

# Jesus and His Enemies

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Let's go to Luke 13. We actually, Lord willing, will complete this chapter this morning and the Lord is, again as he is pilgrimaging through Galilee toward Jerusalem, giving us rich, rich truth and rich insight into his life and his ministry and I thought this week, meditating on this text, how I love Christ. I love him because he's just who he is and you can't figure him out, you can't put him in a box and there's a lot more to Jesus than you learned in fifth grade Sunday School. Listen, that doesn't mean fifth grade Sunday School wasn't wonderful, it's just that he's infinite and we keep learning and keep growing and keep understanding. Amen? That's the way we want to be.

Luke 13, beginning in verse 31 and going to the end of the chapter.

“31 Just at that time some Pharisees approached, saying to Him, 'Go away, leave here, for Herod wants to kill You.' 32 And He said to them, 'Go and tell that fox, “Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal.” 33 Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem. 34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it! 35 Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you will not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'”

I've entitled the exposition of this section of Luke “Jesus and His Enemies.” I. First notice a deceptive ploy, the Pharisees pretend allegiance. A deceptive ploy, the Pharisees pretend allegiance. Here we have this group of Pharisees coming to Jesus and saying to him, “Hey, you need to get away from here because Herod is trying to kill you.” And so we have to think about, now who is saying this? The Pharisees who hate him, who despise him in every way. Are they really genuinely concerned about the welfare of Christ? Absolutely not. I found no scholar that agreed with that, that this was in full effect, at least when you take the balance of biblical revelation, a deceptive ploy. They're just pretending that they are concerned with Jesus, on the team of Jesus, or have any kind of allegiance to Jesus.

I mean, these Pharisees were of the lowest character. The Bible shows us that these Pharisees hated sinners. I mean, at least in their understanding of sin, you know, the way they twisted and manipulated the definition of sinning. For example, if you touched a dead body or if you ate unclean meat, they would declare you unclean and, therefore, you are a sinner and they would stay away from you. You would have to cry three times if you saw anyone on the street if you were declared unclean, “Unclean! Unclean! Unclean!” The Pharisees did all this to promote themselves as being the clean and holy ones and others were the sinners.

So, they were those who “hate sinners” but they loved sin. When they looked at Jesus, they saw fidelity. When they examined the words in the ministry and the life of Jesus, they saw reality, real holiness and they were so envious of his holiness, envious of the power he illustrated in his ministry and the wisdom he conveyed in his words. Not to mention that we've already seen it numerous times in the book of Luke, but all the gospels bear out that Jesus boldly, verbally, continually exposed the Pharisees as hypocrites so that, in itself, made them very, very angry and they despised him deeply. As a matter of fact, these Pharisees have already pledged themselves to destroy Jesus. We see this in Luke 6:11 and Luke 11:53 and in John 5:18 and other places where they actually make something of a vow together to ruin him or bring him to death.

So, all this is, is this is a prelude to an attack. They've got a ploy. They've got a plot. They're going to act like they're in some sort of favor with Jesus or allegiance to Jesus because they've got an ulterior motive. This is a pretend devotion because their real motive is ultimately just to exalt themselves. A couple of cross-references that are good here: Proverbs 26:25, “When he speaks graciously, do not believe him, For there are seven abominations in his heart.” Now, you have to be aware of that, especially in religious and “Christian” circles that Satan makes sure to it, that there are always some, even leadership, that speak marvelous things. They're impressive, they're persuasive, they seem genuine, their doctrine is sound but you're to be discerning. As Proverbs says, “Don't listen to them. There are seven abominations behind what they're saying.”

Ephesians 4:14, “As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming.” So, Paul says, “It's just going to be a common issue you've got to deal with. There are going to be those who come to you with trickery, with craftiness, with deceitful scheming.” What does he mean by that? He means they're going to sound wonderful and great and sound and solid, they're going to be so loving and committed and devoted to “ministry” but you've got to be discerning. Of course, these Pharisees, they knew the Bible better than anyone. They kept all the laws, at least externally, so that men would think they were holy and now they're pledging some sort of loyalty and allegiance to Jesus but that's just what they are, they are tricksters, they are full of craftiness, they are full of deceitful scheming.

