



The Gospel of Mark | Mark 13:9-13
May 10th, 2020

Well, this morning we're going to be back in the book of Mark, the Gospel of Mark. So, if you have a Bible, I wanna encourage you to grab it. If it's in another room, take a moment to grab your Bible. But we're gonna look at Mark 13 this morning, and we picked up this chapter last week and said in this chapter that this is a very lengthy chapter that needs to all be held together, and this is a very confusing chapter. And we talked about the fact that this is one of most misinterpreted chapters in all of the New Testament. So last week we really only covered the first 8 verses. I wish we could study the whole thing at one time, but we can't do that because we need to just take our time and go very slow through this text. I said last week there are really three reasons that we get this text so wrong when we read it. One is that we just read right into the text things that aren't even there. Sometimes we let our Bible headings that the editors have put in shape the way we read the text. Sometimes we just read over the text. We just skip right over words, and we shouldn't do that. And then sometimes we make the biggest mistake of all, which is we just read this text completely out of context, so we just kind of take it as if it's just not connected to anything else and we just go read it. And so, we read this text alongside of the newspaper and we let the current events interpret Mark 13. And really, we need to let Mark 11 and 12 interpret Mark 13 for us. So, this morning, we want to come back to this text. We want to recap just for a moment, the first 8 verses so we can set the context again. Then we're gonna move into verses 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 as we just continue to work our way slowly through this, ok? So, let's read Mark 13, the first 13 verses again this morning, alright?

So, Mark 13:1 says: And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?" And Jesus began to say to them, "See that no one lead you astray. Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains. "But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. And brother will deliver brother over to

death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

This is God's holy word. Let's ask God to bless us now as we study this word with his spirits' guidance: Father, we pray this morning that you would give grace to us as we study this text, illuminate and make it come alive for us. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

I said last week that the purpose of Mark 13 isn't to give us a timetable to predict future events related to the return of Christ. Which is often what we do, is we just look at it and say this is going to give me a timetable so I can put it all together. Even though Jesus says that no one can do that, we do it anyway. Really, this is a text that's an exhortation to us for faithful discipleship in the present moment that we live in, and its related specifically to these people, to these disciples of Jesus. And so, we saw in these first couple of verses that there's a question that is being asked related to a comment Jesus has made. Jesus has said that not one of the stones of the temple is going to be left standing, that the temple is gonna be completely destroyed. And that happens in AD 70. So just within the span of about 40 years from the time that Christ is crucified, raised, and has ascended to the Father, the Romans are gonna come in and they're going to destroy Jerusalem and they're gonna burn the temple to the ground. It's never been rebuilt. And so, when we come to this text, if you look at verse number 4, notice what it says in verse 4: tell us when these things will be. When will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished? Remember, they're asking two questions: when will these things be, and the second question is, what will be the sign? Not a bunch of signs, but *the* sign, when all these things are gonna be accomplished. And we remember that we saw last week that the question is about when will these things happen. What things? Well, the things that he talked about in verse 2. When is it gonna take place? When is it going to happen that the temple is gonna be destroyed, that none of the stones are gonna be left? And so, the topic is the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. So, the disciples want to know something. They want to know one, when is the temple gonna be destroyed? When's that gonna happen? We want to be ready for this, and two, what's the sign we can look for so that we can be ready when it happens? We say, oh, this is happening. That means that's about to happen. They want to know when it's gonna all take place.

In verse 5, it says that Jesus began to say to them, "See that." And we noted that that's an imperative statement. It's a Greek word 'blepo' that appears five times in this chapter and here in this verse and then again in verse 9, 23, and 33 it shows up as the English phrase 'be on guard.' And he's telling them that they need to pay attention to something, they need to watch out, keep a watch out for something. And so, he began his answer to their question about when all this was gonna happen with a warning. And the warning was, watch out, see that no one lead you astray. And that's an exhortation you notice to the disciples. No one leads *you* astray. So, he says, look, hey, some things are gonna happen and the temple is gonna be destroyed. And these things that are gonna happen, these aren't necessarily the sign that you're looking for, it's just stuff that's gonna happen. So, don't be led astray and the things that he mentions come in the next verse, verse 6. He says, many are gonna come in my name saying 'I am he' and they're gonna lead many people astray. So, before the temple is destroyed, there's gonna be false messiahs. And during the next 40 years between

