

Thought for the Day 18th November - John Reed

Read Matthew 23:27-39

Have you ever given someone a gift that they didn't bother opening? Or spent money on something they clearly don't appreciate and don't use?

If so, you are not alone.

One woman in the UK put her dogs into kennels, and paid extra to make sure that they had the most comfortable stay possible, including a comfy bed. Later, she shared on TikTok security video of the dogs ignoring the comfy bed, and sleeping on the floor next to it instead, with the caption "Money well spent."¹

We've had similar experiences in our house with special comfy cat beds that have been overlooked in favour of sleeping in a cardboard box.

Sometimes it's amusing when our generosity and love is not appreciated. Sometimes, it's tragic.

Like in this passage, in Matthew chapter 23, when – as he comes to Jerusalem, where he will be arrested and executed – Jesus pronounces these woes over the city and its leaders. The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat (v. 1), but do not practice what they preach (v. 3). They are blind guides (vv. 16, 24), who shut the door of heaven in people's faces, rather than bringing them in (v. 13). They are whitewashed tombs (v. 27): outwardly beautiful, but inside full of death and uncleanness. They claim to revere the prophets, but actually kill the prophets and wise men that Jesus sends them (vv. 29-36).

And the last words are reserved for Jerusalem, the city they lead – the city of David, whose leaders are about to reject David's greater Son, their Saviour. In verse 37, Jesus says: *"How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!"*

Here's the ultimate rejection of God's grace. Jerusalem's king comes to her, and rather than accept his loving embrace, she kills him.

As well as reflect on the sadness of that, we ought also to ask ourselves if we are ever guilty of similarly ignoring the grace and mercy of our God and Saviour.

¹ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/weird-news/woman-left-stitches-dogs-sleep-23025712>