

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

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Preacher: Bill Story

- [0 : 00] So there was a boy walking on the beach. Obviously, this wasn't in Colorado. And he's walking on the beach.
- He came up to a lady sitting under the umbrella on the beach there, and he asked her, are you a Christian? She said, yes.
- He said, do you read your Bible every day? She said, yes, I do. He said, do you pray often? She said, yes, I do pray often.
- He said, will you hold my quarter while I go swim in the ocean? See, he wanted somebody trustworthy. He wanted somebody he could trust with his quarter.
- What do you trust? Who do you trust? What do you rely on without question? Do you trust what you hear on the news?
- [1 : 13] What you hear on TV or in the movies? What you read online? What you read in books? Where do you go for truth?
- For that which you can trust and rely on. Do you go to other people? If so, which people? Who do you trust without question? What is your measure for who you can trust?
- What is their basis for truth? See, this little boy knew he could trust a Christian, and not just any Christian, but a Christian who reads their Bible, prays regularly.
- In other words, lives their faith. What he understood, he understood, that's somebody I can trust with my quarter. Do you trust another person simply because they're your friend?
- [2 : 22] Of course many of us trust our friends. Do you trust them because they're sensible? They'll give you a good practical answer. Do you trust them because they will affirm what you think?
- That may not be trustworthy. Jesus in Mark 13 said at one point, do not believe certain people because some are false.
- Some are deceived. And some are ungodly. Meaning, they do not orient their lives in terms of God.
- In this, at the end here of Mark 13, Jesus assures his disciples that they can absolutely trust what he says.
- Not just what he says about life, what he says about God, what he says about truth, but they can even trust what he says about the future that is unknown.
- [3 : 41] That his words are permanent. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will absolutely not pass away.
- They will outlive the world. They will outlive the universe. They will outlive all things. My words are so sure. Sure. We've been seeing Jesus give all these predictions through Mark 13.

It began in verse 2, where the disciples are looking at the temple. They've just come out of the temple area in Jerusalem. They're looking at the beautiful buildings, the gold-plated buildings, the magnificent structure, that when the sun shines on it at a particular time of day, it is just literally the light of the world on that mountain.

And they're awestruck by these buildings, and Jesus says, okay, look at these buildings. Not one stone will be left upon another of these buildings.

It will be leveled. He says that in verse 2. He predicts the destruction of the temple. Not just the destruction, but the leveling of the temple. So verse 4, the disciples say, when will these things be?

[5 : 04] When will this happen? Because this changes everything. Their lives were centered in the temple. The temple was everything. That's how they came to God.

That's how they worshiped. That's how they dealt with their sins. And if the temple's gone, what do we have? This will change everything. And please note, beloved, from AD 70 till today, everything has been changed for the Jew.

So they want to know when. So Jesus, beginning at verse 5, begins to talk about the things will take place. He says, you know things are going to happen. In verses 5 through 8, he talks about, actually, things that will keep on happening all through time until the end.

Wars, famines, false prophets. These things will be happening, but they're not the end. Not yet. That's not the sign. That's only the beginning.

He goes on to verse 9 to 13 and talks about how you disciples will go and preach the gospel. You will suffer for it. But that's not the end. That's going to keep going on and on.

[6 : 18] And then he gets to verse 14 and he finally mentions something specific. Up to that point, he's just talked about generalities. Wars, famines, false prophets, suffering for the gospel.

Those are general things. Desolation, standing where it ought not to be. What do you do? Run. Flee.

Do not wait around. You need to get out of town. Because their time is limited. When you see that, you need to go.

And in A.D. 67, the zealots, Jewish zealots, overtook the temple. They set up their own high priest who was not qualified.

In fact, who was a man of little integrity as their high priest, they abominated the temple. They defiled it. The former retired high priest said, this is an abomination.

[7 : 22] When you see that, when you see that man standing where he ought not to be, run. In A.D. 67, that happened.

Within a year, Rome had already surrounded Jerusalem and no one could get out. So if you didn't leave in 67, you're done. From 68 through 70, they sieged Jerusalem.