when Jesus said this in AD 30's, 30-ish somewhere right around there, and then AD 70 when the temple is destroyed, in that 40 year period of time, there were a number of people that came into Jerusalem claiming to be the Messiah, and many people followed after them. And so, he's saying to these people, don't be led astray, don't think oh, this is the coming of the Messiah, and so I need to, to be ready for something that's about to happen. He says, no, this is just gonna happen. So, in other words, false messiahs, they're not to be seen as having any end time significance, which is what we often look for today, we say, oh, there's people claiming to be the Messiah, this must be the end of the world. Jesus just says look, people are going to just do that before the temples destroyed. Verse 7 says this: When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, don't be alarmed. This must take place. But the end is not yet. Nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom. So, in other words before the temple is destroyed, there are gonna be wars and rumors of wars, nations are gonna rise against nation. But don't be alarmed by that when it happens. Prior to the Jewish war, beginning in AD 66 which would last the four years until the destruction of the temple, there were plenty of wars throughout the Roman Empire. Rumors of wars. And so, Jesus is saying when you hear about all this, don't get worked up. It's just gonna happen. But it's not meant to be seen as having an end time significance. Then he says to them, there are gonna be earthquakes in various places. There's gonna be famines, these are but the beginning of the birth pains. In other words, the temples gonna be destroyed. But that is gonna happen. And it's just gonna take place alongside of the normal course of events. Earthquakes, famines, all sorts of things. Well, in the ancient world, there were lots of earthquakes that happened. In fact, there was an earthquake that happened in Jerusalem during the midst of the Jewish war that was taking place that would lead to the destruction of the temple, and when that earthquake took place, it was very interesting because the people then, they didn't have a scientific mind. They couldn't explain it. So, they thought that the Gods were shaking the earth and the heavens in a sense. So, it was earthquakes in the ancient world, were always seen as having some sort of a significant cosmic sign of sorts. And Jesus says, look, earthquakes and famines, they're just part of the world. So, don't see those and say "ah, this is the end." But how many times do we hear this right now, right? Well, there's more earthquakes today than ever before. And Jesus said that would happen before he returns. Earthquakes have always been happening. They have no end time significance. So, notice this: everything that Jesus has mentioned thus far in verses 5 - 8 would be experienced by both Christians and non-Christians. In other words, what he's described so far, it's general experiences. Everyone is gonna encounter false messiahs, wars, rumors of wars. Everybody's going experience earthquakes, earthquakes don't just happen under the homes of Christians or non-Christians. They just happen and everybody experiences it altogether.

Now Jesus is gonna warn the disciples about some specific experiences that they will face all on account of being his disciples. So, this is gonna happen to them because of him. And namely what's gonna happen is they're gonna face suffering and they're gonna face persecution. So, notice that Mark 13:5 began with that imperative 'See that.' Blepo. No one lead you astray. And then he went on in verse 7 to say, when you hear about all these things that are happening but they're not necessarily happening to the disciples, the disciples may just hear about it, hey, I heard about a war that was taking place somewhere in the empire. That didn't happen to the disciples. That was just something happening, right? Now he's going to give a second imperative here in verse

number 8 when he says, 'be on guard,' this is the second time that Greek word *blepo* occurs. And what follows in these next few verses, verses 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, are very specific experiences that are gonna happen to them. They're not going to hear about it happening to somebody else, but they're gonna have it happen to them. So, this is the most personal section of this all-event discourse. And it's not abstract predictions of the future, as much as it is very pastoral care from Jesus as he prepares his disciples for what they're gonna face. So again, it's exhortation to faithful discipleship, and especially in the most extreme of hardships. So, look with me at verse number 9: be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. So, notice the warning. Be on your guard. Notice he says, be on your guard because it's to them that he's talking, be on *your* guard. The disciples themselves are in danger. Now what danger are they in? Well, he says three things are gonna happen to them. Verse number 9: They will deliver you over to councils. Notice first, who's going to do this? They. It says they. So in other words, people in general will be against them. People in general are going to be against the disciples, and now we don't often times think of that, because we think that if we're like Jesus, everybody will love us. And Jesus says look, they're gonna be against you. Second, notice the verb itself. It says, 'they will deliver.' Notice that verb 'will deliver.' We've seen that verb. It echoes something that we've seen earlier in the Gospel of Mark. In Mark 9:31, Jesus as he's predicting his own death and his own suffering and persecution, here's what he says: for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered," see, there's that phrase 'be delivered,' "into the hands of men and they will kill him. And when he's killed, after three days, he will rise." Again, we saw this in Mark 10:33-34, it says: See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over, there's that statement again, 'will be delivered over,' to who? To the chief priest, to the scribes. They will condemn him to death, and they will deliver him over to the Gentiles. And guess what the gentiles will do, they're gonna mock him and spit on him and flog him and kill him. And after three days, he will rise. Notice, this is very important. When Jesus tells his disciples they will deliver you over, he's saying to them that the disciples, if you're a disciple of Jesus, you should expect, and you can expect, that what happened to Jesus is gonna happen to you. In other words, disciples should expect to be treated like Jesus was treated. So, the third thing that I want you notice is this, notice where they're gonna be delivered over to. It says they will deliver you over to what, councils. Now, these were local Jewish councils that existed in the villages and towns throughout Israel. These were the local rulers and governing authorities, and they met in synagogues. Now, if you notice what Jesus says next, he tells them what's gonna happen when they're delivered over to these councils. You're gonna be delivered over to the council, just like Jesus is gonna be delivered over. And what's gonna happen to Jesus is he's gonna be mocked, beaten, spit upon, and crucified. And so, what should a disciple handed over expect to take place to the disciple? Well, when they get to the synagogue here's what happens, verse 9: you will be beaten in synagogues. See what happens to the disciples is what's happened to Jesus. We're going to turn you over to the council, the council meets in the synagogue, and in the synagogue you're gonna be beaten. You know what happens to the apostles shortly after the ascension of Jesus? Exactly this. Let me show you what it says in Acts 5:40-41, it says, and when they, now they is the council in Jerusalem, when the council had called in the apostles, they beat them. Now where was the council meeting? The council was meeting throughout the empire or throughout Jewish

