

I Connect Sunday School Class Notes

May 15, 2022

Meet in Building B, Room 1

Praises and Concerns

Book of Luke

Chapter 11 (continued from last week)

Controversy over Beelzebul

14 Jesus was throwing out a demon that causes muteness. When the demon was gone, the man who couldn't speak began to talk. The crowds were amazed.

15 But some of them said, "He throws out demons with the authority of Beelzebul, the ruler of demons."

16 Others were testing him, seeking a sign from heaven.

17 Because Jesus knew what they were thinking, he said to them, "Every kingdom involved in civil war becomes a wasteland, and a house torn apart by divisions will collapse.

18 If Satan is at war with himself, how will his kingdom endure? I ask this because you say that I throw out demons by the authority of Beelzebul.

19 If I throw out demons by the authority of Beelzebul, then by whose authority do your followers throw them out? Therefore, they will be your judges.

20 But if I throw out demons by the power of God, then God's kingdom has already overtaken you.

21 When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his possessions are secure.

Commentary

Satan. *His palace is the world, so far as it is under his usurped dominion. His goods are the souls which he holds captive. His armor is his crafty devices for keeping them in captivity and separating them*

from all good influences. The stronger is Christ, who, by casting out devils and preaching the gospel, rescues souls from Satan's power. The spoils are the rescued souls, which Christ 'divides' by setting them to work at various employments in His own service.

Ron's comment

Who is Satan?

22 But as soon as a stronger one attacks and overpowers him, the stronger one takes away the armor he had trusted and divides the stolen goods.

23 "Whoever isn't with me is against me, and whoever doesn't gather with me, scatters.

Commentary

In this contest between Christ and Satan no one can be neutral.

Gathers. Scatters] He who does not help Me to **gather** and marshal My army, is working for its defeat and rout (**scatters**).

24 When an unclean spirit leaves a person, it wanders through dry places looking for a place to rest. But it doesn't find any. Then it says, 'I'll go back to the house I left.'

25 When it arrives, it finds the house cleaned up and decorated.

26 Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself. They go in and make their home there. That person is worse off at the end than at the beginning." (backsliders)

On seeking signs

27 While Jesus was saying these things, a certain woman in the crowd spoke up: "Happy is the mother who gave birth to you and who nursed you."

28 But he said, "Happy rather are those who hear God's word and put it into practice."

Commentary

Christ does not deny that His mother is happy, but He declares that to hear His words and obey them, and so to be brought into spiritual fellowship with God, is a happiness infinitely greater.

29 When the crowds grew, Jesus said, "This generation is an evil generation. It looks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except Jonah's sign.

30 Just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so the Human One will be a sign to this generation.

31 The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the people of this generation and condemn them, because she came from a distant land to hear Solomon's wisdom. And look, someone greater than Solomon is here.

32 The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they changed their hearts and lives in response to Jonah's preaching—and one greater than Jonah is here.

33 "People don't light a lamp and then put it in a closet or under a basket. Rather, they place the lamp on a lampstand so that those who enter the house can see the light.

34 Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your whole body is full of darkness.

35 Therefore, see to it that the light in you isn't darkness.

36 If your whole body is full of light—with no part darkened—then it will be as full of light as when a lamp shines brightly on you."

Commentary

If they will only regard His work and teaching without prejudice, then their own consciences will testify that He has a real mission from God.

Ron's Comment

How do we keep our eyes healthy? Is it easy to do?

Rejection of Christ's message makes us vulnerable to darkness. But so does failure to keep our eyes healthy (apathy).

Jesus condemns Pharisees and legal experts

37 While Jesus was speaking, a Pharisee invited him to share a meal with him, so Jesus went and took his place at the table.

38 When the Pharisee saw that Jesus didn't ritually purify his hands by washing before the meal, he was astonished.

39 The Lord said to him, "Now, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and platter, but your insides are stuffed with greed and wickedness.

40 Foolish people! Didn't the one who made the outside also make the inside?

41 Therefore, give to those in need from the core of who you are and you will be clean all over.

42 "How terrible for you Pharisees! You give a tenth of your mint, rue, and garden herbs of all kinds, while neglecting justice and love for God. These you ought to have done without neglecting the others.

43 "How terrible for you Pharisees! You love the most prominent seats in the synagogues and respectful greetings in the marketplaces.

44 "How terrible for you! You are like unmarked graves, and people walk on them without recognizing it."

45 One of the legal experts responded, "Teacher, when you say these things, you are insulting us too."

46 Jesus said, "How terrible for you legal experts too! You load people down with impossible burdens and you refuse to lift a single finger to help them.

47 "How terrible for you! You built memorials to the prophets, whom your ancestors killed.

