

Matthew 25 • Judgment of the Nations

Life Bible Ministry

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You might remember last week in Matthew chapter 24, Jesus took the disciples up onto the Mount of Olives, began to speak to them about the things going on in the last days. And by the way, that's why we call Matthew chapter 24 and Matthew chapter 25, the Olivet Discourse. Named after the fact that it was done on the Mount of Olives. And this is the second part of that.

And those of you who have the words of Jesus in red in your Bible, I don't know if that's you or not, but you'll notice that it's pretty much all red because this is all the words of Jesus here in chapter 25.

Let's begin with verses 1 through 13. This is the parable of the 10 virgins. It goes like this. *“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.” (ESV)*

Before we go on with this parable, let me give you a little background about Jewish marriages at that time, because it's not the same thing that we deal with here. In America there's really only two parts to a marriage, and that is the engagement, and then the wedding ceremony. But in Israel there was more than that.

You had, first of all the arrangement, which usually done by the daddies; the fathers, and many times the perspective bride and groom were children; small children. And the dads would get together. And I tried doing that with a couple of my kids. It didn't take. They decided they wanted to make their own choices. But, and they all made great choices.

But either way, this was very common in those days for the dads to get together and make arrangements for their children to get married. And then, once the kids grew to the point of marrying age, they would come together and have a betrothal. And a betrothal is similar to our engagement, but it was more.

It involved a ceremony where the two people came together but they weren't living together. They weren't going to, in fact, usually live together for another year. But a betrothed couple called each other, husband and wife, get this. Still

didn't live together, and it took a divorce to break it. Right. Even before the wedding ceremony. So you can see that their betrothal was a whole lot more than our engagement period.

And so there would usually, again be about a year between the betrothal and the wedding ceremony. And during that year, the groom would go away to go and build his home. And he would eventually come back and get his bride. But what he would do is he would come back, and by the way, he didn't know when he was going to be able to come get his bride. Only his dad knew because it was tradition that the dad would inspect the house that the son was building for his new bride.

And only when dad said, all right son, it's good enough, you can go get her. Then he could go and retrieve his bride. That's an interesting statement, isn't it? And some people wonder why Jesus said, no one knows the day or the hour when the Son of man will come. Not even the angels, not even the Son, but only the Father. (Matthew 24:36) He was following Jewish marriage traditions.

And so when the son finally got the approval of his dad to go and get his bride, he would come and they would announce it with trumpets. And he would be met by the bridesmaids. And they are going to be the versions that you're going to be reading about in this parable. And they would have lighted lamps and they'd be dancing and rejoicing, and then they would take him to his awaiting bride, where they would enter into the ceremony, and the wedding feast, and they would become a married couple. Anyway, now that you know a little bit more about the background of how these things work, we can go through this parable.

It says, concerning these virgins that were waiting for the bridegroom, “² Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³ For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵ As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. ⁶ But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ ⁷ Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰ And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. ¹¹ Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ ¹² But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ ¹³ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

This is the first parable that we're looking at here in Matthew 25 and I got to tell you something. I remember as a younger man, particularly when I was even going through Bible college, when I would come upon a parable like this, I would think, well you got to dig into this and you got to figure out what all these elements of this parable stand for.

And so we would take everything apart and we'd say, okay, so these virgins, these bridesmaids, who are they? Because we know that the bride is the body of Christ, and we know that the groom is Jesus. So who are these girls? I mean, who are the bridesmaids? And then we do—and what does the oil stand for? There must be some meaning to it. And for that matter, what about the lamps? What are those?

And those five foolish virgins were denied entrance. What does that mean? And we used to just go around in circles trying to figure out what all these different elements of this parable stood for, because we assumed that they all had to stand for something. They don't.

We've said, and I'll say it again, parables are simple and they just, they convey a simple message. And the simple message of this parable is what Jesus said as recorded in verse 13. Look at verse 13 again in your Bible. *“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”* There it is. I mean, in all of its glory, it's this simple message.

Jesus told this parable so that we would learn to be watchful. Right? To be alert. Alert to what? What are we watching for? Well we're watching? I mean, that part of the thing. He is the groom we want, we're waiting for Him to come. And He wants us to be watchful.

