

# Jesus, Jealousy, and the Gospel

## Luke 11:27–36 (ESV)

**INTRODUCTION:** Throughout His ministry, we have seen the growing corporate rejection of Jesus as Messiah by Israel. In the words of John, “He had come unto His own, and His own received Him not.” That rejection would be made official on the cross. But now, we will see it on a regular basis throughout the remainder of Luke's gospel.

Jesus' response to this rejection is interesting. Of course, He rebukes them for their lack of faith in that they had not believed all that the Prophets had spoken. Next week he will take a more direct approach, proclaiming “woes” over the Pharisees themselves.

But this week, He does something very interesting - ***HE MAGNIFIES THE FAITH OF THE GENTILES.***

**REMEMBER:** The **Goyim** in Hebrew and The **Ethnas** in Greek, translated as **Gentiles** in English, basically mean “people of other nations.” So, if you are NOT Jewish, you are Gentile. That's important to remember as you read through the Gospels.

Keep in mind that at this point in history, Israel had been occupied by several Gentile nations—the Babylonians, the Persians, the Assyrians, the Greeks, and the Romans. So, they were accustomed to dealing with people who held differing worldviews. Nevertheless, they worked hard to keep their heritage and their culture intact, and they were very clear about who was HOME TEAM and who was not.

Nevertheless, all throughout the Gospels, we see Jesus praising the faith of the Gentiles. ***We see it in many places:***

- Twice, Jesus declared someone had **GREAT faith**. Both were Gentiles:
  - A Roman centurion (Matthew 8:5–13)
  - A Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21–28)
- Jesus went out of his way to travel Gentile territory on three different occasions. Each time, he made sure the Jewish leaders knew exactly what he was doing.
- In **Romans 11**, Paul explains what Jesus was doing and why he (Paul) was following suit. Romans 11 delves into the fact that throughout redemptive history, Israel had been God's chosen people, but now, God was saving people from every tribe and tongue in this time period known as the “Church Age”. By verse 11, Paul explains what God is doing by calling Gentiles to faith.

**Romans 11:11–14 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> “So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, **so as to make Israel jealous.**”

Now get that—very interesting. God is doing this to make Israel jealous. You say, **“Pastor, I thought jealousy was bad.”** It is, typically, but not always.

**Exodus 20:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> “You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for **I the Lord your God am a jealous God...**”

**When Jesus drove the money changers from the temple, we read...John 2:17 (ESV)** <sup>17</sup> “His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for your house will consume me’.” Zeal, is the same word translated jealousy in other passages.

**Good jealousy is an inward desire to possess that which actually belongs to you but is in the hands of another person.**

In Romans, Paul argues that the Gospel came to the Jew first. Christianity is built on the foundation of the Prophets. It's Judaism 2.0. It's not something altogether different.

God had always intended to redeem the whole world, but His heart was to do so through Israel. They were to be a city set upon a hill that would proclaim the good God of Abraham to the whole planet. BUT, Messiah came unto His own, and His own received him not. NOW, what belonged to them, came to us.

Their commission was given to us! Their empowerment was given to us! Paul mentions that every chance he gets. Why? To make them inwardly desire to possess what actually belongs to them.

**ILLUSTRATION:** I listened to the testimony of a Jewish man this week who had come to faith in Christ. He said, “I visited a church with my friend. I noticed everyone had a Bible. I thought to myself, our people never carry Bibles to the synagogue. I noticed the pastor was joyfully preaching about Moses and the Exodus. I thought to myself, our Rabbi never preaches these things with joy. Then, the people stood and sang loud to God with hands lifted high. Our people sang, but not like this...I began to want what they had. I realized they had what was intended for us.”

Paul continues in verse 12...

<sup>12</sup> “Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! <sup>13</sup> Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my

ministry <sup>14</sup> ***in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them.***

So, see that one of the intentions of Paul and one of the intentions of Jesus is to stir up jealousy in the hearts of the unsaved. ***You have done that, haven't you?***

**ILLUSTRATION:** I remember in college, when I was trying to win Julie's heart, nothing seemed to be working. I would call, I would write, I bought her gifts... nothing worked UNTIL I met a young lady from north Georgia named Amber. I went on a date with Amber and I made SURE that Julie knew about it. Suddenly, Julie was very interested in me...funny how that works.

Well, Jesus is going to do something very similar in today's text. He will use two different Gentiles to illustrate how people ought to respond to the Messiah. Not only that - he is going to tell these unbelieving Jews that God would call these Gentiles as witnesses against them at the final judgment.

**CONTEXT:** Just before the events and pronouncements in this passage, the religious leaders had attributed the power of Jesus to cast out demons to Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons. Others demanded that he produce a sign... as if all the miracles he had done to this point were insufficient. With that in mind, look at verse 27 with me.

