

**Mark 13: 1-13; “He Who Endures to the End”, Sermon # 99 in the series –
“Astonished at His Teaching”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on
March 3rd, 2012, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

Matthew Chapter 24 and this Chapter record the same conversation between Christ and his disciples. They are parallel passages; Jesus going out of the temple, the one disciple asking the question in Mark, and others of Christ’s disciples, in Matthew 24, all eager to point out the greatness of the buildings; Jesus answering in precisely the same way in both accounts; that “not one stone shall be left upon another, that would not be thrown down”. In both accounts, it then follows that the disciples come and ask Jesus this same question, although in Matthew it is a little more intricate. In Mark the question is worded like this. “Tell us, when will these things be?” “And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?” Matthew’s gospel says, “Tell us, when will these things be?” “And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” In Luke’s gospel, Chapter 21, verses 5-36 there is another parallel passage to these two. All of these passages need to be compared with one another if we are going to come to right conclusions about what is being spoken of. Since the question of the disciples concerns not only the destruction of Jerusalem, but the end of the age, it must be true that Jesus is showing us that what would happen in the destruction of Jerusalem is a type of what would happen at the end of the age. And so He masterfully weaves the signs of the things that would happen at the destruction of Jerusalem together with the signs of what would happen at the end of the world in His Second Coming. He did this deliberately so that all generations of Christians would benefit from the warnings and the encouragements to persevere that He gives here. Now, there is one verse which I would like to focus on, from which I would like draw applications to all of these 13 verses that we are studying. It is the second part of verse 13. “But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” The same sentence is found in verse 13 of Matthew 24. Whatever time period of Church history that you are living in, this verse applies to you. Whether it was during the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, or whether it is at the time just before Christ’s coming, “He who endures to the end will be saved”. The way that I want to approach these first 13 verses of this passage in Mark 13 is this. I first of all want us to think together about enduring in times of deception (verses 1-6) 2nd, we want to think about our enduring in times of calamities, then and now. (verses 5-8) And then finally, we want to think about enduring in in your love for all men, even if they deal treacherously with you. (verses 9-13)

1st of all – Let us think together about enduring in times of deception. (verses 1-6)

Verse 5 says, “Take heed that no one deceives you.” Sometimes I do not think that Christians think about how easily they can be deceived by the times in which they live. These disciples were deceived by the glorious beauty of the temple, which had been some 46 years in the making. They marveled over the size of the stones. “Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!” I am quite sure that disciples of that day thought that the Lord Jesus was going to bring in His kingdom during their lifetime. If He was the promised Messiah, then would it not be so, that both He and they would reign together in Jerusalem one day? Perhaps He would even be ruling from a throne in this glorious temple in the days to come! But they did not understand the times in which they lived, or the mission of their Messiah. They did not understand what Jesus would have to endure in His coming sufferings. Actually, this was the last time that Jesus would ever be in that temple. As Olshausen says, “As He withdrew, the gracious presence of God left the sanctuary; and the Temple, with all its service, and the whole theocratic constitution, was given over to destruction.” Jesus understood that this was the end of his public teaching ministry at the temple. No more would He walk in the porticos of Solomon.

Jesus answered His disciples in verse 2 – “Do you see these great buildings?” “Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” This really shook the disciples up, because it really was a very impressive building. According to Josephus, some of these blocks of stone were about thirty-six feet in length by twelve in thickness, and eighteen in height. And yet Jesus did not want His disciples to be deceived. “Not one stone would be left upon another when the city was destroyed. That time of destruction was only 36 years away. Let’s apply this to ourselves. If you knew that all the stately and impressive buildings in Washington D.C., such as the Capitol, the White House, the Washington monument and other buildings were all going to be destroyed by a foreign army in the near future, then what would you think? I think that the Lord would not have us to be taken in by appearances. I think that the Lord would have us to realize that a nation is just like a person. If that nation continues in their sin, then no matter how much the greatness or the glory of its past history has been, it does not deserve to continue. The disciples of that day were deceived by the appearance of grandeur. They were deceived by the greatness and the glory of the buildings in Jerusalem. They were thinking that these buildings were immovable; that the state of things for their nation would continue to get better, now that their Messiah had come. Little did they know that in just a few short days, that a great multitude of people, together with the leaders of the nation, would put their own promised Messiah to death on a cross. The lesson for the Christian is this; first comes suffering in your identification with Christ, and for Christ; then comes glory. This is not to say that the Lord is not full of goodness. Has He not given us many days which have been full of the blessings of kindness and goodness, and for the Christian, His grace and peace? He has; and as we pray for repentance for our country, let us also pray that goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives.