48 In this way, you testify that you approve of your ancestors' deeds. They killed the prophets, and you build memorials!

49 Therefore, God's wisdom has said, 'I will send prophets and apostles to them and they will harass and kill some of them.'

50 As a result, this generation will be charged with the murder of all the prophets since the beginning of time.

51 This includes the murder of every prophet—from Abel to Zechariah—who was killed between the altar and the holy place. Yes, I'm telling you, this generation will be charged with it.

52 "How terrible for you legal experts! You snatched away the key of knowledge. You didn't enter yourselves, and you stood in the way of those who were entering."

53 As he left there, the legal experts and Pharisees began to **resent** him deeply and to ask him pointed questions about many things.

Ron's Comment

"Resent" is way too mild a word to describe how the legal experts and the Pharisees must have felt. Jesus gradually moves from teaching using indirect statements (e.g., parables) to direct statements, gradually increasing anger and resentment among Jewish officials leading to his crucifixion.

54 They plotted against him, trying to trap him in his words.

Chapter 12

Commentary

Verses 1-12 – Jesus' message is attracting attention, and he is accompanied by so many people that "they were crushing each other", but popularity is never Jesus' goal. Therefore, he begins to speak a more cautionary message privately to his disciples warning them to "watch out". The challenge at this point in Jesus' ministry is not rejection as in his earlier ministry; the challenge is non-chalant acceptance of his message. Jesus is not interested in people who merely hang around without ever changing. Such people will eventually be exposed.

In speaking to those who are already his “friends,” Jesus warns that the greatest threats to character are not physical hardships, but rather spiritual complacency (apathy). Some followers will be lulled into the spiritual death by simply allowing “the yeast of the Pharisees” to lead them into lives with only an outward and trivial commitment. To such followers, Jesus speaks stern words about the reality of judgment, but also reminds them of God’s love. Even God’s judgment is a witness to God’s love.

Jesus assumes that his true followers will face persecution and be prepared to deny him. In the context of persecution, the Spirit will support believers, but Jesus warns them not to “insult the Holy Spirit,” because those who do so “won’t be forgiven”. This sin “won’t be forgiven” not because God is unwilling to forgive them, but because persons have cut themselves off from the Holy Spirit,” who would lead them to forgiveness. In this context, this teaching is probably intended to warn Christians to rely upon the Spirit in the time of persecution and to recognize that they cannot withstand persecution without the Spirit’s help. To believe that you can withstand by your own power is to render the Spirit powerless; that is, to insult the Spirit.

Warnings to Jesus’ friends

1 When a crowd of thousands upon thousands had gathered so that they were crushing each other, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples: “Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees—I mean, the mismatch between their hearts and lives.

2 Nothing is hidden that won't be revealed, and nothing is secret that won't be brought out into the open.

3 Therefore, whatever you have said in the darkness will be heard in the light, and whatever you have whispered in the rooms deep inside the house will be announced from the rooftops.

Ron's Comment

This warning applies to us today as well.

4 "I tell you, my friends, don't be terrified by those who can kill the body but after that can do nothing more.

5 I'll show you whom you should fear: fear the one who, after you have been killed, has the authority to throw you into hell. Indeed, I tell you, that's the one you should fear.

6 Aren't five sparrows sold for two small coins? Yet not one of them is overlooked by God.

7 Even the hairs on your head are all counted. Don't be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows.

Acknowledging the Human One

8 "I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before humans, the Human One will acknowledge before God's angels.

9 But the one who rejects me before others will be rejected before God's angels.

10 Anyone who speaks a word against the Human One will be forgiven, but whoever insults the Holy Spirit won't be forgiven.

11 When they bring you before the synagogues, rulers, and authorities, don't worry about how to defend yourself or what you should say.

12 The Holy Spirit will tell you at that very moment what you must say."

Commentary - Verses 13-34

Both Jesus and Wesley had much to say about wealth and poverty. Wesley feared that riches were a sign of self-indulgence and frequently warned his Methodists to practice generosity rather than self-indulgence.

Warning against greed

13 Someone from the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

Commentary

Such questions were decided by the 'bench of three' of the local synagogues. Christ, as usual, refuses to be drawn into any political or semi-political action.

14 Jesus said to him, "Man, who appointed me as judge or referee between you and your brother?"

15 Then Jesus said to them, "Watch out! Guard yourself against all kinds of greed. After all, one's life isn't determined by one's possessions, even when someone is very wealthy."

16 Then he told them a parable: "A certain rich man's land produced a bountiful crop.

17 He said to himself, What will I do? I have no place to store my harvest!

18 Then he thought, Here's what I'll do. I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. That's where I'll store all my grain and goods.

19 I'll say to myself, You have stored up plenty of goods, enough for several years. Take it easy! Eat, drink, and enjoy yourself.