territory, wherever there was a synagogue, wherever there was the right number of Jewish men to create a synagogue, the council was meeting in the synagogue and guess what they did. They beat them. And it says they beat them, and they charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus. Now I want you to notice what it says, their charge to them is not to speak. In other words, that was their crime. This is really important. The crime that was committed by the apostles was to proclaim the gospel. Where they preached the gospel, they were persecuted; where they were persecuted, they preach the gospel. This needs to be held together. These were really important thoughts. And so, after they charged them with this, they let them go. And then they left the presence of the council. So, notice here they're in a council, and here they're being beaten. And they were rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. So, the first two dangers that they're gonna face, Jesus is telling these disciples, remember, it's Peter, James, John, and Andrew who've come and said to Jesus, hey, when is all this gonna happen. Jesus says, hey, look, a lot of things are gonna happen before the temple falls. I'm gonna tell you what's gonna happen to you. Before the temple is destroyed in AD 70 you're gonna be delivered over to council's and you're gonna be beaten in synagogues. And guess what happened shortly after Jesus ascends to the Father. That exact thing happens. So, the Jewish rulers are going to, they're gonna create lots of problems for these disciples. But they're also going to suffer at the hands of the Roman rulers. Look at what it says in verse 9, You will stand before governors and kings. Now, governor here is just a general term that's used for Roman prefects and procurators. Paul stood before governors Felix and Festus in Acts 23 and 24. Paul stood before King Agrippa in Acts 25. And ultimately, Peter and Paul will stand before the ultimate King of the Empire, Caesar himself in Rome. And what will happen is, is that Caesar will take Peter and he'll crucify him upside down and chop heads, he'll chop Paul's head right off. And so, they're going to stand before these officials as well.

Now, why is this gonna happen to them? It is really important that you see this. There are two reasons I want to give you. The first reason is that it's gonna happen for a reason, all right? The reason is this: It's because of their suffering and persecution that, I'm sorry, it's because they follow Jesus that they suffer and are persecuted right? So, the first thing I want you to see is their suffering and persecution, is completely because they follow Jesus. Here's what it says in verse 9, you're going to stand before governors and kings, and here's the reason, for my sake. That should be interpreted as on account of me or because of me. Why are you gonna be beaten? Why are you gonna be turned over to councils and to kings and governors? On account of me, because of me, this is gonna happen. So, you're gonna be persecuted because of your relationship to me, Jesus says. But the second reason he gives is it's gonna happen for a purpose. So, there's a reason that they're going to be turned over, and it's because of the relationship to Jesus. But they're going to be turned over not just because of their relationship to Jesus, but because Jesus has a purpose in this. So, here's the purpose. It's because they're suffering in their persecution will itself be a witness to the gospel. Notice again in verse 9, you're gonna stand before kings for my sake, and here's the purpose, to bear witness before them. In other words, their suffering and persecution is actually going to result in an unimaginable opportunity. And that is that they're gonna have the opportunity to declare before the authorities and the rulers and kings the power of the gospel. And so, they're given this opportunity because they suffer. So, in other words, I want you to consider this for just a moment. There is no such thing as

closed doors to the gospel. There are no closed doors. We look at palaces, and we look at places where rulers live, the White House, 10 Downing Street, palaces that exist in Saudi Arabia, and we say, well, certain places are just closed off to the gospel. No one can get in to preach the gospel there. That's not true. The gospel is never closed off. In fact, God can put anybody anywhere he wants them to be, even if it's in the presence of Caesar himself in the Roman Empire, to preach the gospel as long as we're willing to suffer if that's what it takes to be put into that place. And so, there's no closed doors. And so, the gospel can go anywhere. Those in power may not embrace the gospel, but they will have had the gospel preached to them.