And this is not something that He's only said once in the last chapter we dealt with here, chapter 24. You'll remember that He told some parables related to watchfulness there too, so He's repeating Himself. Why is Jesus repeating Himself? Because He wants us to take these things seriously, and He wants us to really lay hold of them because He knows that there is a great danger that comes from not being watchful and not being ready. So we need to take this seriously and say, okay, great.

He tells us here to be watchful, to be alert, to be ready for His coming. What does that mean? What exactly does that...? I mean, I could say that all day long. Guys be watchful, okay? And then we could just move on but what does that mean? What does it mean to be watchful? Well, I got to thinking about that. So we're going to put up a heading on the screen here so you can see it together.

READINESS and WATCHFULNESS

We're going to talk about **READINESS and WATCHFULNESS**. And we're going to ask ourselves the question, what does it look like to be ready and watchful?

And I'm going to lay out for you three things that I believe that readiness is defined by. And the first one that we'll put up here is,

READINESS and WATCHFULNESS

- Being diligent to abide in the Word

Being diligent to abide in the Word.

And I think we all know that abiding in the Word means, just staying connected to the Word on a daily basis. But what I think we don't often realize is what that daily connection to the Word does in our hearts. I think we forget about that sometimes.

I think we forget about the fact that when we withdraw from the Word for a period of time, and I'm willing to bet you know what this is all about. We begin to feel a distant, a distance from God. We begin to feel a distance from fellowship with other believers. You might even remember coming to church, and maybe it's been a while. You've just, your Bible just hasn't been opened very much lately, and you haven't been in the... And you come to church and it just feels weird. You feel like you're on the outside of things. And that's one of the consequences of just not staying connected in the Word.

I was sharing this in first service, but there was a little joke I saw just recently on the internet telling about a couple who invited their pastor over for dinner. And after he left, the wife said to her husband, I think the pastor stole one of our spoons. And he's like, serious? Yeah. Washing dishes and one's missing. He's like, oh.

Anyway, about a year goes on. And a year later, they invite the pastor back for dinner. And this has been just eating at her for all this time. And so she says to him, pastor, I have to ask you, when you came to dinner about a year ago, did you take one of our spoons? He said, no, I just put it in your Bible. Oops. We've all been there at some time or another where we're just not staying connected in the Word like we should.

But I believe that part of staying ready and staying watchful for the Lord is staying connected through His Word. Because you guys know that when you're in the Word regularly, and when you're reading your Bible, when you're studying the Word, and I'm not talking weekly. When you come to church, I'm talking daily, you know that there's a connection to the Holy Spirit that makes you more sensitive to the things that He's saying to you, and the things that are going on in the world. And it just creates a connection that we can't afford to live without.

And, we also know that when we're not in the Word like we should be, our faith begins to erode. And that's just, that's an obvious... One of the most common questions that I get as a pastor is, pastor Paul, how can I build my faith? And I always take them to Romans 10:17 because that's your answer up on the screen. Let's take a look at it.

Romans 10:17 (ESV)

...faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

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So you want to build up your faith, what you do is you get into the Word on a regular basis, and stay connected, and allow that influence of the Word to really begin to take hold in your life. Because guys, can I just tell you, and this is a bit of a warning and exhortation all built into one.

If you are not allowing the influence of God's Word on a regular basis in your life, you're going to be influenced by something. And the other thing is the world. If you're not being influenced by God, you're going to be influenced by the world. And it's going to begin to take you down a path that you don't really want to go down.

Let's look at number 2.

READINESS and WATCHFULNESS

- Being diligent to abide in the Word
- Living each day as if Jesus could return anytime

The second thing that describes **READINESS and WATCHFULNESS** and what it looks like, is Living each day as if Jesus could return at anytime.

Jesus Himself told, in fact, it was just in the last chapter a parable that gave a warning about thinking that my master has been away a long time and yeah, it's probably going to be a long time before he comes. Let me show you this from the last chapter, from chapter 24. It says,

Matthew 24:48-50 (ESV)

“But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ ...the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect...”

“But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ ...the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect...”

