

24 And Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! 25 "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 26 And they who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" 27 But He said, "The things impossible with men are possible with God." 28 And Peter said, "Behold, we have left our own homes, and followed You." 29 And He said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who shall not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life."

31 And He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. 32 "For He will be delivered to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, 33 and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again." 34 And they understood none of these things, and this saying was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.

You've been hearing the phrase, "kingdom of God" over and over from this pulpit for a very long time. And we've consistently taught that the phrase kingdom of God is referring to the household of God as opposed to Satan, where God has authority to reign.

We understand that God ultimately has authority to reign over every created thing, but we also understand that Adam forfeited that authority to reign in this world given to him by God, when he sinned, and Satan usurped that authority and reigns on this earth until Jesus comes a 2nd time and deposes him to chains.

Last week we noted that in the story of the rich, young, ruler, the terms; *Eternal life*, *Kingdom of God*, and *saved*, or salvation, are all used interchangeably. Those terms are all speaking about someone who has been freed from the captivity of Satan because of sin, into God's household, God's family, God's ownership.

A wealthy, intelligent, morally fine and seemingly worthy prospect comes to Jesus and says How do I get saved? What must I do to have eternal life? And Jesus immediately gives him the opportunity to enter. First we have to deal with sin. The man says, none to report. Then Jesus immediately shows him his sin.

Leave your worldly wealth behind, in fact, sell it and give it to the poor so that you can pay your wealth forward to enjoy real wealth in the kingdom, and come follow me.

No can do. His face fell. He was sad. Stricken even, but he calculated the cost and could not or better, would not pay. His wealth, which was a LOT, his wealth was worth more to him than having Jesus. He forfeited his soul. He forfeited a quality of life where your spirit is quickened from the dead and made alive together with Christ for eternity. He gave that up to keep his worldly possessions.

He told Jesus there was no sin to report, but what about the Shema? You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength, and Him only shall you serve. Jesus showed him that he loved his money more than eternal life, more than a relationship with God, more than freedom from the curse of sin. More than Jesus.

There may have been a crowd of upwards of 20,000 present that day. Jesus is in full stride right here. Moving towards Jerusalem, but still in full stride. I'm going to venture that all 20,000 plus all of the thousands who came and went during the three years of His ministry had to do a similar calculation.

After the resurrection, a little group of sad frightened believers are waiting together for the promised Holy Spirit. We have that number. About 120. Out of perhaps a quarter of a million people that encountered Jesus in His 3 year ministry in Israel that also had to do the math to decide if Jesus was worth having at whatever the individual cost may have been, we have 120?

That begs the question; What about us? What about us? Those of us who live in the land of the glib, who have never had to ponder what if anything we might have to give up in order to have Jesus, in order for Him to be Lord of us, in order for the words *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven* to be true of our lives.

This morning Luke transitions into the final weeks of Jesus life on this earth. We're going to shift out of overdrive and start the grind up the long grade from Jericho to Jerusalem. You always go UP to Jerusalem. It's very much like any of the grades you're used to coming up out of Death Valley, except the road is shorter and the grade is steeper.

Transition time. But Luke's transition is filled with this idea of cost. This event with this rich young man who wouldn't pay opens up the discussion of cost. Personal cost to exit this world and all of it's baggage and stuff, in order to have the kingdom.

We begin with a man who calculated the cost and didn't join with Jesus. He kept the world. And we didn't say much about it last week, but we will this week, if God allows. Peter says; what about us? We left some very real treasures of this world behind in order to follow you, Jesus, what about us?

28 And Peter said, "Behold, we have left our own homes, and followed You."

What about us. This is tricky. Because good old Peter says we left everything behind to follow you, but after he rejected Jesus before the first trial, and the cock crowed as Jesus told him it would, Peter who is broken hearted over his failure says what? I'm going fishing.

He left his home to follow Jesus, but the boat was still there. The nets were still there, waiting. He didn't have to re-invest in equipment, he just went fishing.

Matthew, on the other hand, left a business opportunity that had cost him X amount of dollars in order to have the set-up necessary with Rome, and 5

minutes after he left, Rome had someone else in his booth gathering the tax dollars. There was no going back when He followed Jesus.

