

06.07.26

Luke

Chapter 11 - A Polarizing Wish

The Inevitability of Hostility (vs. 52-54)

Luke 11:52-54: “Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering.” When He left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects, plotting against Him to catch Him in something He might say.

Why in the world isn't Jesus embraced? Why isn't He loved by the world? It just doesn't make any sense when you consider His message. His message is, for God so loved the world and that God sent Him into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. What a wonderful message that is. And

yet, I don't think there's a name in which people are more hostile over than the name of Jesus. It's a strange phenomenon and as we come to this passage, what's also interesting is the way that Jesus addresses those that are religious leaders of His time.

In this particular passage that we're looking at, especially in Chapter 11, and if you drop on down to verse 42, He starts off with what is called the “woes” passages. And if you look at this, what you have is Jesus literally pronouncing formal accusation and denunciation against the religious leaders. He's very bold about it.

His statement is in verse 42,

(Luke 11:42) “But woe to you Pharisees! ...”

And then He begins to show their hypocrisy.

You look in verse 43,

(Luke 11:43) “Woe to you Pharisees! ...”

And you look at verse 44, and He says the same thing.

What He's virtually doing is saying that “You and I don't think alike.”

In fact, one of the statements that He makes, if you back up with me in verse 23, is,

(Luke 11:23) “He who is not with Me is against Me...”

What this whole passage is doing is displaying the fact that there is a polarizing thought in the world. And of course, the gospel is on the one end, and of course, the world thinks another way. Our wish should be, our desire should be, “Thy kingdom come. The way You think, we want to adopt as our own. We want to embrace Your standards, Your rule of conduct.” But unfortunately, man has his own way of thinking, and so, oftentimes, even when he prays to God, it's really about his wishes, it's not about God's wishes. And as we know that the wishes of man are really contrary to God's.

It is in this passage that you begin to see that the world begins to hate, and it's actually revealing that truth and the lie can't coexist. It's like light and darkness. It just can't coexist. Once light comes to the world, then darkness has to flee. But the problem is, the perception by the world is that you can have the lie and you can have truth, and God says, “No, you can't have it both ways.

You're either for Me or you're against Me.” And it's that dogma that really is oftentimes, I think, frightening to people. And God begins to demonstrate His holiness within the passage.

What's interesting is that in the scheme of things and how people react within the world towards Jesus. It's always interesting to me that you don't actually have to be combative or argumentative in order for people to hate you. You don't have to be confrontational or aggressive in a hostile way for people not to like you. All you have to do is you have to speak the truth unapologetically. That's all you have to do. You just tell them what you believe is right and what is wrong. In fact, that's part of our gospel. I think what has happened is that we soft-sell the gospel of God. The gospel means “good news,” right? It's simply “*euangelizō*”, which means “good news”. But the prefix in that, making reference to “eu,” or “good,” is a good that's not only beneficial, and I like the fact that God has given us something beneficial, wonderful, and that's salvation. That's a wonderful gift, isn't it? But it's also a gift that is something that is good in the sense of holiness. So, we're

not only talking about benefit, we're talking about virtue. And so, when we talk about proclaiming the good news, we're proclaiming a news that will help people in the sense that we save people. But we're also telling them that God is virtuous, that God is right, and that God is just. And sometimes what we do is we leave out that part of the good news. We say, "Well, you can be saved and then you can act any way you want to." And God says, "No, I've called you out of sin so that you might live to righteousness." And it is that which brings the greatest benefit to us is by virtue of doing what is right. So, it is the righteousness of God that we proclaim not only the benefit that God gives us.

And you see this all the way back when you go back to as Jesus sends out the disciples in Luke 9, He says, "I want you to go and proclaim the good news." Now, when you go into Chapter 10, He sends out 70 other disciples, and how does He call it? He doesn't call it the good news. He says, "I want you to proclaim the kingdom of God." They're synonymous. It's the same thing because the kingdom of God is making reference to the standards of

God and the righteousness of God, the rule of God. And so, we proclaim Christ.

The way that Paul puts it in 2 Timothy 3:12 is,

“Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

That's a given. In other words, if in fact, you'll do the right thing according to the way that Jesus lives, they're going to hate you. And that's exactly what Jesus tells His disciples in John 15, “If they hated Me, they're going to hate you too.” And I think sometimes we think of it as the fact that, “Well, it's just good news and we just tell people all the things that benefit them and we won't tell them that they are sinners and that they have to change.” Well, where's the benefit in that? I mean, if heaven was full of people that like to live like hell, then how wonderful would heaven be?