And probably catch him doing things he shouldn't do. Because if you're living your life with the true belief that Jesus could come at any time, that's going to affect the way you live. It's going to affect the way you treat your spouse. It's going to affect the way you raise your children, the way you speak to your children. It is going to affect the way you conduct your business.

I mean, if you truly believed that Jesus could come this afternoon or this evening, it would change the way you live this afternoon. If you, I mean, if an angel came and appeared to you and said, listen, He's coming. It'll be three hours and then He'll be here. I dare say you would spend that three hours very differently than you might otherwise.

And one of the elements of the second coming of Jesus for the church. In other words, to catch the away of the church, is that it could happen at any time. There's nothing prophetically that needs to happen before the Lord comes to catch away His church. There's nothing more required, so He could come at any time, and we truly see the stage being set for this.

The third description of what it means to be watchful and ready is,

READINESS and WATCHFULNESS

- Being diligent to abide in the Word
- Living each day as if Jesus could return anytime
- Being careful not to allow entanglements with worldly pursuits

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And I got to tell you, I think this might be the more challenging of the three to be completely honest with you, because to some degree, we all, we have to interact with the world. You work in the world, you got to make money, you got to pay your bills, you got to deal with the IRS. You got to—life goes on and you have to do that.

The danger comes when that interaction becomes the focal point of our lives. It becomes the reason we get up in the morning or it becomes literally something that just consumes us.

You might remember that when Jesus was giving a different parable concerning different soil types and how they responded to the seed of the Word. You'll remember that there was only one soil type that precipitated real growth, healthy growth of the seed. The other ones were all detrimental to the growth of the Word of God.

And let me show you here what Jesus said. This is from back in Matthew 13. You might remember, He said,

Matthew 13:22 (ESV)

As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfaithful.

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Now listen, this does not need to be talking about an unbeliever. This could be talking about a born again, washed in the blood of Jesus believer. Who knows that they know, that they know, they're going to heaven because they love Jesus, and yet the world becomes overwhelming. And all consuming to the point that they just begin to shut out the things of the kingdom of God because the noise and all of the glamor of the kingdom of this world is just taking precedence. And we have to be careful. All of us have to be careful.

When the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy exhorting him. He used a military metaphor to describe not getting overly involved in the world. Let me show you this on the screen from 2 Timothy. He wrote to Timothy saying,

2 Timothy 2:4 (ESV)

No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

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And I know some of you were in the military and you know what it is to please your C.O., your commanding officer. And that was just, that was the way you lived. Your commanding officer gave you an order and your desire was to fulfill that order.

Well, guess what? You have another commanding officer and His name is Jesus, and we want to live to please Him. Well, what's one of the biggest detriments to doing that? Getting involved in civilian affairs. And that's metaphor for the things of this world that entangle and make the Word of God unfruitful in our lives, so we got to be careful.

And if right now, this very moment you're seeing these Scriptures, and you're being convicted, then embrace it. That's the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and you start talking to the Lord about that. Very important.

Let's move on to the next parable. Verse 14 says, *“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property.* ¹⁵ *To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.* ¹⁶ *He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more.* ¹⁷ *So also he who had the two talents made two talents more.* ¹⁸ *But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.* ¹⁹ *Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.* ²⁰ *And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’* ²¹ *His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’* ²² *And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’* ²³ *His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’* ²⁴ *He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed,* ²⁵ *so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’* ²⁶ *But his master answered him,*

'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? ²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.' In other words, what he is saying to him is, these are excuses, right.

"²⁸ So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹ For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰ And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'" All right, pause there with me.

We're going to be careful again, not to overanalyze this parable too much, and to try to connect all of the elements to some element of the Bible. Instead, we're going to focus on the meaning.

And the meaning of the passage, the meaning of the parable, the point of the parable, is what is given to us in verse 29, and it's very simple. *"For to everyone who has* (and that means, to everyone who has been faithful with whatever they were given, okay?) *will more be given, and he will have an abundance.* (so there's going to be added blessing to that individual) *But from the one who has not,* (meaning the person who has nothing to show for what they've been given other than what they've been given, He says) *even what he has will be taken away."* All right?