The Pharisees were those who had a systematic method to their deceptive ploys. They are those the Bible says are trained in evil. Now, all men are evil and we all fail and sometimes a genuine and true saint of God has a bad week or a bad day and says some

things they shouldn't say but they're not trained in evil. It's not a premeditated discipline that they've learned to put on so they'd be deceptive in their life and ministry. You see, Satan uses every approach to thwart the true ministry of Jesus Christ. Did you hear that? Are the men of this church listening to their pastor this morning? You men have to be mature and discerning if you're going to guard your families and guard this church because Satan uses every approach to trip up or thwart the true ministry of Christ. Sometimes Satan just outwardly opposes the truth and we're seeing more and more of that today as men preach and teach and just clearly, obviously deny the Scriptures.

One of our ladies came up to me several weeks ago and she was referring to her son, he was just a grade school kid. He might have been seventh grade, maybe eighth but I think younger than that. And a minister had been exposed as a fraud and that little boy had already been telling his mother listening to his teaching and preaching that, "I know there's something not right about him." Even a grade school boy could see he was off track. I hope that means that he's been taught soundly. I think it does.

But sometimes Satan just comes out and opposes the truth. Sometimes Satan's approach is to dilute the truth with error, the synchronizing, if you will, of man-made wisdom and human philosophy and psychology with sound Bible doctrine and to the undiscerning and the immature, it sounds so good. But Satan knows if he can dilute the truth with man-made wisdom, he can ruin the truth altogether.

The third one is what we're dealing with here and it's the tricky one. The third way Satan will try to oppose and thwart the true ministry of Christ is he uses deceitful men to advance the truth. Did you hear that? He uses counterfeiters, plotters, deceitful men but they're actually teaching what would be true doctrine. But we're to stay away from them. We're to discern them. We're to guard ourselves from them. Now, I want to give you a method and I think it may be the primary foundational method whereby you can discern if this person who seems so sound and seems so solid and just seems so on track, if he's really the genuine article or he is up to a deceptive ploy. And I like to say this because I want to be as compassionate in my thinking as I can be: I believe there are those out there who may just be ignorant and may not get what they're doing but then I know there are those out there who are set aflame by demons themselves and they are deceitful men just carrying out a deceptive ploy even though they're proclaiming sound doctrine.

Well, the great clarifier of this is God's local church. I don't mean any local church, I mean if you find a sound body of believers, never a perfect one, not going to be perfect until we get to heaven but if you find a sound body of believers where the church is purposing to walk in truth and preach a true gospel, have a healthy membership, exercise biblical accountability and discipline of the body, all the things that the Scripture says make a healthy body, then how a person responds to that church clarifies where they are. It's the great clarifier. You should look for in that person's life this: do they have a deep affection for and a deep devotion to God's true local church? Did you hear that? Do they have a deep affection for and a deep devotion to God's local church? You see, that's what we see about the Pharisees. The Pharisees would pop in, put on the Jesus clothes for a little while, talk about how, "Yeah, we agree with the missions." They look like they're

pledging an allegiance but they never sold out to devote themselves to the forming church that was building around the Lord Jesus.

They never bought in. Do you know why they didn't buy in? They were not humble enough to buy in. They had to be in charge, on the throne, in power or they don't want to have any part of it. Oh, they would use the name of Christ and even the teachings of Christ if it might help their power position but they're not going to join in humbly to be a part of the team. Now, you men listen to me this morning, starting with Jeff Noblit: you cannot be pleasing to God or valuable to God's church if you're not humble. We can't all have our own way. We have to continually die to ourselves which is basic Christianity. When a false teacher, this deceptive one, these deceitful men, that's something they can't do and you will find them damaging, thwarting, hurting if not willfully purposing to destroy, God's local church.