I thought about this a bit and tried to think of other examples of biblical heroes that left things behind in order to follow God. Lots of examples come to mind;

Job didn't leave his home, his home left him. God stripped him bare of everything, and when that wasn't enough cost for Satan, God even allowed Satan to attack his physical health. Job, sitting in ashes, scraping scabs with broken pottery, everything gone, except his wife who is telling him to curse God and die. He doesn't. And it was worth it.

Noah built a boat because God told him his home was going to be flooded.

Abraham left his home to go to an unknown place that God promised to him, sight unseen, totally just believing God that it would be worth it. It was.

Abraham not only left his home to follow God, on God's command he took his beloved son to offer him as a sacrifice. Talk about being willing to leave family behind in order to have God?

Moses left the palaces of pharaoh behind in order to belong to God instead of pharaoh's household. Then Moses convinced the children of Israel to leave Egypt behind in order to dwell in a promised land. They did.

Rahab the harlot left her home behind in order to be counted among the children of Israel, and she became a link in the lineage of David, and then, Jesus. Worth it.

We could go on and on about examples of people who left comfort and wealth and home behind in order to have a promise as yet, unseen, a better world, with God.

Some of you have figured out that I'm drawing heavily from Hebrews chapter

11, the so-called "faith" chapter. Let me read you some verses from that chapter where the author explains to us the concept of leaving this world and its treasures and comforts that are known, behind in order to have the as yet, unknown. We leave this world behind, and we get a down-payment for later. The Holy Spirit of God who dwells with us and in us.

*13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were **strangers and exiles** on the earth. 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.*

Peter says, that rich guy wouldn't leave his stuff behind in order to have You, but we left our homes behind in order to follow you. Jesus says, don't you worry, it'll be totally worth it! And it was.

We can't leave the subject without considering one person who was late to the party but who definitely left it all behind in order to have Jesus. In order to have life. This is very familiar territory for us. I've read it many times. Paul

*5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. 7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but dung **in order that I may gain Christ**, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, Ppn. 3:*

Paul is the mirror image of the rich young ruler. He had it all and was on his

way to being a rock star as far as this world counts wealth. But he walked away from all of it, in order to have Jesus. Was it worth it? Jesus promised more, in this life, and in the life to come, Glory. Here's what Paul got;

2 Cor. 11: in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. 24 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. 26 I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; 27 I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. 28 Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches.

Worth it? Well, life wasn't dull! Those churches that he mentions that he has concern over, above and beyond all the physical challenges; that's the part Jesus promised His followers;

“Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who shall not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life.

Once your eyes have really seen Jesus, there's nothing this world's got that compares. Nothing.

Well, let me show you one more person who left his home behind in order to have something of inestimable value. Talk about a guy who left riches behind in order to embrace poverty for a time in order to gain exceeding riches;

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a

man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus left riches in glory that our limited minds cannot even begin to fathom. For what? To be homeless. Rejected. Spit on?

*2 For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot,
And like a root out of parched ground;
He has no stately form or majesty
That we should look upon Him,
Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.*

*3 He was despised and forsaken of men,
A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
And like one from whom men hide their face,
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*

We didn't like Him. He wasn't King material. Not in our eyes. Nothing about Him was attractive to us. Trade our wealth to have Him?? I don't think so.

Jesus begins the ascent up to Jerusalem to die. The man who left the company of His Father, the God of all creation, who left riches and all of the splendors of His heavenly home, unfathomable to us, leaves this rich man who turns away from following Him, and has this conversation with the disciples about what they will gain, as he begins the ascent up the mountain to Jerusalem to be spit upon, beaten, murdered.

All of a sudden, what Peter or James or John or Paul or anybody else gave up in order to hang out with Jesus seems kind of small by comparison to what He gave up in order to come and go up into Jerusalem to be spit on, beaten, murdered so that God could hang out with us. Anybody else want to talk

about what they left behind?

This is now the third time Jesus has introduced this subject of His impending death and resurrection at the hands of wicked men. Each time there has been increasing scope and detail. Each time the disciples don't hear it, won't hear it. It doesn't make it into their computers. They simply have no place for a dead Messiah. That isn't a possibility in their thinking mechanisms.