Now the next verse that we come to, verse number 10, when you look at it, it seems in some ways to kind of interrupt the flow of things. In fact, if you just look at what happens in verse 9, it says they're gonna deliver you over to councils, you'll be beaten in synagogues, and then when you come to the verse right after that, when you come to verse 11, if you skipped 10, it says, and when they bring you to trials, see, it seems like suddenly verse 10 just interrupts this smooth flow from verse 9 to 11 and so verse 10 kind of seems out of place, right? Let's look at it in context, alright? Let's remember what Jesus is doing here. He's answering the two questions that the disciples ask back in verse 4. What was their question? When will these things be? What will be the sign when all these things are gonna be accomplished? They want to know when will the temple be destroyed? And what will be the sign when the temple is about to be destroyed? And he told them that a number of things are gonna happen, right? He told him, look, false messiahs are gonna come, wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines. But these are not the end. And then specifically in verse 7, he says, when you hear of all these things, he says, don't be alarmed. God's gonna do something with this, and the reason we know that is because we saw these words in verse 7, when you hear of all this, don't be alarmed. This must take place. Now see that phrase 'must take place.' That's an important phrase because we saw last week that the reason Jesus can say not to be alarmed when all this is happening is because the fact that it must take place means that God is in sovereign control of history. So, this stuff is going to happen. But it's not a sign of the end. It's more a sign that God is in control and he can guarantee that if this is gonna happen, that this is gonna happen, and this is gonna happen.

Now, with that in mind, look at verse 10 again: And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. See, here's that word 'must' again. These things must take place, verse 7 says. Here we read that the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. Now, let's just break this verse down, alright? First notice the word 'first.' Remember the question they asked: Jesus, when will the temple be destroyed? Well, here he tells them when it won't happen, alright? That's the first thing you've got to notice. He says it won't happen until the gospel has been proclaimed to all nations. So, if you're wondering when the temple is gonna be destroyed, I can tell you this, until the gospel has been proclaimed to all nations, the temple will not be destroyed. That's what Jesus is saying right here. So that has to happen first. Before the temple can be destroyed, the gospel must be proclaimed to all nations. Second, notice that word 'must.' The gospel must first be proclaimed. So, when it says 'must' right, the temple won't be destroyed until the gospel is proclaimed to all the nations because this must happen first. So, the certainty of that taking place, the gospel being preached to all nations, can only be guaranteed by the sovereignty of God. It's the only guarantee. In

other words, Jesus is saying this, don't be alarmed by the suffering and persecution that you're gonna experience, don't let that unnerve you or unsettle you, don't let that rattle you. Because when that happens, you're liable to say, wait a minute, wait a minute, this isn't supposed to be happening to me. I'm being thrown before governors and kings and I'm being drug into the council, and I'm being beaten on account of my relationship to Jesus. He said the gospel is gonna be preached, but this is happening. He said wait a minute, don't let that unnerve you. God is still in sovereign control of history. In fact, look, he is in sovereign control of their lives, just as he is sovereign in control of your life and my life. And he's also therefore sovereignly in control of gospel mission. Which means that the gospel, if it's the means of God's reconciling the world to himself through the death of Jesus, if that's God's plan to reconcile the world, is that the gospel will be preached, then I can guarantee you that God has not left that plan to chance. In fact, there's no way, the gospel will go where he wants it to go, when he wants it to go there, and it will save who he wants to save when it gets there. Because God is in control of history and the gospel is his gospel.

And so, listen very carefully. If God has sent Christ to die for our sins and Jesus has taken our sins upon himself in order that we might not suffer and be judged for our sins, but rather that Christ has suffered and has been judged in our place for our sins, and the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. So when I hear the gospel and I hear that Christ has died for me, I hear that my sins are no longer going to be something that I'm going to have to carry around enduring this sadness and grief of knowing that my future holds nothing but judgment when I find that one day I stand before God and all of his perfection and all of his holiness, but rather that this holy God has judged Christ for my sins. When I hear that, then something happens. The gospel is the power of God, and it breaks the hardness of my heart, the scales fall from my eyes, Christ becomes beautiful to me, and I turn to him in repentance and faith, and I worship him, and this is God's means for reconciling the world to himself. And if that's God's means for doing it, then I can promise that God has not left that to be something that he has just taken a great big chance on that it will actually happen in world history. No, in fact, God sovereignly stewards the gospel and its proclamation to the nation's because he is in control. It's his gospel. And so, if it's his gospel, then that means nothing can stop it. Nothing can stop God from accomplishing what he wills to accomplish through the gospel. And so, when Jesus tells the disciples, hey, listen, just let me tell you in the middle of this conversation about persecution, I know you want to know when the temple is gonna be destroyed, I know you want to know when all this is gonna happen, but first, just understand all the suffering I'm describing that's gonna take place to you, it's not going to stop the gospel. The gospel is not gonna be hindered. Kings can do whatever they want. They can issue edicts, they can do anything that they want, they can say the gospel can't be preached, but it's not going to stop the gospel because the gospel is attended to by a power far greater than the power of the most powerful kings of the world. It's God's power.