And that's how you know. You need to look for: is there a humble heart affection and devotion to God's church? A true church. If not, everything they do, everything they say, no matter how wonderful it sounds, no matter how thorough the doctrine, how many Scriptures are used, how sweet, how loving the ministry they may be a part of: analyze how are they doing with the local church of God? Now, I want to balance this with experiences we've had at Grace Life so this is going to get a little bit personal but I'm being your pastor this morning, this is my responsibility before God. As the years go by in any church striving to be true, you're going to have issues. And one of the issues you occasionally have is somebody rises up and verbally, maliciously and habitually purposes to hurt or thwart or divide or even destroy the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Don't act like that doesn't happen. Now, I'm not talking about they found the doctrinal errors that the church wouldn't deal with. There are times to leave a church when a church won't get right on clear doctrinal things. There are times to leave a church when a church leadership won't get right on scandalous or immoral things or deal with sin in the body. That's biblical, I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about a church that's striving to be true. If someone rises up and for a season of time with willful malice purposes to hurt that church and does to some degree damage things and then years go by and all of a sudden they start talking to some of you out at the mall or out in the neighborhood and they're saying some wonderful things. They're talking about the Scripture, they're talking about what they believe and teach and their doctrine sounds good and their ministry sounds caring and good and you think, "Wait a minute. This sounds so wonderful. What is the deal?" What's the great clarifier? Here's the one thing, listen, be kind and be humble but the one thing you should always say is this: "Ma'am, sir, have you made things right with the local church that you hurt deeply?" And if that's not their first order of business and ministry, then you're dealing with a deceptive man, not a true minister of God. They will want with all of their heart to get things right with the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said if you're ministering at the temple and you're bringing your offering – by the way, a biblical thing, a biblical ministry in service to God – he said, but if you're bringing your offering and even know one brother that you've hurt or offended, don't dare continue in your ministry. Leave your ministry and offering there and go be reconciled to your

brother. That's the real ministry you need to be a part of. Amen? How much more if you damage a whole body of believers, a true body of believers? So, that's a real insight, I think, we get from watching these Pharisees and understanding the balance of biblical truth, that they had no heart for Christ and for the band of believers that were genuine and around Christ. They wanted to just bob around and float along on the outside edges and undermine every way they could but a true man of God is humble and submissive and wants to repent of anywhere he's wronged God's local church.

It's been quite common here through the years when people would come to join. We will ask folks, "Did you leave with a good standing with your former church?" Sometimes they'll say, "Well, you know, this doctrine was compromised and the gospel wasn't clearly preached," and we agree with that and people should leave those situations if leadership are not willing to deal with those things. But the way you leave is important also and we've seen good and godly men, some are sitting under my voice this morning, go back to their leadership and say, "You know, though we disagree on doctrine," usually there's not disagreement but disagreements on willing to do something about issues that are clear in the Bible. That's the real issue. But, "I shouldn't have left with this tone or this attitude. Will you forgive me?" That's the right attitude.

That's not what the Pharisees had. Theirs was a pretend devotion. Theirs was a phony pledge of allegiance and we need to understand that same thing happens to God's work and God's church today. So, what do you do? You ask a person, "Are you willing in every way, shape or fashion to restore yourself to God's local church?" If they're not willing to do that, you should not fellowship with them in the things of the gospel. Amen? Your pastor is helping you this morning.

You know, it's funny to me as I think about Baptist churches that this kind of stuff is just basically the way most Baptist churches just conduct business: fussing, mean and forming parties and angry. It's mob rule. If you can get the bigger mob, you get the votes and you get your way at the business meeting. Brothers and sisters, we don't function that way here and have not for many, many, many years and we're not going back to it. Amen? And by the way, if there is an issue with doctrine, if there is some sort of scandalous sin, even something of that magnitude, still your approach should be to go humbly and privately to church leadership and see if you can get it worked out. You don't go publicly to hurt God's church. Listen, we're to lay down our lives for this church. Why? Because we're special? No, the God whose name this church bears is that special. The reputation of our Lord is the reason why we would lay down our lives for this church, God's brothers and sisters. Is that clear enough?