That's the meaning, and it communicates to you and me the simple message that the Lord is one day going to call us all to account for how we've been faithful with what we've been given. Simple as that. Now I want you to understand that God is looking for faithfulness, not worldly success.

You'll notice that the response of the man who doubled his five talents was the same response given to the man who doubled his two talents. There wasn't a word given to the second servant saying, well, you did good, not as good as the other guy. There's none of that going on. It's faithfulness. That is the key.

So what God is looking for from you and me and our time on this planet; planet earth is, have you been faithful with what you've been given? That's the big question.

Now, I want you to also be very careful in this parable, not to assume that what Jesus is doing is giving us an insight into how we're saved because He's not. This is not about salvation, and when He says to that final servant, cast him out

and da, da, da, da, He's not saying that salvation is going to be based on how faithful you've been, because you see that would be a violation of Scripture elsewhere that tells us that we are saved by grace through faith, and this not of ourselves. It is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8 and 9, right? There's no boasting as it relates to salvation. You're not going to be saved because you've been faithful. You will be rewarded if you've been faithful, right? So please understand that.

Now, some of you might be wondering about this a little bit because you've been just cruising through life and you never even stopped to really think about, well, what have I been given? Because the Bible says here, I'm going to be called to account to answer for what I've done with what I've been given. So what have I been given? Well, I don't know. It is between you and the Lord.

And if you are sitting here today and you're like, well, I don't even know what I've been given. What talents, what abilities, what resources, what has God given me that He wants me to use on His behalf? Well, then you need to ask Him. And I believe the Lord will reveal it to you. But you need to ask, Lord, what have You given me that you want me to give away or to use for Your kingdom so that when I stand before You, I don't have to be ashamed.

To say, well, I never really figured out what You gave me. So ask the Lord. Ask Him like you expect an answer and He'll give you an answer. And whatever He shows you, use it for His glory. Take it and invest it and give it away. And yeah, let it be a blessing for others.

The final section of Matthew Chapter 25 isn't a parable. It's rather a description of a judgment that will take place. And yes, you heard me say a judgment. The Bible or you hear people saying, talking about judgment, and they'll say, well, on Judgment day... Well, and they talk about it like there's going to be a judgment.

There's going to be several judgments actually. And not the least of which is the believers' judgment. And what is a believer's judgment? Well, we just read about it in the previous parable. It's the time when you are judged according to how faithful you've been with what the Lord gave you.

You might say, well, what about a judgment for sins? Are you kidding? Do you expect to be judged for your sins? Do you expect one day to stand before God and be judged for your sins? If you say yes, you don't know your Bible good enough. Because the Bible says that if you're a Christian, and what I mean by that, you've accepted what Jesus did on the cross for you when He died. You

need to remember that He died and he paid for your sin. He was judged for your sin. Right. And after He finished taking that judgment, He declared in victory, *“It is finished!”* (John 19:30) And that phrase means, paid in full.

So I'll ask you again, if you're a believer today, do you expect one day to stand before God and be judged for your sin? If you say yes, you need to go back to the Bible and you need to learn what Jesus did for you. And you need to rejoice. Because if you are judged for one sin when you stand before God, then what He did wasn't enough. You with me, then it wasn't paid in full. And if there's a place like purgatory, heaven, help us all. But if there was a place, if there really was a place like purgatory, that would mean that Jesus didn't finish the work of paying for your sin. And there's a place you got to go to work it off yourself, but there isn't a place called purgatory. It doesn't exist because Jesus paid it all and there's nothing left for you to pay because He said, I paid it in full. All right.

So I don't want one Christian walking out of this room today, thinking to yourself that one day I'm going to stand before God for my sins, because that's a slap in the face to your Savior who suffered terribly that you would never have to be condemned. He was condemned for you. Don't ever forget that.

The only judgment that you're going to stand before the Lord about relates to what you've done with what He gave you. And that is a judgment of rewards, not of condemnation. All right?

What we're about to read is a judgment, Jesus is going to tell us about that is going to take place at the conclusion of the great tribulation and the Battle of Armageddon. And it is a judgment against the Gentile nations as it relates to how they treated the Jews. Okay, so this is not a judgment that you're going to be a part of as it relates to being one of the sheep or the goats. You've probably read through this passage and thought to yourself, gee, I sure hope I'm a sheep and not a goat. Well, this doesn't even involve you, but it is an important passage to keep in mind and you'll see as we go through this.

