

“He Brought It“

Matthew 12:17-21

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All Scripture quoted from ESV unless otherwise noted

Everyone seems to have a different idea about what they think the world needs. But Jesus looked at the world and saw what He knew it needed, and He came to bring those things. Matthew 12 quotes the prophet Isaiah, and in doing so, draws our attention to three things that Jesus saw that the world needed, that He brought

The world needed Justice, and Jesus brought it. Matthew 12:18 says, “...**he will proclaim justice to the nations.**” (NIV) Jesus wasn’t bringing justice for one group or select individuals – He was bringing justice for every group, and every individual. John tells us (John 1:12), “**But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.**”

Injustice is everywhere; people are treated differently because of age, race, gender, physical fitness level, or any number of other descriptors. As it pertains to physical fitness, studies have shown you cannot spot reduce (cannot lose fat in only one part of your body.) Likewise, you cannot fight one type of injustice and expect it to go away, while other forms of injustice remain, and even grow stronger. Okay, so that analogy wasn’t the greatest you’ve ever heard, but it brings out the point that when *justice for one comes at the expense of justice for another, all that is gained is a greater injustice.*

The world needed justice, and Jesus brought it. He didn’t cater to the elite or reserve His time for those who could make it worthwhile to Him. Jesus crosses all barriers: race, social class, gender, age, physical condition, education level, geographic location, financial status, family situation, peanut butter preference, or any other ridiculous criteria one might use to distinguish ‘us’ from ‘them.’ It’s not fair that only the elite could have access to God’s Word, so God’s Word came to us – to all of us!

Jesus welcomed all those who embraced Him and wept over any who rejected Him, knowing that the world needed compassion . . . and He brought it! Compassion means reaching into someone else’s situation with your heart and with your hands, and offering to help. It’s not just offering a ladder out of a pit; it is climbing down into that same pit with that person and helping get them out. When it comes to the problem of sin, the law says you deserve death and eternal separation from God; but compassion says there is another way – a different way – a better way. And though you do indeed deserve those terrible things, God compassionately says, ‘there’s another way.’

*You have wounds that time can scar over, but only compassion can heal. Matthew (12: 19-20a) says, “**He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench.**” A reed is fragile already; how much more so when it’s bruised? Yet Jesus is compassionate enough to care for even one as wounded as that. As for a smoldering wick – some translations render that as ‘flax.’ That’s*

because flax was the material wicks were made from. Jesus is tender enough to deal with the embers that are left without snuffing them out.

Some of you feel like one of those two things this morning. You've been bruised; emotionally, physically, spiritually; the flame of passion that once burned bright and clear in your life has been stepped on. But Jesus doesn't stamp it out. There is still life left in you, and where there is life, there is hope; where there is a smolder, there is the possibility of flame. Jesus has come to bring justice to those who have suffered injustice and compassion to those who have suffered the cruelties of this world – that brings us hope.

The world needed hope, and Jesus brought it. Matthew (12:20b-21) goes on to say, “...he brings justice to victory; and in his name the Gentiles will hope.” Hope is a fragile thing, isn't it? It seems like hope can be shattered so quickly; so easily. But maybe that's because we so often misunderstand hope. *Hope is not the naïve thought that things will turn out well; it is the logical expectation that God will be there, regardless of how things turn out.*

Last week was Palm Sunday, when we celebrated how Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem to the cheers / hopes / expectations of the people. But when Jesus showed that His kingdom was something other than they had wanted, their hope quickly turned sour – things didn't turn out like they wanted them to. Oh, a few did remain faithful to Jesus – even to the point of His death by crucifixion – but in the end, even *they* misunderstood what was happening.

Luke 24 records the experience of two of those faithful few, who were on their way home after the traumatic events of the weekend. As they walked along the road to Emmaus, Jesus came up to them and walked with them, but He kept them from recognizing Him. He asked what they were talking about and they recapped the past few days; that Jesus had been condemned and put to death by the religious elite in Jerusalem. Luke 24:21-23 shows their reaction: “**But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.**”

“*We had hoped...*” – what a sad statement. Reports of the empty tomb failed to bring them the hope that they were so desperate for, and it seems like it just confused them. We had already said that where there is life, there is hope, so if there is no life, then there is no hope, right? Wrong! Jesus' earthly body was without life, but there is still hope – an expectation that that God will be there, regardless of how things turn out.

Matthew 12:21 (NIV) reads, “**In his name the nations will put their hope.**” Because He has kept every promise, and because He has defeated the power of the grave, and because He brings justice and compassion and hope to you and me today, and because He has fulfilled every genuine prophecy that was ever written about Him, we know that He has won the ultimate victory... and we put our trust in Him... because on the other side of this life . . . He will be there, no matter how things turn out. That's why we put our hope in Him – and that hope is not easily shattered. Matthew is quoting the words of Isaiah, a prophet who lived over 700 years before the birth of Jesus, and reminding us that Jesus fulfilled every aspect of this prophecy. In short, He brought it.

But now it's your turn. Bring your suffering and your weariness, your hurting and your pain, your ambition and your dreams. Bring it all, and lay them down before Jesus. By His death and resurrection, He has proven once and for all that He is who He said He is. He trampled on the power of death and we declare Him the ultimate victor. That is why we will praise His name forever! He is the risen and only Son of God – crucified for our sins and put to death on the cross, yet He arose – hallelujah, Christ Arose! Trust Him today. He won't let you down.

Takeaways from this message.

The world needed JUSTICE, and Jesus brought it.

- *When justice for one comes at the expense of justice for another, all that is gained is a GREATER INJUSTICE.*

The world needed COMPASSION, and Jesus brought it.

- *There are some wounds that time can SCAR OVER, but only compassion can HEAL.*

The world needed HOPE, and Jesus brought it.

- *Hope is not the naïve thought that things will turn out well; it is the LOGICAL EXPECTATION that God will be there.*

Jesus TRAMPLED on the power of death and He has been declared the ULTIMATE VICTOR.

DIG IN!

Here are some farm-fresh questions that will help you to personalize and apply this morning's message.

1. What is one thing that you will take away from today's passage? How will you apply it to your life?
2. Explain how what you see in verses 15-16 fulfills what you see in verses 18-21.
3. Which is best, dark chocolate, milk chocolate, or white chocolate? White Chocolate is best...obviously
4. What qualities of a servant do we see in today's passage? Name some other times you've seen these same qualities in Jesus' life.

5. **How would you respond to someone who suggests (incorrectly) that Matt. 12:17-21 'proves' that Jesus was just a man who was used by God? We know that is not true; what Bible verses assure us of this?**

6. **For further study, see also John 1:1-18 and Luke 24:13-35.**

7. **What have you learned through your personal time of Bible reading this week?**