

Pre-Sermon: This is to help you prepare for hearing from God's Word.

- Prayerfully read Luke 13:31-35
- What is happening in this passage?

Sermon Questions: This will help you evaluate how well you were listening.

- Why do we talk so much about faith at church?
- What are some different forms of unbelief we see in the gospel of Luke and in the world around us?
- What question is Luke answering in this passage specifically? How does the structure of this chapter help you see that? But how does the way these particular people responded to Jesus warn us?
- Why is what Jesus says about Jerusalem so particularly sad, and what does it tell us about human beings?
- How do we know Israel's response was sad to Jesus? In what way does this passage remind us that God's sovereignty is not an excuse for a lack of compassion for sinners?
- While unbelief is sad and it is sin, what is the most important lesson we can learn from Jesus' response about unbelief?
- In what way did God use that generation's rejection of Jesus to accomplish good for you personally?

Sermon Outline: A sermon is much more than an outline, but perhaps this outline will help you follow the sermon.

I thought we might just look at this passage and see what we can learn from the way Jesus' responds to unbelief. We're just going to pull together some principles from these verses, because I think his response teaches us some things we really need to understand, if we are going to understand what's happening as we see people rejecting Jesus.

1. Unbelief is sin.
2. Unbelief is sad.
3. Unbelief absolutely cannot stop God from accomplishing His purposes through Jesus.

Synopsis: This is a short summary to help you reflect on the message.

We are going to look at Luke chapter 13:31-35 today and talk about unbelief. There's a lot of unbelief all around us. It can feel a little overwhelming. How should we respond? In this passage, Luke shows us how Jesus responds to Israel's rejection of Him and looking at his response can teach us some very important things we need to understand as we see people rejecting Jesus.

And maybe the first thing we should stress about unbelief is that it is sin.

When Luke wrote his gospel, he ordered the stories a certain way to make a certain point. This particular chapter is a chiasm. For now, what we need to understand about a chiasm is that it means verses 1-9 are parallel with verses 31-35. To get more specific, the chapter opens in verses 1-9 with a question: will this generation of Israel respond to Jesus correctly? Then we look at the story in verses 31-35 and get the answer: No, they won't. At the start of the chapter, Jesus said, if you don't repent you will perish. At the end, they say, we won't repent so you must perish.

So, we are looking at Israel's rejection of Jesus. I know we always like to read these stories and think about how they apply to us. That's great, because they do. But first, it's important to understand that Luke's talking about something that happened. Jesus came into this world claiming to be Israel's Messiah, and Israel rejected Him. While that may not seem like much of an issue to us, it would have been very confusing to the early church. In fact, there would have been a lot of people

wondering if Jesus really was the Messiah, how come he didn't establish the kingdom for Israel right away the way they were expecting? That's part of why these stories are here. The past couple chapters he's been showing us that it wasn't a lack of evidence or lack of opportunity. In this passage, he's giving us insight into the way Jesus thought about Israel's rejection of Him. But while we are looking at their particular response to Jesus, the fact is, their response illustrates the typical human response to Jesus. They are not worse people than others. You might say, these are people at their best. Out of all the people who ever lived, these were people with the most spiritual advantages. And yet, what did they do when Jesus came preaching the kingdom? Here we see, they wanted to get rid of Jesus. And in the end, Jesus says they are going to kill Him. And do you know where? In Jerusalem. Now, think about that! It shows us something is really wrong with us. Jerusalem was the place where God came to meet with man. And yet how does man respond to God's stooping down to meet with him there? By killing the ones God sent to speak His word to them there and ultimately His own Son. Unbelief is not something neutral. We can be a little naive about unbelief and think all that is needed for someone to believe is a little more information. The real problem however is deeper than that. We are by nature like the people we are reading about in Luke 13. And why did they reject Jesus? As someone has said, "It was not a lack of evidence that caused them to be unbelieving, it was a love of evil. It was not a lack of proof, but a love of their sin. They did not want to abandon themselves to what was obvious, or be exposed as sinners, or turn from their sin. And you know, ultimately, that is still the problem. At the end of the day, it isn't a lack of evidence that causes people to be hard and unbelieving today. It is a love of evil." Unbelief, at its rawest form, is sin.

But **unbelief is not just sin, it is also sad**. It should be sad to us because it is something that was sad to Jesus. The second part of this passage is a lament. When Jesus saw people suffering around him, he knew why they were suffering, he knew their sin, he knew how man's sin had brought all this, he knew why God was allowing this to happen, and yet, even knowing all that, it still moved him. He was grieved by all human suffering, but especially grieved, as he considered, man's spiritual condition. B.B. Warfield says, "The sight of suffering drew tears from his eyes, but obstinate unbelief convulsed him with uncontrollable grief." And yet no matter how evil unbelief is and no matter how sad unbelief is, **unbelief absolutely will not stop God from accomplishing His purposes through Jesus**. While Jesus is grieving in this passage, there's no real sense of desperation. Though the Pharisees come to Jesus and try to frighten him by talking about Herod wanting to kill him, Jesus isn't frightened at all. Their threats had absolutely no impact on him. Not because he thought he wasn't going to die, but instead because he knew exactly where he was going to die and why. He knew that God had a plan, and that even someone as powerful as Herod couldn't stop that plan and neither could Israel's unbelief. While Israel's rejection of Jesus must have seemed shocking to the early church, it wasn't shocking to God. It wasn't even an obstacle to God. In fact, while this generation was rejecting Jesus and would be judged for it, God would use their rejection to accomplish something amazing - the salvation of the Gentiles - and one day Jesus will return and there will be a generation of Israel who rejoices and says, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" as God does everything through Jesus exactly how He said He would.

That's awesome! If God can use Israel's rejection of Jesus, He can use anything. While it should cause us to grieve as we see people rebelling against the God who created them and offers salvation to them, it is not something that should cause us to lose hope. As we look at Jesus' response to Israel's rejection, we see that even though we can't always understand all the details of how God is going to do it or why He's doing it the way He is, we know that God is able to use the sinfulness of man to accomplish His good purpose in the world.

Application Questions: We can't just read these passages, study them. It's vital you respond.

- Do you believe God is going to keep all the promises He has made in the Scripture through Jesus? What should you do if you struggle with unbelief?
- How should you worship Jesus as a result of what we saw in this passage?
- Do you have the same heart toward those who are rejecting God as Jesus did?
- What reason for hope do you have as a result of this passage? How should you be different as a result of that hope?