Verse 31, *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.”* And look at verse 32. It says, *“Before him will be gathered all the nations, ...”* And that word nations can also be translated Gentiles. In other words, it's the Gentile nations. All right?

And it says that, *“...he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”* So before anything else takes place, He does the separating based on His knowledge, who's a sheep and who's a goat. And we're going to see what that relates to here in a moment.

But remember, this is a special judgment that is going to be done of the Gentile nations, again, specifically how they treated the Jews. And we're going to talk about why that's important in just a little bit.

But the judgment goes like this. Verse 33, *“And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.”*³⁴ *Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’* And so when He says *“inherit the kingdom,”* He's talking about the Millennial Kingdom. He's inviting them into that 1,000 year reign of Jesus on the earth. Right.

He goes on to verse in verse 35 to say, *“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,”*³⁶ *I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’*³⁷ *Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?’*³⁸ *And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?’*³⁹ *And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’*⁴⁰ *And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, (He’s talking about the Jews) you did it to me.’”* All right. Very important.

You'll notice here that He speaks to these people about the things they did, and these are the things they did to bless the Jews during this time. And this is such an important thing to see. These people are not being saved, by the way, because they did good deeds. They did good deeds, I believe, because they were saved.

These are they who come out of the great tribulation, who survived all of that terrible stuff, and yet who came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. And people will get saved during the tribulation and they showed their love for God by reaching out to Jews, wherever they may be. And not just in Israel, but Jews, wherever they may be, because you see there is going to be a hatred during the time of the tribulation period that will be spawned mostly through the work of the anti-Christ. And it will culminate at the end of the great tribulation with all of the nations of the world coming in war to fight against Israel with the intent of literally wiping her off the map. And that hatred is going to rise for the Jewish people even more than it is today. And yet there will be some people.

And I always think about Corrie ten Boom when I think about this because if you remember that whole story of, The Hiding Place? Corrie ten Boom and her family in Holland or what was Holland back then. Even after they'd been

occupied by the Nazi government during World War II, this family of believers found Jews that were being rounded up by the Nazis, and carried off to prison camps. And they hid them to try to keep them safe from the Nazis. And I think about the things that they did to whoever they could find to help them.

And there's going to be people during the tribulation that are going to be doing the same thing. They're going to be reaching out. They hear, a Jew is in the hospital, or in prison, or sick, and they're going to attend to them for very special reasons.

And Jesus is going to respond and say, when you helped one of these you were helping Me. And you'll notice the connection that Jesus has with the Jews in this sense to be able to say, when you did that for them, you did it for Me. You were doing it for Me.

And that's the same connection he has with the church, with us as believers. I. You remember that, right? Remember when well, I was going to say the apostle Paul, but at this time he was Saul of Tarsus, was on his way to Damascus to go arrest Christians. And Jesus appeared to him in a blinding light, knocked him on down on the ground, and began to speak to him. And Paul said, who are you Lord? And He said, I am Jesus the one you are persecuting. (Acts 9:4-5) He didn't say, I'm Jesus and you're persecuting My people. He said, you're persecuting Me. You see that connection between Jesus and His people, and that connection is very real.

And it goes on in the judgment to say, ⁴¹ *"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'" By the way, I want to just pause for just a moment.*

Did you see that? Did you see what it said right there? Who's the eternal fire prepared for? What does it say in your Bible? Who was it prepared for? *"...the devil in his angels."* Right? That's who hell was created for.

Do you understand people? Hell was not created for mankind. The devil in his angels, they've got no excuses. They've been beholding the glory in the face of God from the very beginning, and some of them still rebelled. There's no salvation for angels. So a place of punishment was prepared, but it was never prepared for mankind. Mankind chooses to go there but it was never God's intention.

I've heard people say, I could never believe in a God who created a place like hell to send people to. He didn't create it for people. Jesus said it right there,

“prepared for the devil and his angels.” It wasn't prepared for mankind. You'd say, well, pastor Paul, then why do men, why do some people go there? Why are they sent there? Because they choose to go. We forget. We forget.