**TEXT: Luke 11:27–36 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> "As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, 'Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!'"

Ah, a good Catholic woman was in the crowd. Jesus says to her what he would say to our friends who venerate Mary, who pray to Mary...

<sup>28</sup> "But he said, ***Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it.***"

Keep in mind, according to Mark's Gospel, around this same time- **Mark 3:21 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> "And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, 'He is out of his mind'."

So, very likely, Mary and the brothers of Jesus were there, hoping to talk some sense into Jesus. Many of you came from a Catholic background. Please understand that what they taught you about Mary was in error. She was a young lady who needed a Savior like all the rest. She was looking for her redeemer by faith and was favored by God to give birth to her Savior. But she was a real person, not a super saint, not sinless.

I often tell my Catholic friends they ought to obey the one command Mary gave in Scripture - they ask what it was, and I refer them to the wedding at Cana, where Mary said to the servants, "Whatever He (that is Jesus) tells you to do, do it."

<sup>29</sup> “When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, ‘This generation is an evil generation. It seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.’<sup>30</sup> For as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be to this generation.’”

**What I would like to do, is return to explain how Jesus gave them the SIGN OF JONAH at the end. I think you’ll understand why at that point.**

From there, Jesus proceeds to call two Gentile witnesses to testify against the Jews of that generation. Now, keep in mind that these witnesses being Gentile is intended to stir their jealousy so that they joyfully desire what was intended for them...

*The first witness is....*

## **1. The Gentile Queen of Sheba**

<sup>31</sup> “The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.”

The journey of the Queen of Sheba is recorded in 1 Kings 10:1–13 and 2 Chronicles 9:1–12. Let’s read of her journey in the I Kings account.

### **1 Kings 10:1–10 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> “Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions. <sup>2</sup> She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices and very much gold and precious stones. And when she came to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind. <sup>3</sup> And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king that he could not explain to her. <sup>4</sup> And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, <sup>5</sup> the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his cupbearers, and his burnt offerings that he offered at the house of the Lord, there was no more breath in her.

<sup>6</sup> And she said to the king, ‘The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your wisdom, <sup>7</sup> but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report that I heard.

<sup>8</sup> Happy are your men! Happy are your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! <sup>9</sup> Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness.’ <sup>10</sup> Then she gave the king 120 talents of gold, and a very great quantity of spices and precious stones. Never again came such an abundance of spices as these that the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.”

NOW, if the Queen of Sheba would go to all of that trouble to hear Solomon... traveling at a tremendous expense on a perilous journey...and now one FAR greater than Solomon had come, what do you suspect she will say of the Jesus who stood before Jesus and called him Beelzebub??? Jesus is saying, “she will rise to testify against you!” This foreign Gentile woman will speak for the prosecution on that day.

*Now, notice the second witness...*

## 2. The Gentile men of Ninevah

<sup>32</sup>“The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.”

Most of you are familiar with this story. Jonah a prophet of God hated the men of Nineveh because they were so deeply sinful. It literally turned the stomach of the prophet. Then one day, God calls him to go and preach in Ninevah... but Jonah knew how God was... if those men repented, God would forgive each and every one of them. Jonah didn't want to see them forgiven; he wanted to see them burned. He wanted Sodom and Gomorrah, Part 2.

So, Jonah hopped a ship to Tarshish, a port at the other end of the then-known world, going as far from Nineveh as he could get. You know the story - a tremendous storm arose that threatened to sink the ship.

The sailors knew this was not an ordinary storm; divine wrath was bearing down upon them. They knew someone had offended a god. They cast lots, the lots fell to Jonah, and he confessed - yes, I did it. I offended my God... so just throw me overboard, and the storm will cease.

They didn't want to do that - but ultimately, there was no other choice. They tossed Jonah into the sea... and the storm ceased.

### **Jonah 1:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah cried out in repentance and we read - **Jonah 2:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> “And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.”

Now imagine Jonah, spat up on the beach by a fish. The stomach acid of this fish covers him, bleaching his skin white. A crowd gathers on the beach to see this. Jonah stands and begins to preach to them, calling them to repent of their sins. “Yet forty days and Ninevah will be overthrown.”

The King proclaimed a fast of repentance... **Jonah 3:7–9 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> “And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, “By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, <sup>8</sup> but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. <sup>9</sup> Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.”

### **Jonah 3:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> “When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.”

NOW, these Gentile men of Ninevah repented at the preaching of Jonah...and God forgave them...NOW ONE GREATER THAN JONAH HAS COME.

In what way is Jesus greater than Jonah? In every way, but for particulars, let's go back to that verse we skipped earlier....