But if you look with me in Luke 12, if you drop on down a little bit further, actually towards the end, Jesus will make reference to the fact that when He comes to earth, it's actually unsettling to the world. Now, it's not because Jesus has an unsettling message. The message that God

calls us to is a message of goodness. I mean, just do the right thing. Let's just make it really simple, don't kill people. There you go. That's a nice start. Stop stealing. Be truthful. Wouldn't that be a nicer place to live if we just stopped that? But of course, the world is going, "We like this sin, we just want to be saved."

But if you look in Luke 12:49, it reads this way as Jesus declares,

(Luke 12:49) "I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled!"

(Luke 12:50) But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!

(Luke 12:51) Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division;

(Luke 12:52) for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three.

(Luke 12:53) They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter

against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

I mean, He's basically covering all the bases. There are going to be family that you're not going to get along with. Why? Well, it's not because Jesus is aggressively hostile. It's the fact that people don't like the truth. And it's by virtue of them hating the truth that they begin to repel the message. And of course, Jesus is true, so He can't hide the message.

If you look in Luke 4, you see this, and once again, you're reminded of the fact that this is in His own hometown. It's in the place in which He basically grew up, and that was in Nazareth. And if you drop on down to Luke 4:16, at the beginning of His ministry, He comes to Nazareth, He comes back home basically, and this is the place where He's brought up; so, He was accustomed to all these things. He entered the synagogue, which of course He probably had entered many times as a young person.

And it says in verse 17,

(Luke 4:17) “And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written,

(Luke 4:18) “THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR.

HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES,

AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND,

TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED,

(Luke 4:19) TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD.”

You go, “What a wonderful message.” In fact, He closes the book and He goes, “This is the time that it's happening.” And they go, “What a wonderful message, what a wonderful message.” Yeah, but He has more to say. And He goes on and basically says this, “I tell you, that you folks are not going to receive Me.” And He gives examples in the Old Testament where that was true of the people too. He said, “Weren't there a lot of widows in the time in which God healed this one woman or

ministered to this one woman? He sent Elijah. And wasn't there a lot of guys besides the Syrian that had leprosy that He could have healed in her own country? But why did He heal the Gentile? Why did He heal somebody else?

Because you people wouldn't listen." And then, what do they do? They go, "Okay, You're dead." So, they take Him out to throw Him off the cliff to kill Him. Jesus, in that one text, demonstrates the goodness of the gospel, but also, the conviction of the gospel and how people repel that.

Paul will make mention of the fact that we have this message. It's like an aroma. And to some, it's an aroma of life. I mean, they hear the message of the gospel and they go, "What a wonderful smell that is." To the other, he says, it's an aroma of death. How can the same message be so controversial and yet so wonderful and benevolent to so many people? And so, we're reminded of the fact that it's going to be a polarizing wish. When you begin to step up and make your commitment to follow God, you're going to find yourself in a place in which people are not going to like you. They're going to hate the things that you're saying just simply because you're telling the truth. If you were to proclaim God alone is holy, People are

going to get upset about that. If in fact you were going to declare man is the sinner, people get really upset about that. "I'm not a sinner." I don't know. The Bible says there's none righteous, no, not one. Where do you fit in on that? I mean, that would seem to include everybody to me. If you would proclaim the kingdom of God above all rule and all authority, that is to say, we're going by God's rules, not by man's rules, man's going to get upset about that because he likes making his own rules. He's going to take it personally and he's going to become hostile about that. "So, Christ is the only way? What a repulsive thought that is. There are many ways to God." No, that's not what the Bible says. "I am the way, the truth, the life. No man comes to the Father but by Me." That's highly controversial. Is it true? Yeah, it's true. That's true. But the fact of the matter is that people aren't looking for truth. They're looking for what fits into their way of life. So, all the way through this chapter, Jesus is, well, I can't say that making friends is top on His list. What is top on His list is speaking the truth. And that is really one of the greatest ways that you demonstrate love to people. If you withhold truth from them, there's no love in that. And

we've oftentimes quoted the passage in Proverbs, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; deceitful are the kisses of an enemy." If you're just telling people whatever they want to hear, you're not trying to help them. You're just thinking of yourself. But that's the world in which we live in and people flatter people.