They captivated everybody. Waited for them to die off through famine and hunger and killing themselves. And then, by A.D. 70, destroyed it.

Not only the city, but the temple. So verse 19, then Jesus says, in those days there will be such tribulation as has never happened before, since creation.

Nor will ever happen again. So in other words, this wasn't a final tribulation. This was a unique, unprecedented tribulation. Nothing before comparable to it, nothing after comparable to it.

[8 : 28] And if you read in Josephus, what happened in those three years, three and a half years, in Jerusalem, it was unprecedented. It was devastating.

It was horrible. Then in verse 24, Jesus says, after that tribulation, here's the next significant thing that happened.

After those, in those days, after that tribulation, some spectacular things will happen. The sun will be darkened, the moon will turn, will not give its light, and the stars from heaven will fall to the ground.

Or they'll fall from heaven. That sounds like the end of the world, doesn't it? Sure does. If the stars are falling from heaven, other things are falling apart.

We see shooting stars. We see stars fall. We see stars move. But not all stars. Jesus uses this language that is the language of the Old Testament, that the language that has been used in Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Joel, to talk about the end of a historic nation.

[9 : 50] Not the end of the world, but the end of the world for that nation. Whether it applied to Babylon, or Egypt, or in this case, it applies to Israel. Jesus is not literally saying the sun will go dark and the moon will not give its light and the literal stars will fall from heaven.

But he's saying the stars of Israel will fall. The twelve stars of Jacob that bowed down, right?

Remember Joseph's dream? The eleven stars will bow to the one star. Jesus told, or God told Abraham, look up at the stars. So shall your descendants be.

Those descendants, those stars fell in 70 A.D. because it was the end of Israel's administration.

Not the end of the Jewish people, but the end of the Jewish stewardship of God's light and truth. It was transferred not to a nation, but to a people of every nation who followed Jesus their king.

[11 : 04] And then, verse 26, the sun will come. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds. Now that's got to be the end, isn't it? That's his return.

That's what we mean by coming, right? Well, we just sang three songs this morning about coming. Oh come, oh come. Is that for the end? No, that's for the first coming.

Oh come, oh come. We're going to sing one after the sermon about coming. Jesus is coming again. That's about a later coming.

Do you know there was one coming of Jesus Christ between those two? There's a coming of Jesus at the birth which we celebrate Advent, the coming, the arrival.

There will be an end time coming of Jesus when he comes back and he makes all things right. He judges, right? Revelation talks about that. Paul talks about that. We're all awaiting for the Lord to return.

[12 : 07] That has not happened. But there's another coming in between. When Jesus died, he rose again. he ascended. Where did he go?

To heaven. To the Father. Now we say, well that's not coming, that's going. Yeah, but you're looking at it from earth's perspective. See, from heaven's perspective, Daniel chapter 7, that was a coming up to the Father to receive his kingdom.

And Daniel 7, 13 is the language that Jesus is using when he talks about the Son of Man coming in the clouds. That's the exact language from Daniel 7, 13. Not coming down, coming up to receive his kingdom.

70 A.D. The temple was destroyed. What do we know happened next? Well, we know that Jesus had ascended and he took his throne and then he sent his angels, verse 27, to start gathering the elect from all over the world.

not gathering them for judgment, but gathering them for the first time. Salvation. This is what was happening.

[13 : 25] So now, now, by the way, there are different interpretations of those verses I mentioned before. I grew up believing that verse 24, 25, 26, 27 were all still future.

Because I read it literally, the sun, the stars haven't fallen from the sky yet, so that hasn't happened. Well, that's reading into the text what I think it should be.

Not reading from the Old Testament and recognizing that's language Jesus is borrowing that has a certain particular meaning. Not a literal meaning. So, I think that's the best understanding of these verses.

I won't die for that, though. Okay? I could be wrong. I don't think so. But I could.

Just like I thought I was wrong before and now I'm right, 20 years from now I might discover other verses that say, you knucklehead. You didn't think about this? So, when it comes to prophecy and future, we know three things for sure.

[14 : 40] We can bank on three. One, Jesus is coming back. That's absolutely clear. There will be a resurrection. That's absolutely clear. And there will be a judgment. That's absolutely clear.

