

46. Jesus Taught on the Way to Jerusalem

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to apply the Word of God to their daily lives so that their lives will show justice, mercy and humility. We saw that Jesus chose to teach those lessons by healing a woman on the Sabbath day. The action caused the ruler of the synagogue to show the condition of his heart by the words that he spoke. Today, we are going to see that Jesus taught His disciples many other lessons as they traveled through the cities and villages on the way to Jerusalem.

Jesus used a question one person asked to explain how a person enters into the kingdom of God. Luke 13:22-28 says, “And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then one said to Him, ‘Lord, are there few who are saved?’ And He said to them, ‘Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’ then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.’” But He will say, “I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.” There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.” Jesus answered a question and also gave a warning.

Jesus and His disciples were traveling through the various cities and villages as they were on the way to the city of Jerusalem. The last period of months before His crucifixion Jesus spent time across the Jordan River in the area of Perea and also made several short trips to Jerusalem. However, Jesus knew that He was moving toward the time when He would arrive at Jerusalem for the time of His death and resurrection. This gave Jesus the opportunity to teach in the various cities and villages both in Perea and Judea. It also gave time to teach His disciples as they traveled from place to place.

One day, someone asked the question, “Lord, are there few who are saved?” The disciples of Jesus had seen the large crowds such as the feeding of the five thousand. At times, there were still large crowds. However, this question was probably asked due to the fact that the crowds came and went while the number of disciples stayed small. In John 6:66-68, Jesus said, “From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’ But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’” Those who became true disciples continued to follow Jesus.

The Jews thought that all of the Jews except the tax collectors and sinners would be a part of the kingdom of God. However, we see that some of the disciples realized that many of the Jews were rejecting Jesus. The word translated “strive” means *to compete in games or to make every possible effort*. The only people who will enter will be those who enter by the narrow gate. Jesus said later in John 14:6, “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’” Jesus made it clear that He is the only way to enter into the kingdom of God. No one else could pay the penalty for sin and provide forgiveness.

Jesus warned that many of the Jews would not make it into the kingdom of God. Once the door is shut, it will be too late to enter. That is illustrated by what happened when Noah built the ark. Genesis 7:16 says, “So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in.” In this verse, we see that God shut the door of the ark and after that no one could enter in. The same will be true in the future. Those who want to enter the narrow gate must enter it while they have the opportunity. The door of opportunity is shut for each person when that person dies. Hebrews 9:27-28 says, “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.” The time of death shuts the door for all unbelievers but opens the door to eternal life to all believers.

That is why Jesus warned about those who wait until the door is shut. There is no future opportunity for salvation. We see what some people will try to say when they face eternal judgment. They will begin to say, “‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.’” Jesus gave a special warning to the Jews who had lived during the time of the ministry of Jesus. We saw in Luke 11:37 that a Pharisee even invited Jesus to dinner at his house. That verse says, “And as He spoke, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him. So He went in and sat down to eat.” We see the final response of the Pharisees and lawyers that were at that dinner. Luke 11:53-54 says, “And as He said these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to assail *Him* vehemently, and to cross-examine Him about many things, lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say, that they might accuse Him.” They ate in Jesus’ presence, but they did not repent of sin and place their faith in Jesus. They were also there many times when Jesus taught but most did not believe.

Jesus warned what it will be necessary for Him to say to all those who heard Him and chose to reject Him. In the judgment day, they will hear the words, “‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’” There is a day of judgment for all those who reject Jesus. Those who personally heard Jesus and rejected Him were given a warning in Luke 12:47 which says, “And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare *himself* or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*.” This spoke of the coming judgment of those who heard and rejected. That is why Jesus said that there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. “Gnashing of teeth” speaks of the extreme anguish and suffering of those who will experience eternal judgment. A similar passage in Matthew 8:11-12 says, “‘And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’” Jesus gave a warning in that passage that there will be many Jews who will not be in the kingdom of God. Every Jew, as well as every Gentile, must make a personal decision to either accept or reject Jesus as the way into the kingdom of God.

However, Jesus went on to point out the fact that there will be many besides Jews who will enter into the kingdom of God. Luke 13:29-33 says, “‘They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.’” On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to

Him, ‘Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You.’ And He said to them, ‘Go, tell that fox, “Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third *day* I shall be perfected.” Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the *day* following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.”’ Jesus said that many people from the east and west, the north and the south, will sit down in the kingdom of God. This is the promise that many Gentiles will also be in the kingdom of God.

God said in Isaiah 66:18, “For I *know* their works and their thoughts. It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory.” Here, we see that it has been the plan of God throughout history to include many Gentiles in the kingdom of God. Jesus said that many of the Gentiles who are last will be first and many Jews who had the first opportunity to learn about God will be last because they chose to reject. That very day, some Pharisees came to Jesus and told Jesus to leave that area because Herod wanted to kill Him. Jesus told the Pharisees to go tell Herod that Jesus would finish His work and that Herod could not stop Him because He would not perish away from the city of Jerusalem, which was not under the control of Herod.

Then, Jesus went on to show His love for the people of Jerusalem. Luke 13:34-35 says, “‘O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen *gathers* her brood under *her* wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until *the time* comes when you say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”’” Jesus had a great love for the people of Jerusalem even though they had killed many of the Old Testament prophets.

Jesus said that He wanted to gather the children of those who killed the prophets like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. Jesus had a great love for the city of Jerusalem. Luke 19:41-42 says, “Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, ‘If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that make* for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.’” Here, we see that Jesus later wept over the city because of that great love. Jesus realized that most of the people of that city were not willing to accept His peace.

Jesus said that their house would be left desolate. This meant that the city would soon experience judgment. About forty years after the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Romans came and completely destroyed the city and the people who were living in the city at that time. Jesus loved that city and will have the opportunity to show His love in the future. We want to help our physical and spiritual children also understand the love that Jesus had for Jerusalem. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the love of Jesus for Jerusalem and the nation of Israel.