All the way through the book, in particular this Chapter 11, Jesus is really being highly insulting to the Pharisees, to the religious leaders. And in many respects, what He's saying, actually, if you were to go through this chapter, we won't have time to go through the details of the chapter again, but He virtually begins to indict them for their inconsistent views. When you tell people, "You're inconsistent in the way that you see things," they're not going to like that. If in fact you come to them and you tell them that whatever they're doing, they have an inability to actually produce peace; of course, you have religious leaders, and that's what they're kind of proclaiming, that they have the ability to make peace.

But Jesus gives the example, if you look in Chapter 11, of the unclean spirit, in verse 24, that goes out of a man, he

passes through waterless places seeking rest and not finding any. He's actually using this as an analogy ultimately to the Pharisees, that their influence is that which is really demonic in the sense that they're promising people... I think Jude puts it this way, the false prophets are clouds without water. In other words, they promise people rain, but they don't bring any. And so, it's an interesting description of them. He begins to indict them for literally making things worse. They not only are not giving hope and peace to people, but they actually make things worse. And He goes into that within the passage. He begins to make reference to the fact that they have misperceptions and contrary ways of doing things. They have a hardness of heart, as He begins to describe.

In fact, you go down to verse 31, the hardness of heart is so hard that they seem to trump the Queen of Sheba. He says, "She's more receptive than you are." So, the hardness of heart and the unrepentant heart is greater than those who have far more to lose than they do. I mean, here you have a queen and she finally subjects, and

she goes, "I'm going to listen to what God has to say," and you don't. And then He gives the example of the Ninevites and they're an example of those that are far less informed than the Pharisees and yet they repent. So, the indictment just keeps going and throughout He begins to accuse them of obscuring the truth, for being obsessed with insignificant stuff. And basically, to quote Matthew, "strain a gnat, swallow a camel." I mean, you're just involved in stuff. You're going through the regiment, you're going through the ritual of religion, and you've left out things like mercy and justice and doing the right things. And so, you begin to see just how insulting these things are towards them. He accuses them of oppressing the poor, taking advantage of, and encumbering them. He says, "Look, you lawyers, you actually tell people to do things, but you don't try to help them with one finger to lift off the burden that is upon them." And as you read through this whole chapter, you begin to see clearly, well, no, I don't see any reason why they'd be angry at Him. I mean, the longer the list goes, the more upset they're getting.

So, it comes down to this passage in Luke 11:52, in which the declaration is with this final woe,

(Luke 11:52) “Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering.”

I mean, that's the nail in the coffin, basically. And what He's fundamentally saying is, “You've hindered others by virtue of the things that you do.” Now, once again, the question you have to ask yourself is, what are the things that they do? And it's very clear that you have religiosity without genuineness or the heart. In fact, it's clear that God is looking for the right motives; He's looking for the right intent. Scripture tells us that God judges the intent of the heart. He's not really impressed by the great things that you do. And I know some of you have probably done some great things, maybe. But the point is that God's not impressed with what you can produce. He is looking for the heart that's wholly His. And if your heart is right, then God rewards the intent and the motive of the heart. So, God is looking at those things, and Jesus continually is reminding them of that. Paul will oftentimes talk to those

that he writes, he says, "I tell you this with a clear conscience, because the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith." And what you're hearing is real. That's what you're hearing all through those passages. And so, God is looking for that, but of course, if you look at the Pharisees, they're basically appearance-oriented, show-oriented. You do all of your works to be seen by men. You do something right and you look around and you go, "Did somebody see that? Because I'm hoping somebody saw that." And Ephesians 6 begins to actually focus on this point at the very beginning of Ephesians 6, with those that work and with their bosses and they say, "Don't do the right thing by merely eye service, looking for the people to see you. Do it from the heart as unto the Lord." Once again, that's what the Lord sees. This goes counter to everything that they've been doing, and what they've been pursuing is that external show. Well, the problem with that is that's easy to catch.

The way it's put, if you look at me in Luke 12, you have so many thousands of people that are gathered around

Jesus, and He's very concerned that the Pharisees are somehow infiltrating the masses.

It reads this way,

(Luke 12:1) “Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first of all, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.””