Now, how and when? When? We're pan-millennial. It'll all pan out. I don't know when the millennium is.

Okay. So, I think this is the best understanding, though. And as we come now to verse 28 where Jesus is going to apply the timing of these events. Remember back in verse 4 the disciples said, when will these things be?

So, Jesus has given them some signs. He said, when you see the abomination and desolation, you've got to get out of town because it's soon. And then, when the stars fall from the sky, that is the end for Israel.

But now, he's going to actually give them a time frame. Now, he's going to give them a within-this-generation time frame of when all these things will happen.

[15 : 44] And he does it by means of a parable, a lesson. In the parable of the fig tree, Jesus gives us, I think, two practical applications.

In verse 28 and 29, an application regarding the timing of these things and its significance, which is more important. And then, in verse 30 and 31, he's going to speak to us about how we can trust the word of Jesus.

Because Jesus makes an authoritative statement. I, truly, truly, I say to you, whenever he starts a sentence with that, he's saying, pay attention, this is really important, write this in your notes, it will be on the test.

Truly, I say to you, and then he ends in verse 31 by saying, heaven and earth will pass away, but my words, my words, are absolutely trustworthy.

Absolutely trustworthy. In fact, he stakes his reputation on these words. Because if any of his words did not become true, Jesus is a liar.

[16 : 56] And he's a false prophet, or he's deceived, or he's a lunatic. Those are the only choices he gives us. He can't be just a good man and get some stuff wrong.

He says, no, I'm it. And all that I say, you can bank on. He's making a huge claim. All right, so, look at the first application, verse 28 and 29.

He talks about the parable of the fig tree. He's going to compare what happens to a fig tree with what happens in their time. And the significance of this is, I think, that we recognize, the first application is we recognize that the kingdom of God has indeed come.

When you see these things, know that it's near. Well, it was near for them. It's reality for us. The kingdom of God has come.

Let me show this to you. First of all, we look at the parable. Learn from the fig tree, he says. Now, what's significant about the fig tree? Now, remember, we saw the fig tree two chapters ago.

[18 : 04] Remember, Jesus saw the fig tree and he thought there might be fruit on it. He goes and he looks and it's just leaves and no fruit. And so, he says, you shall never bear fruit again.

Remember? Then he goes and he cleanses the temple. Or, not cleanses it, but clears it out. Right? Kicks all the merchandising out. The next day, they come by the fig tree and it's withered.

And Peter says, hey, look, Lord, you cursed the fig tree and it's all, you know. And Jesus built a lesson on prayer. Yeah, if you believe. Fig tree was picturing Israel who was showing leaves, looked like it was promising, but in closer inspection, there's no fruit there.

So, Jesus goes into the temple and he sees, yeah, the temple's beautiful on the outside. Go in the inside, what's going on? There's robbers, there's thieves, there's abominations, there's selfishness and greed.

This is not to happen in God's house. Kicks it out. So, now we come to another fig tree, but it's, now he's just using the fig tree as a comparison.

[19 : 16] So, what is it about the fig trees? Well, in Israel, most trees in Israel are evergreen. Did you know that? Most trees there, olive trees, oak trees, terabith, they're mostly all evergreen.

They only have a few that are deciduous that drop their leaves in the winter. The olive tree is one of those. I mean, the fig tree, excuse me, fig tree is one of those. And so, the fig tree, in particular, for Israelites, signal when they begin to bloom, when they begin to become tender and they put the leaves forth, that tells you what?

Summer's coming. It's springtime. Right? We know that. We got trees where in the winter all the leaves fall off, everything looks dead, it's a time of transition, spring comes.

Why do we love spring? New flowers, green, goes from gray to green. We love that. We love this picture of new life, new promise, new hope, new fruit that is being promised of coming.

spring. So he says, when you see that in the fig tree, it's a signal that the summer is near. It's close. It's not far off.

[20 : 44] These leaves come out in March, April. Summer comes, what? Into May, June-ish, somewhere in there. Not figuring by an American calendar.