And so furthermore, if that's the case, then I want you to notice that not only does this persecution that's described in verse 9 and verse 11 and 13, not stop the spread of the gospel, but in fact, this persecution, it does just the opposite. In fact, it's the cause of the spread of the gospel. We see this in Acts 8. If you look at the first four verses of Acts 8, guess what you'd see? Great persecution broke out in Jerusalem, and when it did, guess what it did? It scattered the church, and those who were scattered went about

preaching the gospel. And guess what? People came to Christ as a result of this spread of the gospel, and the gospel spread, why? Because persecution broke out. And so, we see this alright? Now, the third thing I want you notice in this verse 10, is when he says 'all nations' alright? It says, and the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. Now, we've got to stop here and ask the question, what does he mean by all nations? Right? That's an important question. This is one of those verses that is also very often misinterpreted. In fact, let's just look at how it happens. Right? First thing that happens is this, we come to Mark 13, we open the Bible, we have our newspaper or we have our blog, or whatever we're looking at with the news and we say, oh my goodness, all this is happening, increase of earthquakes, wars, rumors of wars, you know there's a famine over here, you know, yesterday there was a person claiming that they were the Christ the Messiah. This must be the end. We come to Mark 13, we read it, we say oh my goodness, all that's right there. And so, we say, these are all signs of the second coming of Jesus. It's gonna happen. And then we say but you know what? Wait a minute. I thought that Jesus said in that same place where he told us about all the stuff going on on CNN.com today that all that happening points to the end of the age. But hold on. The gospel hadn't been preached to all the nations; I hear all the time about unreached people groups. And so, if the gospel has to be preached to all nations before Christ can return, maybe he can't return. If he can't return, well, then what does that mean? That means oh, no. We're uncertain about the world we're living in. I don't know if Jesus can return or not. Am I preventing the return of Jesus? Well, look at the text. What does the text actually say, though? It says first, that the context here, is that they're asking about the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in AD 70. They're not talking about what we read on CNN. They're talking about the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in AD 70. So that means that the gospel then, watch very carefully, if they're talking about the destruction of the temple in AD 70, then it means this, the gospel must first be proclaimed to all the nations before the destruction of the temple in AD 70. Now, let me ask you something. Was the temple destroyed in AD 70? Yes, it was. Did Jesus say that before the temple would be destroyed that the gospel would be preached to all the nations? Yes, he did. Does that mean then, one of two things have to be true? Either a. that Jesus was wrong or b. that Jesus was right. Yes, it means just that. Which means that we have to say well hey, then Jesus must have been right. He said the gospel had to be preached all the nations. So, we have to assume then, that it happened. Well, in that case, then here's what we have to do. We have to look at this and say, what did all nations mean when they heard him say 'all nations'? It would have simply been understood as the whole known world at that time, the Roman Empire for them, and the bordering nations of the Roman Empire. That was the world for them. And to show you that this is how they thought and that I'm not doing what I told you that you can't do, which is read into the text. You say, wait a minute, you just read that into the text. It says all of the gospel has to be preached to all the nations, and all nations mean all nations. And suddenly you just read into that, and you said no, that means this. No, I want to show you just so you're clear. I want to show you that this means exactly what I'm saying.

Look at Romans 16:25, see what it says, it says as the apostle Paul is concluding this great chapter to the church in Rome, here's what he says, he says: Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings, in other words, the gospel

