

Not What Anyone Expects

March 25, 2018

Wonderful Mercy Church



We're Good at Getting it Wrong

- Cluelessness, that's our very particular set of skills. God says as much.
- **Isaiah 55:8-9** HCSB
“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not My ways.” This is the LORD’s declaration. “For as heaven is higher than earth, so My ways are higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

The People Had Experienced Famine

- **Amos 8:11** HCSB
“Hear this! The days are coming—this is the declaration of the Lord God—when I will send a famine through the land: not a famine of bread or a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.”
- Many of those in this scene probably thought God was on vacation. Who knew when he’d get back?

Under the Spirit of Religion

- The people had suffered years of slavery to the spirit of religion, with a crushing cumulative effect
- Religion, with its severe judgments, brooks no argument; it doesn't even welcome conversation

Under the Spirit of Religion

- The religious spirit insists that you must behave before you can belong, that you must believe before you can be a part of the community
- The spirit of religion creates an unsafe place to become who you really are because *who you really are is insufficient*

Heart of the Father

- The heart of the Father has nothing in common with religion
- Here's how we can test that: sinners are attracted to Jesus because with him they are safe and loved
- Don't miss this in John's account: an entirely different spirit is operating in and through Jesus: Holy Spirit

Professional Scholars Are Almost Universally Critical

- “The minds of all were filled with a kind of mob hysteria” [William Barclay]
- A “superficial enthusiasm...possessed most of the cheering throng.” [Life Application New Testament Commentary]
- “Many were as so many are in a crowd—simply sightseers, wanting to be where the people were and where the action was. They were after the excitement, the sensational, the spectacular.” [The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible]

It's So Easy To Be A Critic

- Yes, the people get it wrong. But this should stir compassion in us, not contempt
- **Luke 19:41-42** NIV
As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.”

It's So Easy To Be A Critic

- Their blindness isn't entirely their own doing—they've had some help getting to this point
- **2 Corinthians 4:4** NIV
“Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.”

What Will We Be Known For?

- Will the captivity of our neighbors and those in our community call forth our compassion or our criticism?
- It makes no sense to get mad at people who don't know Jesus for behaving like people who don't know Jesus!

Love Is Supernatural

- Love has the power and authority to cancel seasons and open prison doors
- Love means we don't have to wait for optimal conditions for things to change. Breakthrough and reversal can come right in the middle of hell when love shows up
- The people sensed this about Jesus, even if their ideas about him weren't entirely accurate

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