And so, it's just a few months away. In other words, it's near. It's not a long ways off. There's not a long waiting period. It's close by. We know it's coming. So, what does he compare that to?

So, the beginning of verse 29. So, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near at the very gates.

So, just like when you see the leaves, you know that summer's near. So, when you see these things that I've told you all about, all these predictions, when you see these things, you know that he is near at the very door.

Who's he? Well, our translators haven't done a good job there, by the way. First of all, let's talk about what are the things when you see these things.

[21 : 53] Now, regular, simple reading of the text would say, well, all the things that Jesus has talked about from verse 5 to verse 27.

But, some traditions in America, with certain theologies, leapfrog some of the verses. Oh, we can't be talking about when the sun, moon, stars.

We can't be talking about when Jesus comes, because we know that's the return of Jesus. We can't be talking about when the angels go, because that's the end of time. Is it? Is it? I've showed you in the previous studies those can be understood differently, and I think, actually, more biblically, those are not the end of time.

Those are temporal things. So, what things do they see? Well, did they see back in verse 5?

Did they see that there's people who try to lead you astray, that there were false Christs and false prophets? Yes, they saw that. Did they see wars and rumors of wars? And did they see earthquakes and famines?

[23 : 05] Yes, they've seen all that. Have they seen verse 9, the suffering for the gospel? Yeah, we read that in Acts. Yeah, they saw that. Did they see verse 14, the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be?

I say to you, most definitely, they saw at the very least an abomination standing where he ought not to be.

And verse 24, well, it couldn't have been the sun, moon, stars thing, right? That's cosmic. But again, if we read it the way you read it in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel, those are pictures of, yeah, the end of a universe, but only the end of the universe for one particular nation.

And beloved, since 70 AD, where is the Jewish nation? Now, in 1948, they regained statehood, did they not?

Okay. God can do anything. God may reform that nation. I don't know. But when you have 1900 years go by without a rebuilding of the temple, I think things have changed.

[24 : 32] I think God has done with Israel as a nation, not as a people. I'm not saying he won't still save Jewish people. He no longer works through nations.

He works through a people of every nation. He works through a body of believers in Jesus Christ. He's no longer interested in a physical earthly kingdom.

Done that, been there, didn't last, didn't work. Now he has established a heavenly kingdom, an eternal kingdom.

my kingdom is not of this world, did he not say? Pilate asked him, are you a king? Yes, I'm a king. Where's your kingdom?

Everywhere. Not just here. If I wanted, I could decimate you right now. Send 12 legions of, that's kind of overkill, isn't it?

[25 : 32] 12 legions of angels. I sounded a little southern. Angels? I don't know where that came from. Go for it, yeah. Then the other question we have to ask is, what is near?

He says, verse 29, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, my translation says, at the very gates. I'm reading from the English Standard Version.

If you read from the New International Version or the King James Version, it will not say, he is near. It will say, when you see all these things taking place, you know that it is near.

You got an NIV? It is near. That's more accurate. That's more accurate. You know that something is near.

There's no he, by the way, in the Greek text. text. It's left ambiguous. So something's near. What is it? Now, our translators already have a preconceived idea and they want to write it in there for you.

[26 : 43] It's he. Bless their hearts. They mean well. They're trying to help you. I say, leave it alone. just translate what it says. Yes, that's harder. But we don't get off track. And I got to give kudos to NIV.

I usually pick on the NIV. Yeah, you do. I think. So I'm trying to be honest. They got that one right.

And I only pick on them because they're not word for word. You understand that? It's not that they're bad at all. Just a detailed thing. So when you see these things, know that it is near.

Well, Mark isn't clear. Matthew's not clear. But guess what? If we go over to a parallel text in Luke, in Luke 21, where Luke is recording the same sermon, the same predictions, Luke is speaking to Gentiles.

[27 : 52] And so he doesn't get bogged down in all the Jewish details. He actually kind of puts it on the Gentile level, so to speak. So how does Luke translate this?

Luke 21, 29. Look at the fig tree, Jesus says, and all the trees. As soon as they come out and leave, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. Same thing. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that what is near?