was disclosed through the prophetic writings and through the preaching of the gospel and look at what it says, it has been made known to all nations. See that? There's the Apostle Paul saying the gospel has been made known to all nations. You know when he's writing this? Before AD 70. Now, obviously, he didn't mean Mexico and Canada. Mexico and Canada didn't exist at the time. So, when they heard all nations, Peter, James, John, and Andrew didn't say, oh, yeah, well, what about Chile? Because what about that? Jesus would have said, what's Chile, right? They didn't know these nations. These nations didn't exist at the time. So, Paul can say that this has happened because all the nations that they knew of and were aware of, this had happened. And it happened according to the command of the eternal God. To bring about the obedience of faith. Now Paul says something very similar in Colossians 1. So, look at what he says in verses 5-6, second part of verse 5 says this: Of this you have heard before in the word of truth. Now what's the word of truth? Well, he tells them, he says the gospel. And now watch what he says about the gospel. He says the gospel, which has come to you. Okay, so here's the church in Colossi. And remember, Jesus is telling the disciples on the Mount of Olives, just right outside of Jerusalem, that the gospel is going to be preached to all the nations before the temple will be destroyed in AD 70. Now, Paul, writing in the mid to late 50's AD, like no 1950, just 50, just a couple, like we're talking 20 years after Jesus says this, what does Paul say? He says the gospel, which has come to you, it's gone from Jerusalem, all the way to Colossi, and then he says, as indeed in the whole world. He obviously can't mean the Americas; we know that we don't even know anything about the Americas in European history until Columbus accidentally lands there. So, he can't mean the Americas. He says that the gospel is bearing fruit and it's increasing. Indeed, if indeed you continue in the faith stable and steadfast not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, and then watch this, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven. Paul just said the gospel has been preached in all creation under heaven. Well, seriously? In Brazil? You say no, Paul hasn't been to Brazil. What does he mean? He means exactly what we have to understand the biblical writers to be saying. They're saying look, in the whole known world, in the entire Roman Empire, in all the lands that border the Roman Empire, in everywhere that we have gone, where every nation has been represented just the same as all the nations were represented on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit was given, the gospel has spread. And that's why the book of Acts begins with Jesus saying to the disciples, you're gonna be my witnesses here in Judea and Samaria and to the outermost parts of the Earth. And guess what? When Paul gets to the end of Acts, the book of Acts in the 28th chapter, he's sitting in a prison cell and the gospel, in a sense, has made it to the end of the world. It's symbolic, we're meant to understand, the gospel has gone forth. So, Paul could say, by the 50's, mid 50's AD, that the gospel had been made known to all the nations and in fact as he said in Colossi that it was bearing fruit throughout the whole world.

And so, when we come back then to verse 10 and say, well, it says: and the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. Now, suddenly we look at it and say, OK, hold on. So, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked the question about the temple being destroyed, and he's saying to them, Peter, James, John, and Andrew, I need you to know this, before the temple is gonna be destroyed, because you want to know when's it gonna happen? Let me just tell you. Before that happens, the gospel will be proclaimed throughout the whole world. So, don't be alarmed when you suffer. And you say, wait a minute. Jesus said the gospel had to be preached throughout the

whole world. But we're suffering. Paul has had his head chopped off. Peter's been crucified upside down. This isn't gonna happen. Jesus says no, listen, the gospel must be preached to all the nations before the temple is destroyed. And if I say it must be preached than understand, I will guarantee that it will happen. So, you see now how this makes a lot more sense in context here. So, after this remark in verse 10, Jesus then resumes his exhortation regarding suffering and persecution. And so, look what he says in verse 11: when they bring you to trial, which you're going to stand trial, and they deliver you over, don't be anxious beforehand what you're to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. So now, Jesus continues to make it really clear that proclamation of the gospel and persecution, they go hand in hand, alright? So, the gospel is proclaimed and when the gospels proclaimed it results in persecution and when that takes place, guess what that does? That results in further gospel proclamation. So, the gospel is proclaimed, I'm persecuted, and I was just preaching the gospel to people on the street. And now I am persecuted, and I'm thrown into prison. And then they drag me out of prison, and they stick me in front of an emperor or a king. I stand in front of a governor, Felix. I stand in front of Festus, and now the gospel is proclaimed to them. And so, the gospel and persecution go hand in hand. And the key point then that we have to remember is this: God is therefore sovereign over both; he is sovereign over the gospel being proclaimed, he will ensure it goes to every nation, and he is equally sovereign over persecution of Christians when they suffer for proclaiming the gospel. So never make the mistake of assuming that a Christian who has been thrown into prison in their faith, someone living in a prison cell being beaten and tortured in North Korea or China on this very day as I speak, never make the mistake of assuming that God is somehow out of control and is not in power over their life because he is sovereignly in control of their life, of their persecution, and of the gospel, and neither will lose. The gospel will not lose as it advances across the world, and neither will that Christian who suffers and dies for the advancement of the gospel lose. They will win in the end.

