

GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

89 – Spoken By Who?

Announcements:

10/11 @7:30 -

Prayer

10/12 @6:30 -

Grace Group

10/14 @6:00 -

Showers of Grace

REUNION

10/15 @8:30 -

Sunday School

10/15 @5:00 -

Joint Service With

La Luz

ICE BREAKER: Has someone ever taken credit for something you did? How did that make you feel?

READ: Matthew 27:3-10

Having spent a loooooong time in Matthew so far, we should be pretty used to hearing things like we read in verses 9 and 10 here. “Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord directed me.” But when Matthew says that this “fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah” we have a bit of a problem: Jeremiah never actually said this! In fact, no prophet in the Old Testament said these exact words. So what are we to do about this? The first step is to assume the best in the author. Matthew was not a fool and we can assume that he knew just as well as we do (probably better) what the Old testament said. So what is he actually saying and how can we understand it?

The first thing to ask is where did *any* of these thoughts come from? Specifically 30 pieces of silver and “the price set by some of the sons of Israel” and the potter are the things that stand out. The closest thing that we have in any prophet comes from the Zechariah. Zechariah 11:13-13 says: “Then I said to them, “If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.” And they weighed out as my wages thirty pieces of silver. Then the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter”—the lordly price at which I was priced by them. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD, to the potter.” Before diving into the Zechariah vs Jerimiah part of this problem, we need to first understand the differences in what Zecharaih said and what Matthew said. The short answer as to what is going on here is that there are two types of fulfillments of prophecy: literal and patterned fulfillments. A literal fulfillment is just that, when what the prospect says comes true in a direct and literal way (think “he was pierced for our transgression and the nails and spear literally piercing Jesus). A patterned fulfillment is when what is said, or even here truly the life of the prophet himself, becomes a pattern that sees a more full and true fulfillment in the events prophesied about. It would take a lot more room and time than we have room for here to show the beauty of the patterned fulfillments in Zechariah 11 but note this: In Zechariah and in Matthew the rejection of God’s vessel and judgment on those rejecting him play an important role in *both* Matthew and Zechariah!

DISCUSS: Why is it important to know and understand multiple *types* of prophetic fulfillment?

Having seen where the seed of the idea comes from, we can tackle the Jeremiah or Zechariah debate. And here it is actually helpful to see that Matthew is not directly quoting either of them. Instead he is using the background and flow of thought and words from Zechariah, mixing that with thoughts and patterns ALSO in Jeremiah (again, time and space are limited but see Jeremiah 18 and 19 and the allegory of the potter and Jeremiah 32 and a purchase of a field with silver). So the debate is not Zechariah OR Jeremiah but Zecharaih AND Jeremiah. If this is the case then it is completely acceptable to credit only the “big name”. Lets just be honest, most of us are more familiar with Jeremiah. We could also look to how much each wrote. Jeremiah and Lamentations (written by Jeremiah) are 57 chapters long total and make up a sizable portion of the OT, The book of Zechariah wasn’t even its own book in the ancient scrolls and was rather one entry in “The Book of the 12”. Even in modern days we do the same thing. Just recently I was writing a paper for a class and needed to cite a book that had multiple authors. It was OK for me to say “As Smith said” even though since there were two authors “As Smith and Jones said” would be more exact. Ultimately here I would say, more than knowing the exact answer there is a principle that is critical here. For almost every “error” in the Bible, the real error is how we are reading it, and not giving the original author the benefit of the doubt!

DISCUSS: Why do we often NOT give the biblical writers the benefit of the doubt?

But I would like to end with a quote from Dougals O’Donnell because he gets to the heart of what is important here. It is more than understanding OT prophetic fulfillments, or debating the merits of two men of God. Rather “Matthew combines some words from Zecharaih and themes from Jeremiah to show how the chief priest and leaders’ actions ‘fulfill’ this pattern or typological parallel found in the prophets and *played out in the drama of Jesus, the drama of God’s people rejecting the Lord!*” In other words from Jeremiah to Zecharaih and all the way to Matthew the point is to get us to see Jesus!

DISCUSS: How does understanding the rejection of Jesus help us to appreciate his work even more?