We'll compare Matthew and Mark's version of this event also as each author brings some bit of detail and color that the others leave out. So we consider all of the accounts to get the most puzzle pieces for the clearest picture.

*Lk. 18:31 And He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and **all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man** will be accomplished.*

Luke is the single gospel writer who tells us that Jesus here draws on completed prophecy in His third and most complete account of His torment and death. The disciples have no ideas of a suffering dead Messiah but Jesus says, it is written by the prophets and so it will come to pass.

We have computers these days that can spit out numbers that give a realistic numerical equivalent to the possibility of something randomly happening. Most of that computing power is working for the industry of gambling. What are the odds of something that requires no human element of skill to make the calculations even more difficult, of a guy tossing a set of 5 dice out of a can and a royal flush appearing on the dice.

Before computers we had a sense that it was a big number. Computers can tell us it's about one chance in 650,000. What are the odds of Jesus fulfilling hundreds of prophecies given over a 1500 year period by multiple prophets?

We've heard the Texas deal before. Fill up the entire real estate of the area of Texas 2 feet deep in dollars with a single one marked and then send in a blind guy to pick out that dollar. That's the odds. Whatever that number was.

That doesn't seem to impress people who apparently believe the odds that the worlds created themselves by chance are possible. If that could happen it's a small thing for many prophetic voices over 1500 years making somewhere around 400 prophecies that have all come true. Really?

Paul explains how this level of unbelief is possible. Romans 1:18 *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.*

That word suppress is the word you would use if you're expending all your effort to hold down a giant spring that has enormous dangerous pressure if it gets away. This world works hard at it's dis-belief and rejection.

A God who speaks. How about a God who tells the future in the past and it has all come true. You have to work hard at dis-belief. It's hard to suppress the facts. Hard work to purposefully and wickedly ignore and dis-believe in a God who has supplied so much evidence.

If creation isn't enough, how about the prophecies? If creation and completed prophecy isn't enough, how about a man who speaks and the wind ceases to blow and the waves cease capsizing the boat. Instant silence. How about a man who speaks and food appears from almost nothing that feeds 20,000 people until they're completely full, and the leftovers gathered up are 10 or 20 times what you started with.

How about a man who speaks and eyes that never saw, now see, ears that never heard, now hear, legs that were shriveled and useless now leap, dead folks who are dead long enough to stink come out of the tomb, and the demons flee from Him in terror. A man who was murdered and rose from the tomb on the 3rd day. His name is Jesus.

*31 And He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and **all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished.***

Luke is the sole author that includes that statement to buttress our belief in Jesus. Everything the prophets said about the Son of Man is going to be accomplished.

That's a true statement, and the final 6 1/2 chapters of Luke's gospel is going to give us a blow by blow account of the false trials, death, and resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

But that doesn't complete the prophecy that Jesus just made along with all of the other prophets. Jesus death and resurrection was necessary in order to solve the sin problem for God's chosen elect to have a righteousness, not their own, given to them by Jesus. He takes our sin. He gives us His righteousness.

But there's a LOT more to the story after that. Jesus isn't finished with all of the prophecies by a long shot. About 2/3rds of the prophecy of this book are actually about the second coming of Jesus when He conquers and deposes Satan, takes the title deed of this earth back, and sets up His kingdom on earth on David's throne at Jerusalem.

Beloved, we live in an exciting era. In our lifetimes we have witnessed the lull of the end of the church age, a time of relaxed ease where God has been filling the seats in the stadium up to max capacity for the show that's about to begin.

Satan's not going to leave quietly. Couple that truth with another one. God has been storing up wrath. So much wickedness. So much more stored up wrath. It's about to begin. Satan's going to go out swinging. Over half of the worlds population will perish during a 7 year period.

Wrath! But the wrath unleashed right at the end is so terrible, John was going to write down what he saw, and the angel told him, don't write it down. It's too awful. Too frightening. When God's wrath is poured out on the collective wickedness of this world, it's too awesome to write down. I suppose words couldn't begin to do it justice.