20 But God said to him, 'Fool, tonight you will die. Now who will get the things you have prepared for yourself?'

21 This is the way it will be for those who hoard things for themselves and aren't rich toward God."

Warning about worry

22 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Therefore, I say to you, don't worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear.

23 There is more to life than food and more to the body than clothing.

24 Consider the ravens: they neither plant nor harvest, they have no silo or barn, yet God feeds them. You are worth so much more than birds!

25 Who among you by worrying can add a single moment to your life?

26 If you can't do such a small thing, why worry about the rest?

27 Notice how the lilies grow. They don't wear themselves out with work, and they don't spin cloth. But I say to you that even Solomon in all his splendor wasn't dressed like one of these.

28 If God dresses grass in the field so beautifully, even though it's alive today and tomorrow it's thrown into the furnace, how much more will God do for you, you people of weak faith!

29 Don't chase after what you will eat and what you will drink. Stop worrying.

30 All the nations of the world long for these things. Your Father knows that you need them.

31 Instead, desire his kingdom and these things will be given to you as well.

32 "Don't be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights in giving you the kingdom.

Commentary

Fear not, little flock] *A beautiful and tender saying peculiar to Lk, intended to encourage the disciples who would be for so long in so hopeless a minority.*

33 Sell your possessions and give to those in need. Make for yourselves wallets that don't wear out—a treasure in heaven that never runs out. No thief comes near there, and no moth destroys.

34 Where your treasure is, there your heart will be too.

Warning about being prepared

35 "Be dressed for service and keep your lamps lit.

36 Be like people waiting for their master to come home from a wedding celebration, who can immediately open the door for him when he arrives and knocks on the door.

Commentary

This is a little parable peculiar to Luke, warning the apostles to be ready for Christ's second coming, which will be sudden. The apostles are compared to slaves left to watch the house (the Church) while the master (Christ) goes to a wedding feast (i. e. ascends into heaven). Their loins are girded because they have housework to do (preaching the gospel and ruling the Church), and they have lighted lamps, because their task is to enlighten a dark and sinful world by their shining example.

37 Happy are those servants whom the master finds waiting up when he arrives. I assure you that, when he arrives, he will dress himself to serve, seat them at the table as honored guests, and wait on them.

38 Happy are those whom he finds alert, even if he comes at midnight or just before dawn.

39 But know this, if the homeowner had known what time the thief was coming, he wouldn't have allowed his home to be broken into.

40 You also must be ready, because the Human One is coming at a time when you don't expect him."

41 Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for everyone?"

42 The Lord replied, "Who are the faithful and wise managers whom the master will put in charge of his household servants, to give them their food at the proper time?"

43 Happy are the servants whom the master finds fulfilling their responsibilities when he comes.

44 I assure you that the master will put them in charge of all his possessions.

45 "But suppose that these servants should say to themselves, My master is taking his time about coming. And suppose they began to

beat the servants, both men and women, and to eat, drink, and get drunk.

46 The master of those servants would come on a day when they weren't expecting him, at a time they couldn't predict. The master will cut them into pieces and assign them a place with the unfaithful.

47 That servant who knew his master's will but didn't prepare for it or act on it will be beaten severely.

48 The one who didn't know the master's will but who did things deserving punishment will be beaten only a little. Much will be demanded from everyone who has been given much, and from the one who has been entrusted with much, even more will be asked.

Conflicts brought by Jesus

Commentary – Verses 49-59

Because of their revolutionary character, Jesus' words will prove divisive. Wise followers will understand the incongruity between themselves and unbelievers – even unbelievers within their own families – and will seek to settle accusations against them before involving the civil authorities. This advice was particularly appropriate in the first century, because only Christians with an eagerness for martyrdom would involve the civil authorities.

49 "I came to cast fire upon the earth. How I wish that it was already ablaze!

50 I have a baptism I must experience. How I am distressed until it's completed!

51 Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, I have come instead to bring division.

52 From now on, a household of five will be divided—three against two and two against three.

53 Father will square off against son and son against father; mother against daughter and daughter against mother; and mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

Learning and practicing good judgment

54 Jesus also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud forming in the west, you immediately say, 'It's going to rain.' And indeed it does.

55 And when a south wind blows, you say, 'A heat wave is coming.' And it does.

56 Hypocrites! You know how to interpret conditions on earth and in the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret the present time?

57 And why don't you judge for yourselves what is right?

58 As you are going to court with your accuser, make your best effort to reach a settlement along the way. Otherwise, your accuser may bring you before the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison.

59 I tell you, you won't get out of there until you have paid the very last cent."

The Lord bless us and keep us.

The Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us;

the Lord lift up his countenance upon us and give us peace.