

“Legalism and the Son of Man” Luke 13:10-21

Please Stand and Open Your Bibles to Luke 13:10-17

Before we dig into the story that we just read let us remember the context that Luke is compiling of these stories of Jesus. Luke was not an original disciple of Jesus and was picked up by Paul on his second missionary journey. Luke made it his aim to compile the stories of those that were with Jesus and put them together as a defense of the truth of Jesus and His ministry. Many of the stories are put here in thematic order and not necessarily in chronological order. We are in what is known as the “Travel Discourses” that started in...

Luke 9:51

Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem

This continues until Luke 19:28 when He rides into Jerusalem on a donkey presenting Himself to Israel as their Messiah. Most of the teaching and interaction on this journey is with the religious leaders and their rejection of Him.

Last week we looked at a teaching on the way to Jerusalem that came from those that had told Jesus about a horrible tragedy

that happens to some Galileans that were killed by Pilate. Jesus used this to start a theme that will be carried through that has to do with the Pharisee's false teachings on our relationship with the Law. They taught that people that suffered tragedy of trauma were cursed by God and must have some sin in their life so that is why these things came upon them. Jesus puts them in their place and tells them that they were no worse sinners than the rest of humanity and they needed to have a change of mind about that, or they could not be saved. Today that thought is picked up as Luke inserts another story unique to Luke that shows the heart of legalism. We know that true believers in Jesus Christ can be deceived by legalism but what about those that promote it? Now I am not going to say that every teacher and ministry leader of movements that promote legalistic doctrine are not saved but only to point out what the scriptures say about them. I cannot see the heart and therefore will let God be the judge, but we must strive to heed the warnings in scripture and use our discernment. Remember it is not my words that matter but God's. Don't take my word for it, search the scriptures yourself and let them guide you.

Luke 13:10

Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.

It was customary in those days to allow traveling teachers to speak at the local synagogue. We see this with Paul on his missionary journeys. But we also know from the other gospels and stories that they often let Jesus into the synagogues to try to trap Him. I believe this is another one of those situations and Jesus, being aware of it, uses it to draw out the leader's heart of legalism which is what they needed to repent from. But notice who's there...

Luke 13:11

And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up.

Now a couple of things to note before we talk about the woman's plight. First, women were not usually anywhere near the speaker as men and women were separated during the service. They were in a court by themselves that would either be a balcony in the back of the room. It is possible that Jesus saw her from a distance, but it could also be that the leaders purposely put her there just to see if Jesus would heal on the sabbath. That leads us to the second point, she was sick. Sick people were not allowed to be in close proximity to the congregation and again points out the possibility she is a plant by the leaders. Remember not too long ago we read...

Luke 11:53-54

And as He said these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to assail Him vehemently, and to cross-examine Him about many things, lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say, that they might accuse Him.

Of course, none of that bothers Jesus and He will not let any of that get in the way of what He came to do. I want you to notice something that Luke, the doctor, makes sure that you hear, she is a woman with a “spirit” of infirmity. And that it caused her to be bent over. After 18 years of suffering she was disabled from this. The word used here for infirmity is...

Strong's G769

ἀσθένεια

astheneia

as-then'-i-ah

From G772; feebleness (of body or mind); by implication malady; moral frailty: - disease, infirmity, sickness, weakness.

This word is used in many forms throughout the New Testament and always refers to the effect of something. The weakness caused by some sort of ailment, whether it be

spiritual, mental or physical. For her it was spiritual oppression that had so overwhelmed her that it affected her health. For 18 years she had been suffering. Jesus does not waste any time healing her...

Luke 13:12-13

But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, “Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.” 13 And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

Not only did Jesus heal her of the spiritual oppression but also the physical effects that had debilitated her. And what was the outcome? She glorified God. Do you know that God does not save you and heal us for our own conveniences? The work that God does in you and me are for only one purpose, to glorify Him. But again, nobody can suck the joy out of a room faster than a legalistic person!

Luke 13:14

But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, “There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day.”