We have creation. We have completed prophecy. We have phenomenal miracles that only the power that created the worlds could accomplish. The world is suppressing all of that truth with all the power they can muster.

32 "For He will be delivered to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, 33 and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again."

Actually, before we get to those seven distinct prophecies, we need to visit Matthew and Mark's accounts very briefly because they add a couple more that Luke didn't mention.

Matt. 20:17 And as Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and on the way He said to them, 18 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, 19 and will deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up."

Luke didn't mention that this communication was to the twelve alone. That adds some color. Inner circle, outer circle. Jesus said most of what He said in the hearing of thousands who were gathered to see the miracle shows. But there were things that Jesus didn't tell the masses that He did tell His chosen apostles.

Also Luke doesn't tell us what Mark and Matthew tell us, two or three more distinct prophetic statements to be realized. Jesus will be delivered first to the chief priests and scribes of the nation of Israel before the gentiles get involved.

He will be delivered. Handed over. Jesus was omniscient. He knew Judas Iscariot would deliver Him to the temple police to be dragged off to a phony trial by the leaders of the Jewish nation. The Jews could condemn Him to death, but they had no power to execute that death. Rome had to do that.

4 more distinct prophecies here.

- Delivered to the chief priests and scribes. Judas did that.
- Tried by the chief priests and their lawyers. That happened.
- Condemned to death by them. That happened.
- Delivered to the gentiles by the Jews. That happened.

I count 4 distinct prophecies there that Luke didn't include. The number keeps growing.

Now bear in mind, I'm only counting the prophecies that Jesus made about the myriad of prophecies in place by the Old Testament prophets. Jesus said, ***all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished***

I'm only counting the ones that Jesus gave as He prophesied about the prophecies. There's layer upon layer of prophecy that the world has to suppress in their unbelief.

You know, Daniel prophesied that in the end times, knowledge would increase. If you draw a curve through all of history of man's knowledge since Daniel until today it's a very slightly increasing almost straight line until the mid 1800's and then a rapid curve on the graph begins and continues in its angle upwards until today the line is almost straight up. Flat line, curve, straight up.

I think we could draw a similar graph of the stored wrath of God. A long straight line, then a rapid curve, then almost straight up. In my lifetime, the world has gotten so exponentially evil as they suppress the truth of God in order to increase their lawlessness and sin. It's going straight up.

32 “For He will be delivered to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, 33 and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again.” Let's count just these prophecies;

- Delivered to the gentiles. We already counted that one.
- mocked
- mistreated
- spit upon
- scourged
- murdered
- on the third day will rise from the dead

6 more completed prophecies. It's written down in the history books, delivered to us by multiple reliable witnesses who had nothing to gain by lying and in fact most of them lost their lives by telling us these truths.

That odds number just keeps going up up up like the number of births as you watch it rolling so fast your eyes can't keep up. And we only considered a small smattering of completed prophecies by a single prophet, Jesus. He foretells His own death.

In months to come as we walk through these events, blow by blow, we will, I'm sure, visit many many of the Old Testament prophecies that Jesus referred to about His sufferings and death. But remember, most of the Old Testament prophecies and many of the NT prophecies are not yet fulfilled. They define the conflagrations surrounding the event of Jesus returning and taking ownership of this earth as He deposes Satan.

34 And they understood none of these things, and this saying was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.

The disciples did not comprehend any of what Jesus just said. It goes in their ears and hits a road block. It doesn't lodge in their understanding. But it's all there, and when it all happens they already have this information in their

memory banks.

I want to end with a couple of truths, first about prophecy, and second about walking purposefully towards known dangers.

This week the New York Times had a story about the embarrassment of evangelicalism because of prophets who claim to have a direct spiritual connection with God, who said Mr. Trump would ultimately WIN. <nasty annoying buzzer sound> Wrong!

We've talked about the amazing apologetic of completed prophecy. God tells the end from the beginning. God tells the future through His prophets. However, we believe that at the end of the apostolic age, as the church began to take a mature form, and the canon of scripture was completed, that prophecy ceased.

There is no new prophecy after the close of the apostolic age. We do NOT believe people today are getting prophetic messages from God. And if you do want to believe that, the guys who were wrong about Mr. Trump's victory need to line up and be stoned to death for being false prophets. If you're going to claim prophetic revelations from God is still real, then you need to stone the guys who get it wrong. Be consistent.