The kingdom of God. Luke supplies for us what Mark left ambiguous. What's coming? What's near? The kingdom of God.

That's what's near. Not he, but the kingdom is near. You will know, and actually the word know, you know by experience, you know personally.

The kingdom of God is close, it's at the door, it's imminent, it's not far in the future. What's the kingdom of God? The kingdom of God is what Jesus started preaching in Mark chapter 1 from the get-go.

[29 : 06] He said, the kingdom is at hand. Therefore, repent and believe in the gospel. And he went about preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

Jesus taught about the kingdom all over the place, not as something far distant, not as something we're waiting for, that's something that is here and now. Something that we're in.

Wherever the king is, that's where the kingdom is. And where's the king? Now, he's seated in heaven at the right hand of the father, he's sitting on his throne, he's ruling, but where is he also?

Him, right? Yeah? Yeah? In you. In you. He's ruling in your heart. We sang about that this morning. Rule in our hearts. Be king in us. Not just king in some temporal place on a specific geographical place.

God's done that. He's king everywhere. And in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul tells us he's ruling, he's putting his enemies under his feet, he's taking them whatever time he wants to take, because he's taking a lot of time because there's more people he wants to save.

[30 : 22] right? And the kingdom, Jesus describes the kingdom as setting people free. Setting people free. Because he's taking them out of the other kingdom, the kingdom of darkness, he's taking them out of the authority of Satan, and he's transferring them into the kingdom of Jesus Christ, Colossians 1.

That's the kingdom. Kingdom's now. will there be a future definite return of Jesus Christ? Absolutely. He's going to come mop it up.

You read Revelation, by the way, how long does that take? When Jesus gets on his horse and he comes and we're all on horses behind him, how long does that take? Well, you read Revelation 19, he comes and fire comes out of his mouth and they all burn up and we go, woohoo.

We don't do much. We just kind of ride along. Oh, did you see that? Oh, did you see that one? I don't know. It's not a prolonged thing. When he comes back, no time to run anymore, no time to go anywhere.

When he comes back, everyone will know. There won't be any question. There won't be any question. There won't be any signs either. People will be working in the field.

[31 : 43] One will be taken, one will be left. People will be going about their usual business. They'll be just like in the days of Noah. They'll be partying and drinking and carrying on and boom.

Without warning, it'll come. That's where we're at, folks. I personally do not believe there's anything we're waiting for before Christ returns. Any event.

We're not waiting for the temple to be rebuilt. Now, maybe. God's going to do that. I don't know. But I don't see it in Scripture. Kingdom is now.

We are his kingdom. So, this phrase near, what does it mean? Some of our friends say kingdom is near means, well, it's just a prophetic way of putting it off.

Well, let's go look at the prophets and see how they use the word near. Does it mean soon or does it mean it could be any time later? In Ezekiel 12, God is warning at the end of the kings of Israel, we're wearing down now, we're about the end of the nation.

[32 : 57] God is warning Israel against their rebellion, against their complacency, against their unbelief. They will not listen to God's warning. They do not trust his word. And so, in Ezekiel 12, God gives them final warning.

He says to Ezekiel, he says, son of man, what is this proverb that you have about the land of Israel where they are saying the days grow long and every vision comes to nothing?

In other words, they're saying, yeah, yeah, yeah, God's warning, God's saying he's going to get us, but nothing happens. Nothing happens. The days grow long. Nothing. I don't think he's coming.

I don't think he's following through. Tell them, therefore, thus says the Lord God, I will put an end to this proverb and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel, but say to them, the days are near.

What does that mean? The days are near and the fulfillment of every vision where there will be no more. There shall be no more any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel, for I am the Lord.

[34 : 04] I will speak the word that I will speak and it will be performed. It will no longer be delayed. But in your days, O rebellious house, I will speak the word and perform it, declares the Lord God.

And the word of the Lord came to me, son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, the vision that he sees is for many days from now. He prophesies of times far off.

See what they're saying? It ain't gonna happen. Yeah, he keeps warning, it's way off, it's not gonna happen. Therefore say to them, thus says the Lord God, none of my words will be delayed any longer.