But we need to take heed that we are not deceived by the times that we live in. “For many will come in My name, saying, I am He, and will deceive many.” This actually happened before the destruction of Jerusalem. Many claimed to be the Messiah when they were really false prophets. In our day it is political leaders and the media prophesying great things for our country. And on a bright and sunny and cloudless morning on September 11th, 2001, the Lord permitted our nation to see how instantly all can change, when His judgments come. Turn with me over to Jeremiah 18, verse 1. “The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: ‘Arise and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause you to hear My words.’” “Then I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was, making something at the wheel.” “And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.” “Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying; ‘O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter, says the Lord.’” “Look, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!” “The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.” “And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.” “Now, therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you.’” “Return now every one from his evil ways, and make your ways and your doings good.” “And they said, ‘That is hopeless!’” “So we will walk according to our own plans, and we will every one obey the dictates of his evil heart.” You can see here that it does not take long for the Lord to change His mind about doing a nation good if they will repent, or devising evil against it if they do not repent. It can be in “an instant”. We are often thoughtless of the Lord’s kindness and mercy to us as a country. The kindness and goodness of God are meant to lead us to repentance it says in

Romans 2. But even if the people in our country around us do not come to repentance, let us not say that "it is hopeless!" "We will walk according to our own plans and every one the dictates of his evil heart." No, he who endures to the end shall be saved. That is, if you will hold fast to your faith in Jesus Christ and repent of all of your sins, you most certainly will have a future and a hope, no matter what happens to this country. You will be saved from all of your sins because you are persevering in holiness. Because your faith has been shown by your works, you shall be brought into Christ's heavenly kingdom. In the final day when Christ comes back to judge the world, you shall see the re-creation of the world; the New Heavens and New Earth in which dwells righteousness. We should pray for this country, but we should not go along with the compromises with evil that are more and more being evidenced in our society. If we have to lay our lives down, let us lay them down for the truth. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap. If they sow to the flesh they shall reap corruption. But if you sow to the Spirit you shall reap eternal life. Do not be deceived by the times that we live in.

2nd, we want to think about enduring in time of calamities, then and now.

(verses 7 and 8)

"But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for such things must happen, but the end is not yet." "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." "And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles." "These are the beginnings of sorrows." Jesus is speaking of the coming destruction of Jerusalem; that before it came, the Christians who were then alive would hear of wars and rumors of wars. They were not to be troubled. Jesus said to them, "Such things must happen, but the end is not yet." It is a very good thing for a Christian to cultivate a calm heart by faith in God's Providential ordering of events. He ordains all things according to the counsel of His will. It is important to the stability of your faith not to become anxious and troubled about everything that you read and hear on the television as though wars are going to destroy the world. God has His plans for this old world, and they include ordaining that wars will come, they must come as judgments upon sinful nations and societies. This does not mean that the people of God must approve of all wars, or necessarily that they must participate in them. Each Christian must pray to know what their part and their duty to God, first and foremostly is, during such times. And then after that comes your fulfilling righteous duty to help protect our country. But the Christian should not be troubled by these things. Why? Because they are to rest in the sovereignty of God, and have their faith in Jesus at all times; especially those times. Listen to how Matthew's gospel words it. "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars." "See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." "And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places." "All these are the beginning of sorrows." No, they were not to be troubled. Does this mean that this was the beginning of sorrows for the true Christian? No, it means the beginning of sorrows for a sinful unrepentant nation. In this case Jerusalem and the nation of Israel as the destruction of Jerusalem as the event came nearer to them.

What is the Christian to do in circumstances when they hear of wars and rumors of wars? What should their attitude when they hear of famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in various places? Well turn with me over to Psalm 46. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." "Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling." "Selah." "There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High." "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn." "The nations raged, the kingdom were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted." "The

Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.” (or our stronghold) This is to be the attitude of the Christian under such circumstances. God is our refuge, He is our strength. He is a very present help in time of trouble. Therefore we will not fear. O that each and every Christian would receive these words. You needn't be troubled in troublous times. God will help His people in such times, and His grace will be like a river which will make them glad. God will help His church at just the right time. The darkest time is just before the dawn. Therefore, dear saint, take heart in the worst of times. The Lord of Hosts, our Lord Jesus Christ is with us. Look at the rest of the Psalm. Verse 8 – “Come behold the works of the Lord, Who has made desolations in the earth.” “He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two He burns the chariot in the fire.” “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” This is the purpose of God the Father in relation to the kingdom of His dear Son; that He and it will be exalted in the earth. At His time, His Son shall reign and His kingdom with Him, in the earth. He will in that day cause wars to cease to the ends of the earth. Let us trust in the sovereignty of God; that He knows the times and the seasons and will bring everything to a right conclusion in all the times and seasons of prophetic fulfillment. He who endures to the end shall be saved. This does not mean grit your teeth and bear it. It means trust in the sovereignty of God, and believe that He will give you all the grace in such times that you will need, because He is with His church. He sovereignly came against Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and He destroyed their nation, and over a million people died. But when the Christians saw the Abomination of Desolation, the Roman eagles standing in the Holy Place of the temple, those Christians who were in Judea fled to the mountains. They fled to Pella where they found a refuge from that tribulation. Dear Christian the Lord will always be your refuge in times of trouble, even if you are in a prison camp situation. Many Christians have faced this, and whether they lived or whether they died, God was with them. They were given grace to endure to the end.