Let's go a little bit further. Not only do we see this deceptive ploy, these Pharisees and their pretend allegiance because they're up to something, secondly, notice a providential certainty here. A providential certainty. That is, that Herod cannot thwart Christ's mission. The Lord is going to make so make this clear, he's just going to lay it out there. Notice what he says in verse 31. These Pharisees, with their pretend allegiance, come and say, "Herod wants to kill you." Now, I think what they might actually be doing, one of their deceptive ploys of these Pharisees telling Jesus – this is true, by the way. Herod

does want to kill Jesus, but I think the reason why the Pharisees are doing this could be because they don't want Jesus to go to Jerusalem and they're trying to discourage him from the mission they know his heavenly Father has sent him on. We don't know that for sure but that is a good, I think, informed speculation there.

But Herod himself is a wicked man. He's a selfish man and he's a weak man and he wanted to be rid of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ's popularity was a threat to Herod. He's the Tetrarch of this region of the Roman Empire and he doesn't like anybody rivaling his power and his authority and so he's coming to destroy Jesus. He's working in some way and very likely he and the Pharisees have already had several meetings about how they're going to work this out to get rid of Jesus. But notice what Jesus says here in verse 32, "And He," Jesus, "said to them, 'Go and tell that fox,'" I love that. Did you expect Jesus to say that? No, you didn't. Don't look at me spiritual. You didn't think Jesus would look around and say, "That fox doesn't mean a thing to me." You know, sometimes a man of God needs to just come out and say it like it is even if to some of the ladies it seems crude and uncultured. He just publicly said, "Old Herod is a fox. I'm not worried about that fox." He says, "Go tell Herod, Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal." So, Jesus is saying, "I'm undeterred by what that fox does. He has no effect on me whatsoever."

But let me give you another little application inside that I think is good for us here: every true saint of God and certainly every minister of God is going to find that there are those in power in church settings and in the community too, that will try to undo them, that's going to come against them. These things are difficult. I'll just speak transparently and honestly: I've had people come against me that scared me to death. I'm just being honest. I didn't quit. You know, courage is not the absence of fear, courage is sometimes going on when you're scared to death. You still do what you're supposed to do but you're scared to death about it.

Well, these disciples must be hearing some of this and we know those guys had seasons when they were trembling in fear. They didn't completely bail on the Lord. They had some moments but they didn't completely bail on the Lord. They had fearful times so how are we going to stay faithful when powerful men come against us? First of all, remember that threats are nothing so long as God permits them to do nothing. Did you hear that? Their threats are nothing as long as God permits them to do nothing. Here's what you decide in your mind: they can do nothing to me unless God ordains it. And that's what Jesus is saying, "You tell that fox I'm going to keep raising the dead or doing my miracles or performing my cures and carrying on my mission because Herod can't do a thing to me unless God ordains it." Isn't that good? Let them rage. Let them foam at the mouth. Let them do what they will. Let them say what they'll say. God's work will not be thwarted by the Herods of this world. I like that. In the path of duty, there may be raging lions but we're to remember they are chained lions. We belong to God and Christians are immortal until our work is done.

Jesus calls Herod a fox. It doesn't mean he was good looking either. What it meant was he's sneaky, he's crafty. Foxes aren't known for valor and courage. They're known for

craftiness and sneakiness and that's what he's saying. He's saying, "There's not much to that guy. He's just a sneaky, crafty, wicked one is all he is." This does teach us that ministers are bound by Scripture to publicly rebuke the sins of wicked rulers. Jesus did it. John the Baptist did it. And we must do it. But here Jesus in his true wisdom, gives Herod his true character, he's a fox. Jesus had no fear of men, either of Herod or the Pharisees. In contrast, the wicked of this world are usually not very straight forward. They rather prefer crooked ways like we see the Pharisees above pledging an allegiance to Jesus but having an agenda.

In verse 31, Jesus says, "Go tell that fox, Behold I cast out this and I'm going to do my cures." What is his point? He said, "Let Herod have all of his wicked ploys and do as he may. I have my own plans given to me by my heavenly Father and I will carry on with my plan because Herod and Herod's ploys have not effect on me whatsoever." The Bible says here he's going to continue to perform his cures and I thought what a contrast that is: the Lord Jesus Christ continued in his earthly ministry with mercy and doing good and by contrast, Herod's rule was one of wickedness, snares and malice.