But the word that I speak will be performed, declares the Lord God. What does near mean? No more delay. It will happen in your days.

it's not far off, it's not many days away. The kingdom is near. When you see these things taking place, the kingdom is at hand.

[35 : 16] It's at the very door. All God has to do is come through the door. What did Jesus say in Revelation 3? I stand at the door and what happens?

Open the door. Open the door. and I will come in. There's that come language again. I will come in and dine with you.

Fellowship with you. In other words, not long off. It's right here. For some of you, you already experienced the kingdom of God.

Some of you have already experienced deliverance from the evil one and transferred into this kind, gentle king who has all authority ruling now your heart.

Some of you haven't experienced that. Open the door. He is here. He wants to rule in your heart.

[36 : 26] And he is not a taskmaster. Remember what Jesus said? Come to me all who are weary of heaven laden. I will give you rest for your soul.

That's where you rest. Learn from me. Take of my yoke. For I am gentle and humble. Not a taskmaster.

Learn from me. Learn from me. I'll recover. That soul that's depressed, that soul that's, I'll bring it back to life. The kingdom is here and now.

The kingdom is wherever the gospel goes. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. Paul described the kingdom of God as the righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

So in other words, the kingdom is the whole work of the Spirit. Opening eyes, changing hearts. The kingdom is the blind seeing, the deaf hearing, the lame walking, and the dead rising.

[37 : 29] You once were dead but now you are alive. Because God made you alive. So when you see all these things, know that the kingdom of God is here.

When you see that the temple is destroyed, in other words, know that the kingdom is here. That was future for the disciples in 30 AD. By 70 AD, the kingdom is totaled and leveled and the disciples knew at that moment, there's a confirmation the kingdom is here.

Kingdom is here. That was 1900 and however many years ago. Mark Van Amir is not here for addition and subtraction.

if it was near for them, it's nearer for us.

It's here. So second application, verses 30 and 31. Jesus tells us and assures us that all his words are divinely reliable.

[38 : 38] people. So look at verse 30. He's going to answer the question from verse 4. He's going to say, what's the time frame? Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. I want you to notice what Jesus is saying here. First of all, he makes a declaration in verse 30. This generation will not pass away.

And actually in the Greek he says, this generation will absolutely not pass away until this happens. It's a very strong way of saying it. It will not pass away, it will not die off until these things happen.

In fact, he says, until some of these things take place. He said all, didn't he? So what's all mean? Some?

All. Everything I just told you. All the things I just told you about will take place before this generation dies off. There's your time frame.

[39 : 42] They had asked when it will happen, 30 A.D. What's a generation? Well, according to the Old Testament, generations are 40 years. 40 years. Remember?

Remember, there was another generation that passed off. Right? Back in Exodus. Remember, they were going to go into the promised land. They didn't believe, so God said, okay, this generation's not going in.

And when they pass away, the next generation will go in. Remember that? And that was 40 years in the wilderness. 40 years, you shall wander. Then the next generation will go in.

Same kind of language going on here. So who is this generation? generation. Now, we read that just normally without reading into it. We say, well, Jesus is talking about the contemporary people of his time.

This generation, right? Well, we have friends, evangelical friends, who say this generation means something totally different. They say it means, well, it's just a general way of referring to the Jewish people.

[40 : 52] So they say that, and I used to be in this camp, by the way, and they're not bad guys, by the way. They see things different. They said that this generation refers to the Jewish nation in general.

So as long as the Jewish nation is around, these things will not pass away, or these things haven't happened yet. So as long, so they're saying, Jesus is saying, this race of people, this nation of Israel will not pass away until all these things take place.

They interpret it that way because they see it, they're saying it still has to be future. I'm saying it doesn't have to be future. And that's just not the normal way to understand the word generation.

If Jesus meant to say the Jewish nation, he could have simply said this Jewish nation generation. Why would he use a word generation that has a very specific meaning, meaning the contemporary people of the time?

Let me show you. This is a very popular understanding, that's why I'm taking a little bit of time to explain this other understanding, or the natural understanding of generation.