This man was more concerned with his rituals than the glory of God. He has allowed his legalism to become his god. It has blinded him and now he is thinking he can talk to Jesus with authority. “Hey God, you can’t do that!”. Notice he didn’t open a dialog and ask a question civilly about his interpretation of the law and our need to follow the Sabbath accordingly. His theological presuppositions got in the way and instead of humbling himself at the challenge it says he answers with Indignation. That word means to have much grief. See what legalism will do? Instead of joy you allow a work of God to give you much grief. It makes me wonder who is suffering more, the woman in her infirmity or the man in his legalism? Now here is Jesus’ response...

Luke 13:15-16

The Lord then answered him and said, “Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? 16 So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?”

“Oh, pastor I don’t like what you said about Governor Newsome” or “I don’t think it is very Christian of you to call

Anthony Wiener a Sick Pervert” Jesus calls this man a name! How dare He! He is basically saying “You Faker!” You say your religious and a law keeper, but your own traditions allow you to break the Sabbath. Then He tries to get him to see the plight of this woman and how much more important that is. Jesus’ answer shows us who the spirit is that has given her the infirmity, Satan himself! But what is even more telling is the title he gives to her...daughter of Abraham. Remember last week when I mentioned that they believed sickness was evidence that they had sin in their life. But Jesus is showing that it was not sin, but the enemy that has her bound. He should have been rejoicing but all they could do was get angry and combative. And notice that Jesus’s response divided the room...

Luke 13:17

And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

We just heard two weeks ago that Jesus did come to bring peace on the earth but division. Just mention Jesus, the Biblical one, and you will always spark one of the two responses. In an adversarial one or a glorious one.

When you and I understand the grace of God. That God's gift of salvation is a free gift that cannot be earned or worked for. And that our sanctification is all a work of God by His Spirit in us. That the promise of our future inheritance is waiting for us not based upon our obedience but only by His divine favor you will run into opposition. Satan hates God's grace and will do everything in his power to get us to conform and accept some form of legalism. He sets us up so he can accuse us and say "You call yourself a Christian..." All of these travel discourses are put in here by Luke to warn us. And the next two parables are to teach the reality of this.

Luke 13:18-19

Then He said, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? 19 It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden; and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches."

The first thing you will notice is that we have heard this parable before. Both Matthew and Mark record it at an earlier time. Second, we learn that Jesus taught these things on more than one occasion. Now we know from comparison that the focus of these two parables is speaking of the church age in general. This one speaks of a mustard tree. Now even though mustard plants are one of the biggest in the herb community we know

they do not grow into a large tree and that they do not make a good place for birds to have nests in their branches. So, this would mean that the lesson is that it would grow abnormally large. We need to remember the rule of “Parabolic Consistency” that the birds are agents of Satan.

Matthew 13:4,19

And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them... When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

Now the birds of the air are always considered unclean and evil. We see that in the future of Babylon...

Revelation 18:2

And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!”

So, the Parable is simply seen as this, the church would grow and become large, and birds would find a place to nest in it. This is further illustrated in the next one...

Luke 13:20-21

And again He said, “To what shall I liken the kingdom of God?
21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.”

And again, leaven is type of sin and is exclusively used in a negative context in the scriptures

1 Corinthians 5:6-7

Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

Paul is showing us that the open sin that was being practiced in the church was like leaven that was going to affect the whole church. Same thing Jesus is saying. That to beware of it. That it will be there. It will be in the church!

Luke 12:1

In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first of all, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”

It takes us back to this. To be aware of it. To reject it. To purge it. As Paul was out preaching the gospel these birds and leaven would come into church and try to bring these new believers into bondage.

Acts 20:29-31

For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

1 John 4:1

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

2 Peter 2:1-2

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many

will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

Jude 1:3-4

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 7:15-16

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits.”

I am here to tell you today to be aware of these people. They are in the church promoting legalism or license. Please make sure you are learning the grace of God that leads to salvation.

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have

access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.