Jesus said in verse 32, "Today and tomorrow and the third day, I'm just going to keep doing what I'm doing." Now, this is a figure of speech, it didn't literally mean three days. He just means, "I'm just going to keep going on day-by-day until I reach my goal, until I finish what my Father in heaven assigned me to do." And what did the Father in heaven assign him to do? Go to a cross and die as a substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of his children and redeem for himself a church that he would treasure and have as his own and who would represent his name and fame both for time and eternity. That's what he's going to do.

Jesus says, "I have a detailed course to take. Herod's plots and ploys are of no concern to me. I will finish my mission for he has no authority over me, nor power to stop me. Furthermore, if Herod kills me, it will not surprise me because he will be but a pawn in my Father's hand, carrying out the perfect plan ordained for me from the foundation of the world." So, even when the wicked come against the righteous and they seem to succeed, all they're doing is fulfilling God's perfect plan. They didn't thwart God at all. In John 4:34, Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and accomplish his work." That's what he's saying here: it doesn't matter what Herod says. I'm going to do the will of my Father who sent me. So, quietly and untiringly, the Lord presses on to the goal. He will not be detoured by Herod's impotent rage.

III. We saw a providential certainty: Jesus is going on with his course, fulfilling the Father's plan, it's a providential certainty. Now, notice the providential irony in this text and it's amazing, actually, and that is that Jerusalem, Jesus says, is both the place of apostasy and of redemption. Interesting what the Lord says here. Look at verse 33, if you will, the last part. He says, "For it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem." That's a powerful statement. Two things come out to me there and these are two things that are something of the irony, the providential irony that the Lord is bringing out about Jerusalem: 1. It's a scathing indictment against Jerusalem because Jerusalem is the place that was supposed to be the centerpiece of God's ministry and God's glory and

God's truth in the earth and yet it was the very place where they stoned the true prophets of God. He says that in the following verse. What an irony that is. All the faithful prophets of God who came to Jerusalem preaching the truth, the children of Israel had become so carnal and so worldly they said, "We don't want to hear that. Tell us pleasant things. Tell us good things." And the prophets would not relent in preaching the truth so they just killed them. That's what Jerusalem had become known for.

But secondly, as the Lord says here, look if you will at verse 33, "It cannot be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem." He's also pointing out that he is going to be the final sacrifice of Jerusalem. All of those faithful and true prophets of the Old Testament that were stoned and sacrificed, if you will, in Jerusalem, were but types of Jesus Christ. They were foreshadows of Christ. It is in Jerusalem that sacrifice for sin was made and it is there that Christ will die as the one sacrifice for sin of all time. His sacrifice, his death in Jerusalem is the one all the other sacrifices of Jerusalem pointed to. So, he says on the one hand, it should be the centerpiece of God's truth and God's ministry and God's glory in the earth but they stone the prophets. "But it is going to be the place where I will die. A prophet can't die outside of Jerusalem and when I die there, I'm going to redeem my children." What an irony. Jerusalem, the mother of all the saints, yet the murderer of the saints and to fill up her guilt, she will crucify the Savior.

Let's hurry on to number four: IV. A clear indictment to man's responsibility for sin. A clear indictment to man's responsibility for sin. Look at verse 34. Jesus is speaking and he says, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it! I wanted to gather you together. I wanted to bring you unto the shelter of my wings." It speaks of intimacy and protection and preservation. "But you would not have it." Ezekiel 33:11 is a good cross-reference from the Old Testament, "Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord GOD, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?'" You would not have it. He said, "I would. I would have gathered you together. I would take you but you would not." Why? Why? They would not.

It's simple and it's the reason why every lost person under my voice doesn't come to Jesus Christ and every lost person who has ever lived that doesn't come to Jesus Christ, here's the reason why. This is not hard, it's another one of those things that's as clear as the nose on your face but we want to get caught up in all of these philosophical, intellectual, theological arguments and "What if this?" but "What if that? Well, I see it this way." None of that matters. Here's the simple reason why you're lost in your sin today, here it is: you love sin more than you love the Savior or your salvation. Period. Don't give me your intellectual – it's not about the intellect, it's not about philosophy, it's not even about theology, that is arguing the fine points. Here's the simple truth: you don't come to Christ because you love sin. "Pastor, that's hard preaching." No, I'll tell you what that is: that's preaching that'll save men's souls, that's what that is.