[42 : 09] Jesus uses this word, this generation, three other times in the book of Mark. So back in 8-12, when the Pharisees came and began to argue with Jesus seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him, Jesus sighed deeply in his spirit and said, why does this generation seek a sign?

Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation. Did Jesus mean when he said this generation, Jewish people of all time? Did Jewish people of all time always seek signs?

No. A lot of times they did, sure, but no, there's some generations that were pretty, just waiting on God. Okay, and then again, he uses this phrase in chapter 8, verse 38.

He's talking about the denying yourself and walking with Jesus, giving up your life, right? So verse 37, 8-37, for what can a man give in return for his soul?

For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

[43 : 25] Whoever in this sinful and adulterous generation is ashamed of Jesus, well, is he talking about Jews of all time? Well, there he's given a comparison.

Whoever in this generation during this time is ashamed of me, well, at the later time, I'll be ashamed of him. That's the only thing that makes sense. And you can see another reference, I'm not going to look at it, in Mark 9-19, again, he uses the phrase faithless generation, oh, faithless generation, how long will I be with you?

Obviously, he's talking about the people of that time while he's with them. So this generation means contemporaries, like we would assume it would mean, unless you're reading into it.

So I want you to look closely, finally, at verse 31, what Jesus says, I've already mentioned it. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. Who can say that?

If you said that to your friends or family, my words never pass away. Would they believe you? No.

[44 : 38] Who do you think you are? I bring this up because we read or hear Jesus say that, and we've been hearing Jesus for a long time, so we're kind of used to that? Oh, yeah, Jesus can say that.

But take a step back for a moment and say, wait a minute, what if that's the first time you ever heard somebody say that? Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. Who can say that?

What's he claiming? He's claiming to be eternal. He's claiming to be a permanent, to be permanent. He's claiming that his words will outlive the universe.

There will be a day when the heaven and the earth pass away. We'll get to that next time. But his words will not.

Jesus' words have permanent validity. And this has practical application for us. I began this sermon saying, what can you trust?

[45 : 44] What do you depend on without reservation? Is there someone that you can go to that you can always trust what they say? We have a lot of people we go to and we can often trust what they say, yes.

But can I always? On every issue? Jesus says his words are absolutely trustworthy, absolutely reliable, every time, every generation, every situation.

I will never leave you or forsake you. Does that always apply? Yeah. Yeah. I am the door of the sheath.

Whoever enters through me will have life. Does that apply always? Yeah. Yeah. I am the vine. You are the branches.

Whoever abides in me will bear much fruit. Does that always apply or just sometimes? Always. God will do it. His words are permanent. They are absolutely trustworthy.

[46 : 57] We can rely on them without question. Remember how Jesus defined his words in Matthew 7? At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, he said, there's a wise man and a foolish man built a house.

Foolish man built on the sand, right? The storms came, right? washed away that house. But the wise man built on a rock and the same storms came, storms and the winds and the, but the house stayed because it was built upon a rock.

And then Jesus said, you know who the wise man is? The one who hears my words and lives by them.

You'll go through storms, you'll go through hard times, you'll get a little beat up, you'll get a little wind blown, you'll get a little maybe a cracked window, I don't know.

But you will still be standing because you're depending and relying on my words. You're not leaning on your own understanding, you're trusting my words.

[48 : 11] When I say to you, whoever would give his life to save his life is the one who will have eternal life.

Right? When I say when you deny yourself, you actually build up yourself. In other words, when Jesus says things that are absolutely contrary to the thinking of our time, you know who the one is who's first and foremost in this life?

The one who lays down his life for everybody else. Is that what the world said? No, I'm first. This is a civilization built upon the evolutionary theory, which is what?

Survival of fittest. Me first. Jesus' words have absolutely permanent validity.

His words are no less reliable than the words of God. Listen to Psalm 102 where this is the prayer of an afflicted person, literally a depressed person. And in his depression he's calling out to God and he speaks of God's eternal permanence.

[49 : 31] He says, Oh my God, I say, take me not away in the midst of my day. See, he feels like he's falling and failing and going down the drain. Take me not away in the midst of my days.