And so, watch verse 11: when they bring you to trial and they deliver you over, in other words, persecution on account of me because you're preaching the gospel, do not be anxious beforehand. Don't worry beforehand. Don't worry about that. Don't worry about what? Well, look at what he says: what you were to say. Oh, that's proclamation. So, when you think about persecution, you think about proclamation. Don't worry about it. In other words, listen, say whatever is given you in that hour, because it is not you who speak but the Holy Spirit. So, first thing I want to just say is this, this isn't a text that can be used to justify lack of study or preparation for preaching and teaching. So, you can't just say no, I don't really ever study my Bible, I just show up and the Holy Spirit tells me what to say. No, he doesn't. The second thing is, is that when you look at this, you got to notice that this is a text that promises something else, and that is that when you're suddenly arrested and put on trial for the gospel, you're just there preaching the gospel, which means that you already had studied and prepared right? And so, you had something to say and then someone comes in and they take you and they drag you away and they beat you and you suffer, when that happens, you don't have to worry. You don't say, well I didn't have time to prepare my defense of the gospel here in this moment because I was suddenly arrested and hauled away. No, listen, God is both present and in control in that moment. So, this text is a great comfort. It's a great comfort. It's not a text that says you don't have to study. Just do, say whatever you want. The Holy Spirit just talks through you all the time. We're not all

running around as prophets. In other words, here's what it says: God is with you in your suffering. God is with you in your persecution. He's there, and you might be in the presence of rulers, those with authority and with great power, but when you stand before him and you feel your knees begin to buckle and you start to shake and shiver and you're terrified because you're standing in front of rulers, those with great authority and great power, know that in that moment that you don't have to shake and shiver, your knees can suddenly regain their strength and you can stand tall and erect and strong because while you stand in front of those who rule with authority and great power, the one who is with you in that moment has more authority and more power and is the ruler of all the rulers. And he's promised you in that moment that he will be faithful to you. Verse 12 says, Listen, brother is going to deliver brother over to death. The word 'deliver' here, it means betray, he's gonna be betrayed, and that's gonna happen between a father and his child. And children are going to rise against parents and have them put to death. In other words, suffering and persecution on account of Jesus is not simply gonna come from a bunch of random strangers. It's gonna come from one's own family members, those who are the closest to you. And we know this happens to people. We know Jesus was betrayed by one closest to him, one of his own 12 disciples, Judas Iscariot. And we know throughout history, especially in context, where we see intense suffering in Muslim nations where to come to Christ means to be disowned by your family. It means to have your uncles to come and kill you with a sword because of it, that this is what happens on account of the gospel. Verse 13 says, And you will be hated by all, society as a whole, why? For my name's sake. In other words, because of your allegiance to me, Jesus is saying. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. Remember I told you again, or just a moment ago, the gospel doesn't lose, and neither does the one who preaches the gospel lose. There's no way Jesus is saying there's no escaping suffering and persecution that comes from true loyalty to Jesus. I mean, he says it right there. You're gonna be hated by all. And this verse alone should end this nonsense of, you know, if we were just like Jesus everyone would like us. You know, how many times have we heard they love Jesus, they just don't like the church. That's because this idea of Jesus is this sort of just kind of pansy who walks around, who doesn't have any demands upon anyone. He's not a ruling king who says, this is my word and you must obey it. Rather, he's just some guy who's just there to just basically dispense whatever sort of dreams and wishes that people have hoped for and make them all come true. And so, we said, well, if we were just like Jesus, we just loved everybody, never judged anybody, never called sin 'sin,' and we were just happy and just served the world, people would love us. No. Jesus says, look, if you're loyal to me, you're gonna guarantee yourself this. You're gonna be hated by all.

Now, Jesus, I don't think he would make a great salesman. I don't think Jesus would, if we sent Jesus out to sell cars, he wouldn't last very long. Because he just would be too truthful, right? We would be listening to Jesus and we'd be saying, well, how much is this really going to cost? And he'd say, well it's really gonna cost this much. Oh, well you didn't tell me about that. See Jesus tells the truth. He says this is the cost. You wanna be my disciple, you want to follow me? You'll be hated by everybody. In fact, your own family might hate you for it. But don't worry, because here's the thing. The one who endures to the end will be saved. In other words, true loyalty to Jesus is going to cause suffering. It's gonna cause persecution. It's gonna cause those things because you're gonna be out of step with the world. You're not gonna be going where the

world goes. But, even if you are killed, even if you lose your life, you're going to inherit eternal life and therefore be saved. And that's what he means, he says the one who endures to the end. You just say I'm not letting go of Christ and you hold out to the end like Peter, who was crucified upside down; like Paul, who was beheaded. All because they stood before kings just as Jesus said would happen. Well, guess what? Peter may have been crucified upside down, but right now he's sitting right side up with Jesus. Paul might have been beheaded, but right now he is whole with Jesus. That's why Paul could say to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. It's why he could say to live is Christ to die is gain. If I die, if they take my life, don't feel bad for me. I lost nothing. I gained everything because I gained Jesus. This is an exhortation, then, to radical endurance. It's a call for the disciples to remain faithful, even if it costs them their life.