I am a cessationist. I believe prophetic utterance about the future has ceased with the apostles deaths and the canon of scripture. No new prophecy. It only cheapens the very real prophecy that God WILL hold this world accountable to. Every word about future events recorded in the scriptures will be fulfilled!

Next; a new catch phrase that you will hear over and over in the media. Christian nationalist. Christian nationalists. These are a widely defined group of people who have been in power and who are now defeated, but who need to be stamped out and forgotten forever like nazi-ism.

These are mostly melatonin challenged people who have used some sky God and some ancient book to define a way of life that has stacked the deck in

their favor and downtrodden everybody else. And there may be some truth in that. I'm sure there is. But notice the first word in the new hate moniker.

It's now righteous to hate christians. Evil oppressive intolerant people. Christian is the defining word with nationalist. That's a big tent, a big net that catches a whole bunch of people. Some perhaps guilty, but others who are going to get swept in that are just christians, not nationalists at all.

This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through. I have always rooted for the good things our nation represented and hoped for a sustaining morality mostly out of my own selfish motives. I want to be able to live a dignified quiet life. Paul told us to pray for that much. I have.

But I've also realized God is sovereign over this wicked nation and what I hoped for wasn't going to be sustainable forever. His wrath is overdue in this place. Storm clouds are gathering and christian nationalists are the targets to be eradicated. Cancel culture is coming to a house near you, and I believe soon.

So as I considered those truths this week, the words from Mark's account of our passage this morning rang true, and I'll end our thoughts in Marks gospel, chapter 10, this same exact incident from Mark's perspective, or perhaps Peter

Mk. 10:32 And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were fearful. And again He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him,

These are not stupid men. They know that Jerusalem is hazardous to their health. Do you see the reluctance here? Jesus has stoically set his face towards Jerusalem and He's started up that grade that only goes to that place and Mark says He was walking on ahead of them.

They really don't want to go to Jerusalem. Let's go up to trouble! Really? Is that a good idea Jesus. Are you crazy Jesus. We all know what will happen in

Jerusalem. Nothing good. It isn't safe for you to go to Jerusalem. Can we talk about this Jesus?? And He leaves them and begins the ascent, and they follow along behind Him at a distance, and you can just sense the reluctance.

Mark says they were amazed. Mark loves that word. Amazed. Do we walk into a no-man's-land where guns are blaring? Is that smart to do. Are we amazed if our leader that we've left everything to follow marches headstrong straight into danger. That's crazy!

Mark says they were fearful. Of course they were fearful. Jerusalem is dangerous to the health of those who identify with Jesus. It's deadly for Jesus and dangerous for His followers. They are frightened and amazed that Jesus is insisting on going up *THAT* hill. Nothing good is going to happen up there.

They can look up to the top of the hill and it's black up there with storm clouds and they can see the dust rising up in that storm. There Jesus?? There??? You want to go up into that mess. Can't we just stay down here a while longer? Nothing good is going to happen up there. That's a mess up there.

Beloved, I think there is much to learn from these men at this juncture. We can see the storm in the near distance. And reluctance to follow Jesus up the hill into that mess is natural. Fear is natural. We know it's going to be a mess. And some of us are going to follow Him up that hill at a reluctant fearful distance. Like the disciples on this day.

This morning a man in Canada is in prison. He is a preacher of the gospel who for conscience sake because the Lord gave him a mandate to feed His sheep and the Lord gave the church a mandate to gather together in fellowship and worship, he is in prison because Canada ordered him to limit the number of his sheep to 15% and only worship within the guidelines of the state. He refused to do that and is in jail today. That happened this week.

A storm is gathering up the hill if we follow Jesus there. But we have to go. If you don't, you're like the rich young ruler, not the faithful disciples who did

follow Him up that hill, and eventually all of them died deaths inflicted by other hateful men except perhaps John who was banished to a desolate prison island where he wrote down the prophecies that we have spoken of this morning.

A storm is gathering. We have to follow Jesus up the mountain, into the storm.