attacked the boy in the front yard of the family home in Calabasas, California . . . The California Department of Fish and Wildlife said in a statement that a 65-pound mountain lion left wounds on the child's head, neck and upper torso on Thursday. The boy was rescued by his mother, who hit the animal multiple times . . . The mother jumped into action after she heard the boy's screaming, Captain Patrick Foy with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife told CBS Los Angeles. "She ran outside & immediately started striking & punching at the lion & managed to fend the lion off her son," he said. "This mom's an absolute hero who saved her son's life, there's no question about it."

**f. Jesus is God: Matthew 23:37:** How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!

**Ligon Duncan:** By the way, Jesus makes here an unmistakable claim to His deity, doesn't he? He says that He is the one who is always seeking to gather & to protect God's people in all ages. He is the one who is sending the prophet. C. S. Lewis put it this way. On one occasion this man is sitting down looking on Jerusalem from a hill above it, & suddenly comes this extraordinary remark. "I keep on sending you prophets and wise men. Nobody comments on it." And yet quite suddenly, almost accidentally, He is claiming to be the power that through all the centuries is sending wise men & leaders into the world. You see what the Lord Jesus is saying. "I am the God who has been sending you prophets with the word of grace to draw you into living & eternal fellowship with God. I am the power behind those overtures."

**Craig Blomberg:** Would that all Christians displayed this depth of concern for the lost, especially among those closest to them! Would that we made plain with boldness the eternal jeopardy those without Christ face. **(Misty A.)**

Behold the love, compassion, patience, & mercy-heart of Jesus, imitate Him & cling to Him as Savior & LORD & never let Him go, for He will never let you go!

### **3. Jesus' Final Warning Before His Death And Resurrection**

**Matthew 23:38-39:** See, your house is left to you desolate. <sup>39</sup> For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

**a. Israel's temple/nation is judged & will be destroyed: V. 38:** See, your house is left to you desolate. [70 AD]

**R. T. France:** The repeated second person pronoun emphasizes that it is now just that, "your house", not God's house.  
- **1 Kings 9:6-9:** But if you turn aside from following me, you or your children, & do not keep my commandments & my statutes that I have set before you, but go & serve other gods & worship them, <sup>7</sup> then I will cut off Israel from the land that I have given them, & the house that I have consecrated for my name I will cast out of my sight, & Israel will become a proverb & a byword among all peoples. <sup>8</sup> And this house will become a heap of ruins. Everyone passing by it will be astonished & will hiss, & they will say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land

& to this house?' <sup>9</sup> Then they will say, 'Because they abandoned the LORD their God who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt & laid hold on other gods & worshiped them & served them. Therefore the LORD has brought all this disaster on them.'

**b. Remember Palm Sunday:** Today we see the end of what began back in Matt. 21 at Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Remember, Jesus came into Jerusalem, & the people cried out Psalm 118:26 in **Matt. 21:9**: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" Then Jesus cleansed the temple, cursed the fig tree, pronounced judgment parables against the Jewish leaders, & did battle with them on issues like taxes, the resurrection, the greatest commandment in the law, & who the Son of David is. That brings us to Matthew 23 & all the woes. And so we end where we began – with Psalm 118:26: **V. 39**: For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

When Jesus leaves the temple in 24:1, God's glory leaves the temple, just like in Ezekiel's day: **Ezekiel 11:23**: the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain that is on the east side of the city.

**John MacArthur:** A few days earlier, Christ had referred to the temple as His Father's "house" (21:13). But the blessing and glory of God were being removed from Israel (see 1 Sa 4:21). When Christ "departed from the temple" (24:1), the glory of God went with Him. Ezekiel 11:23 describes Ezekiel's vision of the departure of the Shekinah glory in His day. The glory left the temple and stood on the Mount of Olives, exactly the same route Christ followed here.

**c. There is a future hope for all who repent & trust in Jesus: V. 39:** For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

- **Romans 11:25-27:** I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. <sup>26</sup> And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; <sup>27</sup> "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

- **Ezekiel 11:17-20:** Therefore say, "Thus says the Lord GOD: I will gather you from the peoples & assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, & I will give you the land of Israel." And when they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things & all its abominations. And I will give them one heart, & a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh & give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes & keep my rules & obey them. And they shall be my people, & I will be their God.

Behold the love, compassion, patience, & mercy-heart of Jesus, imitate Him & cling to Him as Savior & LORD & never let Him go, for He will never let you go!

**Looking unto Jesus:** Jesus came into Jerusalem, & they killed Him too – the Prophet of all prophets Who is more than a prophet – He's the God-Man, the very Word of God come in the flesh. He was not gathered in kindness & tenderness & compassion & mercy as the perfect Son of God, but He was cast out & abandoned by God. He was not delivered on eagles wings but crushed. He had no refuge or fortress or safety from the deadly pestilence. He was not covered with safety of the wings of the Almighty, but He was smitten, stricken, & afflicted with the wrath of the Almighty! He is the temple, the house, that was left desolate – exiled & crucified outside the camp. And then God raised Him up so that we might be safe under the wings of God's love forever where there's fullness of joy!

Christ Jesus' Mercy-Heart Shall Speak

Before He Dies In His Last Week

"Jerusalem! For You It's Bleak!"

"You Stone And Kill, You're Evil's Peak!"

"Judgment's Coming Though I Seek!"

"To Gather You As Chicks Who Squeak!"

“But You Would Not!” Oh What Mystique  
How They Resist The God-Man Meek  
Who’d Go And Die And Suffer Weak  
They’d Spit And Beat And Strike His Cheek  
He’d Bear God’s Wrath With Pain And Shriek  
But Then Arise And End Death’s Streak  
For Death Is Dead On Holy Week  
By Faith Alone In Christ Unique  
You’ll Never Be Desolate Bleak  
Escape God’s Wrath And Sin Critique  
And Find In Christ All Joy’s Peak  
For He’s The Treasure Whom We Seek!

Behold the love, compassion, patience, & mercy-heart of Jesus, imitate Him & cling to Him as Savior & LORD & never let Him go, for He will never let you go!