The Bible says that you were created in the image of God. What do you think that means? You think that means you look like Him? Heavens no. It means you were created with a free will. The ability to make a rational, reasonable choice and follow it through to exercise your free will, and we don't always do it very well. But it is what uniquely makes us human beings created in the image of God.

I think some people would rather God take away their free will. So Lord, just please take my free will. He's not going to do that. He'd have to strip away your humanity. He'd have to make you less than what you are. And what you are is created in the image of God Almighty, and so He gives you a free will. And you don't always choose rightly with it or choose well, but you choose.

And there are some who say to God, I don't want You, I don't want anything to do with You. I want You to, I want to be as far away from You as possible. And they're going to get their wish because God is going to honor their choice. Because the choice is what makes them created in the image of God. So God's not going to violate that.

You might say, well then why did we pray for people that are lost? We pray because during the time of in on this planet, God will do everything He can to draw that person, to open their heart, to speak to them, to bring people across their path, or whatever is necessary. But at the end of the day, it's still their choice.

And you know what? We can say no to God, as scary as that sounds. We can look God right in the face and say, no, I don't want what You have, and He will honor that. But I want you to understand the eternal fire was not prepared for man. He was never intended to go there. The Bible says God is not willing that any should be lost, but that all would come to repentance. 2 Peter. He wants everyone to be saved. Is everyone saved? No, but He wants everybody to be saved.

Well, some people might say, well, if He wants it, who can? Who can go against what He wants? Well, we can because He gave us that power to choose. So very important thing to remember.

Verse 42, *“For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.” ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”*

So the purpose of this judgment of the nations is to separate those who, because of their salvation, reached out to be a blessing to Israel. Now, why was that an important thing? Again, I want to remind you, that at the tail end of the tribulation period, the hatred for Israel is going to be so strong that for anybody to do anything for a person of Jewish descent, that it is in any way kind or supportive, is probably going to be such that it will risk their very lives. People will do it at the risk of their own lives.

They will, just like Corrie ten Boom and her family. I was telling you, if you haven't read, *The Hiding Place* the book, you need to. Corrie and her family, they were all ultimately arrested. They somebody, ratted on them, and the Nazis came, and they arrested them. And they took them away to German prison camps where all of her family died except Corey.

And she was released only because of a clerical error, which was of course the Lord. And then she spent the rest of her life traveling around the world, telling people about how God can appear even in the darkest places of life. Powerful stuff. And if you've read, *The Hiding Place* and you love that, then get her follow up book *Tramp for the Lord*, which is about how she would tramp around the world telling people about Jesus. That's the way she, that's the term she used to describe herself.

Here's the point. We're seeing a buildup of this right now you guys. I don't know if you're aware of, I'm sure you are. I'm sure you watch the news, you see what's going on. The modern hatred that we're seeing for Jews today in our world rivals that of what was displayed during World War II by Nazi Germany.

Nazi Germany was responsible for killing 6 million Jews. And maybe we're not seeing people dying at that rate today, but the hatred level is the same. It's the same. It's no different.

And I believe in my heart that it's not just an ideology that's being taught in some of our colleges today. I believe it is a spiritual demonic force that is that

reared its head during the 1940s and is now rearing its head again in the time in which we live. And it's something frankly that the apostle Paul warned Timothy about when he wrote to him about the last days. Let me put this up on the screen for you from 1 Timothy chapter 4. It says,

1 Timothy 4:1 (ESV)

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons...

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons...

That doesn't mean demons are going to be getting up in our college, rooms and teaching lessons. It means that the ideologies that they're going to spew to our young people are going to be demonically energized, if you will, for lack of a better word, motivated. And I believe that the present day hatred of Jews is what we're seeing here is a fulfillment of what the apostle Paul said to Timothy as a warning concerning the last days. And that hatred is going to become so prevalent during the great tribulation period that some are going to risk their very lives to reach out to the Jews. But Jesus who sees everything done in secret is going to turn some aside and say, I saw what you did. I saw what you did.