<sup>29</sup> “When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, ‘**This generation is an evil generation. It seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.** <sup>30</sup> For as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be to this generation’.”

### **What is the sign of Jonah that Jesus promises to give them?**

- Jonah was in the belly of the **fish** for three days... he came forth from the fish and called the people to repent and believe.
- Jesus was in the belly of the **earth** for three days... he came forth from the grave and called the people to repent and believe.

If the men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, how much more ought we repent at the preaching of Jesus?

Now - let's talk about some practical applications.

- **First**, if you aren't sure what to do with Jesus, do a deep dive into the claims of the resurrection. That is the key to the Gospel. If Jesus really did overcome death - that changes everything. We are going to talk about that in a few weeks on Easter.
- **Second**, if you have people you want to see come to know the Lord, yet there is no interest on their part... consider the most excellent evangelistic tool ever developed - **jealousy**.

I am of the opinion that we ought to do **whatever it takes to get people to Jesus**. I'm willing to preach a hellfire and brimstone sermon. I'm willing to preach on the street corner with a sign that says “turn or burn”. If that causes you to stop and take Christ seriously, I'm all for it. But let's be honest - very few people are reached that way.

Aggressive attacks rarely work. It worked for Jonah - 30 days, and Ninevah will fall. So, I reserve the right to use that approach. But, **there are many weapons in the Gospel arsenal**. One of the most effective, yet seldom used, is *jealousy*.

By that, I mean - **PUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT ON DISPLAY** until the unbeliever **wants what you have**...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self control.

- **Love** - Love openly, love loudly, love boldly, love without qualification. Love those who hate and despise you.
- **Joy** - Don't let the weather determine your state of mind. Don't allow the news to do it, either. Emotions are like a garden that must be tended to. *Let them sink their roots into the Gospel of resurrection and water them daily with truth.*
- **Peace** - "Let the peace of God that surpasses all understanding guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus". What does that mean? It means your peace will be illogical from the perspective of those who don't know Christ.
- **Patience** - Because you know that God is working in your favor, chill out and be patient—the lack of stress is a tool for evangelism.
- **Kindness** - Wage a war with kindness - it will bewilder the enemy. How can we be kind in the midst of a battle? We've read the end of the book, and we win!
- **Goodness** - Be good to people... especially those who hate you. In doing so, "you rake burning coals on their head".
- **Gentleness** - The greatest master of the violin holds the bow most loosely... the greatest warrior is also the most extraordinary gentleman.
- **Faithfulness** - That is be filled with faith - walk by faith, not sight.
- **Self-Control** - The fullness of the Spirit is not marked by some sort of ecstatic uncontrolled emotionalism... quite the opposite. The fruit of the Spirit-filled life is SELF CONTROL.

**NOW - PUT THOSE THINGS ON DISPLAY.** Let them mark your life and let the unbeliever see it.

Pastor, I don't think we ought to be so public about our faith... it's a personal thing, ya know?

NO SIR - in fact, look what Jesus says in the next verse.

### **Luke 11:33–36 (ESV)**

<sup>33</sup>"No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light."

Jesus says, I didn't put a fire in you so that it would be hidden - I want the whole world to see it burn!

<sup>34</sup>"Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness."<sup>35</sup>Therefore be careful lest the

light in you be darkness.<sup>36</sup> If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.”

#### **CONCLUSION/INVITATION:**

- Jesus has called the **Queen of Sheba** to testify to the lost world. She traversed sea and land to hear the wisdom of Solomon... now one greater than Solomon is here.
- Jesus has called the **men of Ninevah** to testify to the lost world. They repented at the preaching of Jonah... now one greater than Jonah is here.
- **Jesus now calls you, men and women of America** - to testify to the lost world.

**The sign of Jonah has come** - just as Jonah was three days in the great fish, so the Son of Man was three days in the grave... but then on Sunday - the stone was rolled away... and death has been defeated.

**Death is the friend of the evangelist.**

**Shakespeare wrestled with a concept in Hamlet’s soliloquy that every single person wrestles with.**

*To be or not to be, that is the question* – he’s contemplating suicide. What keeps him from ending it? He tells us...

*But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscovered country,  
from whose bourn no traveler returns, puzzles the will,*

*And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others we know not of.*

***Thus, conscience does make cowards of us all.***

**PUT THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ON FULL DISPLAY AS YOU FACE THE SAME GRAVE THAT HAMLET DID... WHEN THEY ASK WHY YOU FACE DEATH AND LIFE SO DIFFERENTLY, SAY TO THEM... *I KNOW THE ONE WHO DID RETURN FROM THAT UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY.***