Soft preaching will not save your soul. You don't need to be coddled in your wickedness. You need to be told the state of your condition before a holy God. These would not come, the children of Jerusalem would not come to Christ and would not be gathered together by God in refuge and protection simply because they loved sin and they wanted prophets, preachers and a religious system that allowed them to be coddled in their sin. Now, when you get truly converted, you want to be under a pulpit that confronts you about your sin. You want to come to church with a humble spirit of repentance because you joy in being near to God, you've found a new treasure better than the old treasures of the earth. Amen? And you want to be under sound preaching. There is only one reason why men, women, boys and girls, young people, senior adults, do not come to Christ: you love sin. And you will die in your sins and be accountable for your sins and experience the wrath of God on you for your sin. And it's not even the fact of sin, all men are sinners, it's that you loved it and would not turn to Christ.

God had done all that was needed for them to be saved. In infinite love and in infinite wisdom, he had done all that was proper for them to be converted, for them to return and find salvation. Isaiah 5:4, what a good cross-reference this is, "What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones?" God said, "What more could I do?" In the final analysis, in this very day, we're studying about it in Luke: God sent his own Son to preach to them, to perform miracles before them and then ultimately to die before them in their place. What more is God to do? It's what he's saying.

How often he said, "I wanted to gather you together." Actually he says, "gather your children" and I believe there's an implication that the Lord may have looked at Jerusalem and said, "Well, the fathers and the spiritual patriarchs and the heads of the country are hardened, wicked sinners but maybe their children will come to repentance." He said another generation and another generation, "I wanted to gather you and you would not. You would not." Some of you will leave Grace Life Church this morning full of yourselves with no true love for Christ because you won't come because you love yourself and you love sin and the great tragedy of it, whatever you think you're getting in this world is a lie, it's empty, it's deceptive. The real joy is him. The real pleasure is him. The real treasure is him.

God says, "I long to gather you together but you would not." John 5:40, the Lord said, "and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life." You're unwilling to come so that you may have life. You see, sinners are conceived in their mother's wombs with the guilt of sin on them. You have the guilt of sin on you inherited from your forefathers, inherited all the way back to father Adam. He's the federal head of the human race and the guilt of sin is on us. But then we come into this world and we commit sin and then we own the guilt personally. And we're all guilty.

He said, "You would not have it. I wanted to gather you together," verse 34, "but you would not have it." You see, the will and the heart of man is the key. In the will is the key to salvation. In the will is the key to eternal loss. We are not hyper-Calvinists in this church. Now, we do not shrink one iota from the glorious truths of the sovereignty of

God in salvation, amen? But I think Charles Haddon Spurgeon said it right, he said, “You ask me who is to blame if a man goes to hell or who is responsible if a man goes to heaven? I’ll give you the Calvinist answer: God is responsible and God did it all.” Spurgeon said, “If you as me who is responsible if a man goes to hell, I’ll give you the Arminian answer: that man is responsible.” He chose, he willed not to come to Jesus Christ. And that’s the truth.

You see, the will is not free. People talk about, “I believe in free will.” That’s the most ridiculous thing and I want to be respectful, I understand good men hold that. It’s just unbelievably naïve. You’re a subjective being, just the family you were born in, the culture you grew up in, taints your will. Nobody has a pristine free will. Furthermore, you were conceived in sin in your mother’s womb and the pollution, the corruption of sin was in your very being before you were born. You came forth from the womb speaking lies, the Bible says. The corruption of sin was all over your mind, your emotions and your will. Why is it just that as a young child you begin to find pleasure in dirty, filthy things? Because your emotions are corrupted by sin. Why as a little child do you have to be taught to tell the truth but you lie all on your own? Because sin corrupts our wicked hearts. And by the way, it corrupts your will. So, there is no such thing as just a free will. It’s corrupted.