Now that's not going to be you people. You guys are going to be gone. You're either going to have died first before this, or you're, I believe the church is going to be caught up before the time of the tribulation. I believe that with all my heart. But these are going to be the believers who—those who come to faith during the great tribulation.

Now here's the deal. The hatred that is so prevalent and building against Jewish people today in our culture has even caused some tenderhearted believers to become troubled as to how they should view and react to Israel today. I mean, it's even affecting believers and they're not sure. It's like, well, how should I feel about Israel because I'm hearing all this hatred. I'm hearing all this propaganda, all this stuff. And I don't know how I should feel because I keep hearing pastors saying that we should support, Israel and we love Israel and so on and so forth. So how should we feel about this stuff?

Well, I want to bring to your attention a couple of reminders. First of all, as to why we support and love Israel. It all begins with the understanding that God chose the nation of Israel, the Jews out of all the people of the earth, from which to bring forth the Messiah. Who is our Lord and Savior, who is the One who

suffered for us on the cross, so that we might be saved. He was a Jew guys, He's still a Jew. Jesus is not going to turn aside his humanity. I said this last week.

He remains the man, God. He was incarnated as a man. He is retaining that. The Bible says when He returns, the Jews that see Him return are going to see His scars. Do you remember how John the apostle saw Jesus in His vision in the Book of Revelation? He said, and standing in the midst of the throne, I beheld a lamb as it had been slain. (Revelation 5:6)

In other words, He was still bearing the marks of his crucifixion. Even on the throne of God, He bears the marks of his humanity and crucifixion. And guys, that's a beautiful thing because it's this eternal reminder of what the price He paid for you and me.

But secondly, the reason that we love and support Israel is because we know from prophetic scripture that God is not finished with Israel. And anybody who has studied through the Word of God. I don't have any idea how they could deny this, although some do. But I believe it is crystal clear that God's not finished with Israel. He's got a purpose and a plan for Israel that is even separate from the church, the body of Christ.

And the reason I say this is because there are many sincere Christians today who are being taught that God is finished with Israel. He rejected Israel. When Israel crucified their Messiah. That was it. God started over. He started with the church, and all of the blessings of Israel now belong to the church. We are the Israel of God. They will say and Israel is no more. There's no purpose. There's no plan. And by the way, that is a belief system over the years that has given rise to antisemitism. God's done with them. We can persecute them. No, He's not done with him. How do we know that? Well, there are several ways we know that.

One of them is a passage in the Book of Isaiah, which I love to go back to. Let me put it on the screen for you. Isaiah 49. Here's the Lord speaking. This is YAHWEH talking, okay. He says,

Isaiah 49:15-16 (ESV)

Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me.

Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb?

Look at what the Lord is doing. He's using this picture of one of the strongest connections on planet earth and that is between a mother and her child. Isn't it amazing what happens to women when they have a baby? When Sue and I got married, we'd been married for 5 years before we started having kids. And my wife, if you know my wife, she's a business woman and she could run the world. I've told her that several times, but she was just very business oriented for the first 5 years of our life.

And we weren't talking about having babies. In fact, when we got pregnant, we weren't trying. I really believe it was the hand of the Lord, but we finally did, we conceived, and we had this baby. And my wife changed from this corporate level businesswoman, to wanting to stay home and knit booties, and just be a mommy. She wanted to just be a mother and then she had 3 more just to add to that nonsense. Or I guess I should have said chaos, but because they both apply. Anyway, I watched my wife transform by just having a baby in her arms. She just was a mommy. And it was that lioness, like, stay away from my kid.

In fact, when we had our first baby, we had two cats in our house and we loved our animals. We were those dopey people that treated their animals like kids. I'm sorry if you're the same way, but we were, we did. We treated, we gave them things. We spent all kinds of money on them. Once we had a baby, we got rid of him. We were like, get outta here. I was afraid they were going to scratch my baby. And it just, parenting just overcomes you, it really does. It overwhelms you.

Anyway, see what Jesus, what the Lord is doing here when He starts talking about Israel.

Isaiah 49:15-16 (ESV)

Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me.

Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? (listen to this) Even these may forget, (it's possible, even though very rare, that a woman could forget caring for her child, He says) yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me.