So, as I said at the beginning, this section of Mark 13 it's not about us predicting the return of Jesus as much as it is exhorting us to say, be faithful to Jesus right now in history. Before the world ends, be faithful to him; to the disciples, before Jerusalem falls and the temples destroyed, be faithful to him. So, we've seen this in these first 13 verses, and next week we'll move into the next bit. But let me leave you with these three things that I just think are crucial that we take away today. First, is this - faithful discipleship in the present, in every generation, is going to result in suffering and persecution. There's just no getting around that. And I know for some of you that that's not, that's not how you wanted to spend your Sunday, right? You didn't want to hear on Sunday morning as you were drinking coffee in your house, I mean, I'm sure like your breakfast doesn't taste as good right now on your couch, you're saying gosh, man, I'm going to suffer for the gospel, but it is what the Scripture says. Peter says all those who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. It's just the truth. Second thing, though, that you have to understand, is this - suffering and persecution in every generation is always going to lead to further opportunity for faithful discipleship. They're going to always lead to greater opportunities for the gospel to be proclaimed. So, the question is, do I value the proclamation of the gospel over my own life? And the third thing that we see is this - God is sovereign over both. God is sovereign over both, he's sovereign over the gospel being preached and he is sovereign over the persecution of believers and their lives, whether they live or whether they die. This is what we read about in the Book of James. We are to say, if the Lord wills we will live and do this and that, and go here, and go there. If the Lord wills, I will live to preach the gospel another day. If the Lord no longer wills for me to live, I will not preach the gospel another day, but the gospel will have done its work and it will have gone forth. And so, this means that if God is sovereign, that I should never shrink back in fear from either the preaching of the gospel or the suffering that comes with it. But rather I should willingly go forward with both, readily in front of me at all times, because of faithfulness to Jesus.

So, I want to tell you this as we close. You know, there's only one reason that anybody would walk away from hearing these words of Jesus and say, huh, sounds like a good thing. Let's sign up. The only reason anybody would ever do that is if they genuinely believed that Christ was worth everything. If you believe Jesus is worth everything, then you would be willing to say I'm willing to trade everything. That's the only way this will happen. And do you know, the amazing thing is the only way that that will happen, the only way that you will say Christ is worth everything therefore, I'm willing to trade

everything, is if this very gospel does the very work that we've talked about in you. And the only way that that happens is for you to hear the gospel and the way that you got to hear the gospel today is not because I preached it in the relative safety of this space. It's because these people suffered and died in order to ensure that the gospel was handed off and it was handed off and it was handed off, until ultimately I reached back and grabbed the baton, and it was my turn in the relay of preaching the gospel. One day I'll hand it to someone else and they will run the race. One of us along the way will suffer greater than the other. God will be sovereign over both. Those who he wants to suffer will suffer, those who he does not need to suffer for the gospel to go forward, won't suffer. It's his business. But the point is, is that the gospel has made it here, and when the gospel makes it here, the gospel will continue to make it there, and it will continue to make it there. And when the gospel arrives, this is what happens, is that you hear about Christ. You hear what he's done for you. You hear about his death on the cross and the gospel as an explosive power takes the hardness of your heart, in which you couldn't see the beauty of Christ. You heard about stuff, you said why would anybody suffer for Jesus? That sounds horrible, and it's because you didn't see the loveliness of Christ. You didn't see his beauty. You didn't treasure him more than anything in this world. But when the gospel came into your life and it did its work in you, and you were born again, the scales fell, blindness turned to sight, the hardness of your heart was shattered, it melted like wax. And you were able to see for the first time ever the beauty and the glory of Jesus, and your heart was captured. Your affections were held captive by him. And you looked upon him and all of his beauty and all of his loveliness. The glory of Christ was real to you. And you said, Oh, Jesus! Oh, Jesus. You've given your life for me even though I didn't deserve it. You're unlike anyone I've ever known. You're glorious and beautiful and magnificent and worthy of my praise and devotion. And I want to be with you forever. I will trade everything for you. What would you ask of me? I will give it all. If I can just have you. When Christ becomes the center of your affections, then you will say, deliver me to the councils, beat me in the synagogues, stand me before the governors and the kings. Do what you must, let my family turn against me, let my own children put me to death, but give me Jesus. Because I'll trade it all for him. That and that alone is the fuel of the mission of the gospel, and God oversees all of it in great power.

Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for your faithfulness to us, in reminding us that you are always with us in the gospel as it's being proclaimed in the greatest halls of power, and Lord, in the roughest streets of the worst ghettos of our world, you are always there. Your gospel always does its work and no matter how beautiful the setting it's preached in or no matter how unlovely the setting it's preached in, Christ will be lovelier still, and so to him, we turn and offer our song of worship and praise. In Christ's name, Amen, Amen.