But I’m going to tell you something, while the Bible I’m convinced does not teach a free will, it definitely teaches a responsible will. There is a responsibility and an accountability for your will before the holy God. He’s done all these things. He’s let you sit under this sermon this morning. Many of you are raised in the family that took you to church. You’re raised in a culture where the Bible is available, the gospel is available, preaching is available and yet on our own, we don’t turn to him. We would not. Augustine, who also preached strongly, one of the earliest church fathers, preached thoroughly the doctrines of sovereign grace and salvation but he said, “A man may lose good things in this life against his will but if he loses eternal life, he does so with his own consent.”

When the will is turned, the soul is saved but men are helpless within themselves to turn their will or their hearts to God. They’re helpless. You want to see me pitch a fit? Don’t say yes. Then try to tell me how you’re responsible for gaining your way into heaven. You did not somehow have inherited virtue whereby you had the wisdom to turn to Christ in your own abilities. Blasphemy! Blasphemy! You will not boast! You will not boast before the holy God. You will be there by grace and grace alone or you will not be there. Your will is helpless to turn to God.

Acts 16:14, “A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart,” and the Lord opened her heart, “to respond to the things spoken by Paul.” If I’m judging the context correctly, Paul wasn’t really speaking to her. She’s just hearing. And the phrase “open the heart,” A. T. Robertson, the Greek scholar says it means wide open. It’s the picture that at one point her heart is completely dark, it’s like a black – have you seen those black curtains in hotel rooms that just screen all the light out, just every bit of it? It’s like God takes his

omnipotent hand and pulls back the black screen and the brilliant light of Christ and the gospel shines into her heart. I've experienced that. I know what that's like and that happened to Lydia and she became a believer.

On the other side, the Lord says to these Jews, "I would have gathered you together but you would not." "Pastor, how do we balance all of this?" I just preach it all but I do know this, you listen to your pastor this morning: nevertheless Jesus did in this day and in all the days ever since, gather his own together and "all that the Father gives him, he loses not one," John 6:39. But be for certain: all who perish will do so because they chose to reject Christ. You love your sin. You say, "I'm just not going to surrender to that."

Verse 35 and we're done, "Behold, your house is left to you desolate." He's talking to Jerusalem, "and I say to you, you will not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" Your house is left desolate. It means abandoned. In rejecting Christ, their sin had finally crossed the line and God is now turning his back on Jerusalem. He removes all vestiges of his glory from her midst. The nation, the priesthood, the temple and the city are all going to be brought to ruin and to utter insignificance both physically and spiritually. We know Titus of Rome in 70 AD just leveled the city so it came true physically but even before that, it came true spiritually. He said, "I'm abandoning you." Look, friends, a lot can happen to you bad but when God says, "I've given you enough times. I'm abandoning you," that is the most terrifying thing in the universe. "I'm abandoning you."

The die is now cast. The city was now abandoned by the Messiah. A sobering and a devastating reality. He says, "You'll not see me again until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" I believe there are two aspects of this: first of all, there is a temporal, partial fulfillment of that when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the donkey's colt and they yelled, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." But they weren't sincere. They were still thinking he was going to be the kind of Messiah we want him to be. They weren't sincere. Well, I'm not saying there weren't any but the multitude was not sincere. But that's only the temporal partial fulfillment, the final fulfillment is when our Lord returns again and he enters the New Jerusalem as the leader of the millennial kingdom and there a remnant of saved Jews will bow before him and praise him, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." But I'm convinced every Jew will bow before him and say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Furthermore, I'm convinced and the Bible teaches it clearly, every single person will bow before him and worship him when he comes. Some will bow in worship unto their condemnation but some will bow in worship unto their salvation but all will bow in worship. His very presence will be so overwhelmingly compelling, men will not be able to do anything but say, "You are the Lord God." Some will receive wrath and some will receive eternal life.

I love Jesus. I just love him. Every week, I'm like a child in a big old playground when I open the word of God and there is new treasure, there are new things about my Lord that make me marvel over him evermore. Aren't you glad he's who he is? Aren't you glad he startles you at times? And surprises you at times? Oh, I love him. I pray you do. If you

don't today, if you're playing church, you're a church-goer, you've gone through the motions but you're not his, one simple reason why you're not his: you love your sin. And today you must, you must call it what it is and repent and cry out to Christ and he will save you. He will save you. "Come unto me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest."

Let's stand together.