This is God talking about Israel, you guys. And He says, I'm not going to forget. Well, what is He not going to forget? He's not going to forget that He made a promise. And if you guys go back to the Book of Genesis and you read about a covenant that God made with the father of the Jews, which was Abraham, you'll remember that when they made covenants back in those days, both parties that were making the covenant, would take animals. And this was an ancient way of making covenants.

And they would slaughter them and they'd cut them in two, lay them parallel to one another, and each party would walk through the pieces of animals declaring their side of the covenant, which was the promise that they were going to keep related to the covenant. Okay.

But when God made a covenant with Abraham, here's what happened. He told Abraham, go get the animals you need to. So Abraham does, he does. He kills the animals and he separates them. And then he waits and it says that God put him into a deep sleep during which he was also conscious.

And then it says, the Lord came down in this pillar of fire and He passed through the pieces of animals and declared his promise to Abraham and his descendants. But Abraham never walked through the pieces of animals. In other words, he never got to give his side of the covenant.

You know why? Because God wanted to make a singular covenant that couldn't be broken. The only way you can break a covenant is if one or the other party violates the terms of the agreement. Abraham never even entered into the agreement. He was simply the recipient of the covenant blessings. That's how we know God still has a plan and a purpose for Israel.

And then finally we have to recognize something God said to Abraham way back also in the Book of Genesis. Let me put this on the screen from Genesis 12. It says,

Genesis 12:1-3 (ESV)

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will (listen to this) bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

God says, I'm going to bring a blessing through you and your descendants, that he is going to bless the entire Earth, and that, of course is the Messiah. He made good on that one already. But look at that promise in there. Anybody curses you, they will be cursed. Anybody who blesses you, they will be blessed.

So what is the judgment of the that we read about at the end of Matthew 25? It's God making good on his promise. Those that cursed you will be cursed. Those who blessed you, I will bless. And we know that this even continues today.

Now, let me close with a final statement here about Israel because all I've said to you is, we support Israel for biblical reasons. But what if you see Israel doing something that's kind of sketch? And this is where I think a lot of people become conflicted because they're like, does support and love for Israel mean that I am in agreement with everything they do? Heavens. No.

I mean, every married couple in the room should know this rule. I mean, you love and support your spouse, but that doesn't mean you agree with everything they do. Right.

And sometimes you even have to confront them and say, that was stupid. But I love you. I mean, I still love you and I'm not going to take my love away from you. But that was nuts. Keep in mind something about Israel today, it is largely an atheist nation.

We hear a lot about the Orthodox Jews. We see pictures of them in their garb, over at the remaining part of the wall of the temple mount bobbing their heads and praying, and we think that's what Israel's all about. It's not. The vast majority of people in Israel look just like you. They're business people. They get up, they go to work, they go to bed, and they don't even think about God because they don't believe in God.

And an atheist government from an atheist nation is going to do things from time to time, that you and I are going to look at and say that was stupid. And I don't agree with that, but that doesn't mean I'm going to take my love and support away from you. You see, that's the balance here.

Loving and supporting doesn't mean you always have to say yes, even though that's what the world tries to get us to think. So we're free to disagree with Israel and some of the things that they do politically, militarily I'm not a fan of every decision they've ever made, but I still recognize what God's Word says, and I'm going to defer to that above all. Right.

So I believe that gives us a sense of balance and understanding about how we see and support Israel here at the end of the day. So there you go. We're done. Let's stand together. We'll close in prayer.

If you need prayer this morning for any reason after we're dismissed, come on down front. We'll have some folks down here ready to pray for you. Let's take this all to the Lord.

Heavenly Father I thank You so much for Your Word that brings such clarity, such wisdom, such insight. I thank You, Father God, for giving us this sort of insight about the fact that we will give an account one day for how we have used what You've given us.

And I pray my Father God, that each and every person here. Would seek Your face about how they can serve you today so that on that day that they don't need to be ashamed.

And I thank You, Lord, that You have given to each of us according to our ability and according to our faith, something with which to serve You.

And I pray my Father God, that we would serve You with a whole heart as we await the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit and the bride say, come, even so come Lord Jesus.

For it is in that name that we pray and all God's people said, amen.

Have a good rest of your Sunday.