And then finally, we want to think about enduring in your love for all men, even if they deal treacherously with you. (verses 9-13)

“But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues.” “You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them.” “And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.” “But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak.” “But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.” “Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and case them to be put to death.” “And you will be hated by all for My name's sake.” “But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” The great object of the Christian in troublous times is, “How can I glorify God?” The Christian glorifies God by their holding fast to Christ and sharing the gospel when they can; continuing to be a good witness even when relatives betray them or cause them to be imprisoned or put to death. The object, as is implied in Matthew 24, verse 12, is not to let your love for Christ and other people around you, grow cold. In closing this sermon, let me give you a real life example of this. Corrie Ten Boom and her sister Betsie. (This is taken from P. 192 of *The Hiding Place*.) “Corrie, do you remember the day we were arrested, a man came to the shop?” “You were sick and I had to wake you up.” “I remembered very well.” “Remembered the strange roving eyes, the uneasiness in the pit of my stomach that was more than fever.” “Apparently everyone in Emelo knew him.” “He worked with the Gestapo from the first day of occupation.” “He reported this woman's two brothers for Resistance work, and finally herself and her husband, too.” “When Ermelo had finally caught on to him, he had come to Haarlem and teamed up with Willemse and Kapteyn.” “His name was Jan Vogel.” “Flames of fire seemed to leap around that name in my heart.” “I thought of Father's final hours, alone and confused, in a hospital corridor.” “Of the underground work so abruptly halted.” “I thought

of Mary Itallie arrested while walking down a street.” “And I knew that if Jan Vogel stood in front of me now, I could kill him.” “Betsie drew the little cloth bag from beneath her overalls and held it out to me, but I shook my head.” “Betsie kept the Bible during the day, since she had more chance to read and teach from it here than I did at the Phillips barracks.’ “In the evenings we held a clandestine prayer meeting for as many as could crowd around our bunk.” “You lead the prayers tonight, Betsie.” “I have a headache.” “More than a headache.” “All of me ached with the violence of my feelings about the man who had done us so much harm.” “That night I did not sleep and the next day at my bench scarcely heard the conversation around me.” “By the end of the week I had worked myself into such a sickness of body and spirit that Mr. Moorman stopped at my bench to ask if something were wrong.” “Wrong?” “Yes, something’s wrong!” “And I plunged into an account of that day.” “I was only too eager to tell Mr. Moorman and all Holland how Jan Vogel had betrayed his country.” “What puzzled me all this time was Betsie.” “She had suffered everything I had and yet she seemed to carry no burden of rage.” “Betsie!” “I hissed one dark night when I knew that my restless tossing must be keeping her awake.’ “Three of us now shared this single cot as the guarded prison camp daily received new arrivals.” “Betsie, don’t you feel anything about Jan Vogel?” “Doesn’t it bother you?” “Oh yes, Corrie!” “Terribly!” “I’ve felt for him ever since I knew—and pray for him whenever his name comes into my mind.” “How dreadfully he must be suffering!” “For a long time I lay silent in the huge shadowy barracks restless with the sighs, snores, and stirrings of hundreds of women.” “Once again I had the feeling that this sister with whom I had spent all my life belonged somehow to another order of beings.” “Wasn’t she telling me in her gentle way that I was as guilty as Jan Vogel? “Didn’t he and I stand together before an all-seeing God convicted of the same sin of murder?” “For I had murdered him with my heart and with my tongue.” “Lord Jesus,” I whispered, into the lumpy ticking of the bed, ‘I forgive Jan Vogel as I pray that You will forgive me.” “I have done him great damage.” “Bless him now, and his family...” That night for the first time since our betrayer had a name, I slept deep and dreamlessly until the whistle summoned us to roll call.” That, was only part of what it meant for Corrie to endure to end while she was in the prison camp, but it was a lesson that the Lord taught her so that her love for Him and sinful people would not grow cold.