You whose years endure throughout all generations. Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

They will perish. Heaven and earth will pass away. They will perish, but you remain. They will wear out like a garment. Heaven and earth are temporary.

They're wearing out. Scientists tell us that all time, right? This earth is wearing out. The sun is only going to last so long, right? It's burning. They will wear out.

They will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe. In other words, he's going to take off one heaven and earth and he's going to put on a new one. It says that somewhere else, doesn't it?

[50 : 34] I say that the heavens and the earth, the old, will pass away. There will be a new heaven and earth. God puts on a new robe. You will change them like a robe and they will pass away.

But you are the same and your years have no end. The children of your servants shall dwell secure. The offspring shall be established before you. God is eternal And his words are eternal.

And Jesus has declared His word is Jesus' words have been verified to us.

Everything he has spoken of up to this point in this chapter has come true. The leveling of the temple, the way that historically happened is so amazing and literal.

Remember I told you that the temple was first burned. It wasn't leveled. It was just burned. That's usually the end of Rome's decimation. But Titus' father, the emperor, said, I want you to level it.

[51 : 46] So after Bernicke went back, took every stone off another stone, which is exactly what Jesus said would happen. Jesus is self-aware of who he is.

He says, my words are permanent. He knows he's the son of God. He knows his words are faithful. He's not allowing us to think of him as anything less. Jesus is not allowing you to choose to think, I believe Jesus was a good man, but not the son of God.

He doesn't allow you to think that. I think Jesus was just a prophet.! Many religions! say, Jesus was a prophet, but not any more special than any other prophet.

Jesus doesn't allow you to think that. He is claiming not to be a prophet. He is claiming to be the son of God. and you either accept that that is who he is or you think okay he's a liar or he's a lunatic.

He really thinks he is but he's nuts. Or he's outright deceiving everybody by saying that he is. So you don't get to pick that Jesus is I think he's just this and I like him there.

[53 : 05] He doesn't allow you to do that. He says if you reject he's not real tolerant as far as the post modern age that we live in where we need to be tolerant of everybody.

And I'm not talking about being tolerant like being merciful to people. I'm talking about being tolerant of all roads get to heaven. No. No, no, that's a lie. An outright lie.

He doesn't allow us to think He's not just a prophet. He's not just a Moses. He has unique authority and he claims to speak as God and if you reject his words you reject God.

So what difference does all this make? Well, let me meddle for just one minute. Do you accept his words? You accept them? Do you trust that his words are absolutely true?

Whether you understand them all or not, do you trust that they're absolutely true? Do you rely on them? Do you live by them?

[54 : 17] Do you look to his words as not just what's true and I kind of keep what's true over there and how I live over here. No, do you look at his words as that which feeds you, which fuels you, which moves you, which animates you?

Because that's what he claims his word does. And if I can get a correct you, maybe change your thinking from what you've been thinking.

See, a friend might tell you, the friend that you trust might tell you things that affirm what you think. Because they love you and they don't want to hurt you. Jesus will tell you some things that might hurt a little bit.

But he's a real friend. Because he knows that hurt will bring healing. will bring truth. Do you allow his words to change what you value?

To change what you focus on? See, do you lean on his words or do you lean on your own understanding? We have the words of Christ.

[55 : 32] And if you're a believer, I know you love those words. You cherish those words. And maybe it's been a while as a believer where that's faded a little bit.

Well, that can be renewed. That's not go back to him, soften your heart, humble yourself. Ask him to renew the vigor of his word that is life changing in you.

His words are always faithful, they're always true, and they're always reliable. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word, and we thank you for Christ's word.

We pray, Lord, that we would see these words and their significance, that we would truly recognize today that your kingdom is already here, and that we're already in that kingdom, and that you're already ruling, and that Father, through us as vessels, you are reaching out your kingdom to other people, to deliver them from darkness, to rescue them from evil.

And Father, we thank you for the words of Jesus that we can trust. Help us, Father, to submit to them, to accept them, to desire them, to feed upon them.

[56 : 51] We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. So we look forward to the coming of Jesus.

Jesus is coming again. Marvelous message we bring. Glorious carol we sing. NING