Now, once again, Paul reminds Timothy that hypocrisy sears the conscience. How does hypocrisy sear the conscience? Well, you start faking everything; you start putting on airs; start talking to people; don't tell them what you really think; don't be genuine; don't be sincere; you just flatter them. And after a while, you don't feel anymore. Because feeling actually only exists in real. If there's sincerity and genuineness of heart, then that's where real is. That's where it lives.

I remember the first time as a young person I actually went to a party. I never liked parties anyway, but I actually went to a party, and I just go, “What a bunch of phonies.” I just wanted to get out of there fast as I could. I

don't know how people do it. I know some people go to these things all the time. I'm going, "Wow." But if you were to follow those people, I bet you wouldn't find any depth at all in any of them. Because what begins to happen is you begin to harden your heart towards the genuineness. And it's so strange how it just spreads like leaven because you start being phony, this person starts being phony, and before long, we have a whole room of phonies. And that literally sucks out the genuineness and the love among them.

So, Jesus comes into this room and begins to say, "Woe to you guys because you're just not being real and you think that everything's okay by doing this." And he begins to rebuke them.

John 8:45 reads this way,

(John 8:45) "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me."

"You seek to kill Me because I told you the truth." Just because He was sincere? Just because He was genuine?

I was thinking back throughout the years, and I'm not talking about necessarily me walking up to anybody, but I'm talking about people coming to me for counsel. People come up to the Pastor from time to time to counsel. And what's bizarre is that oftentimes when I tell them what they need to do, they get mad at me. Now, a lot of them don't, which I'm thankful for. But I've told people, "You need to forgive." "I don't want to forgive." Right away. I'm going, "What's the hostility about? That's the one thing that'll set you free." You know, the things that you're telling people is to set you free. You know, people start fighting in their families. And I'll quote maybe Philippians 2, "You need to hold others in higher esteem than yourself. Don't just think of yourself. Think of somebody else. Why don't you try that?" "I don't want to do that." And they start getting mad. I tell some people, "You need to submit to authority." Some people don't like submitting to authority. But not only are we preaching the gospel of benefit, we're preaching the gospel of virtue.

Let me show you an example of this. Ephesians 4. Just drop on down to verse 17.

Paul writes this,

(Ephesians 4:17) “So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind.”

In other words, when we receive Christ as our Lord and Savior, emphasizing the word “Lord” there, when you do that, then you want to walk like He does. You're starting to talk like He does. You're taking on His persona. That's why Ephesians 5 will start off, “Therefore be imitators of God and walk in love just like Jesus.” That's what the gospel is. The gospel is we're being transformed into His image. We're being changed. We're no longer those mean, hateful, bad people that we used to be. We're walking in the light of Christ.

It says in verse 18, that the world,

“being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart.”

You want to know why people are so indifferent and hostile? One, is they're a bunch of phonies and two, they've learned not to care. They just shut off the whole caring thing.

It says in verse 19,

(Ephesians 4:19) “and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality...”

Let me just say this, when you're miserable, the only thing you can think about is relieving the misery. So, what is he talking about sensuality? What he's talking about is those things that appeal to the senses. Because you're desiring to feel something. You don't feel anything. You're callous. So, you're desiring to feel something. So, you go into all kinds of sensuality. People oftentimes wonder, why is it that people cut themselves with a knife? And a lot of times the reason for that is because they don't feel anything and they want to feel something. It's very interesting the way the mind plays games and those kinds of things.

“And they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

(Ephesians 4:20) But you did not learn Christ in this way.”

Which is telling us that the gospel is not simply you being saved, but a new way of living. We follow Christ Jesus. We follow His ways. We follow what He tells us to do. And there are going to be times in which we're even going to proclaim the truth.

In fact, in Ephesians 5, he'll say, walk as Light and even expose the darkness. And there are going to be times they're going to do that. You don't have to be nasty. You don't have to be abrupt or hostile, aggressive, or confrontational for people to hate you. All you have to do is speak the truth unapologetically and tell them what is right. And you're going to have people upset at you because you tell them that adultery is wrong. “You're so mean.” Well, no, I'm trying to save you from heartache. I'm trying to save you from pain and from sorrow, from hurting other people. See? But some people just don't care that they hurt other people because their conscience

has been seared and they have a callous heart. And so, the gospel is the very thing that is freeing them up from that.

A couple of guys not too long ago came up to me and they were fighting over their inheritance. And I'm going, "Really? 1 Corinthians 6 says, why not rather be wrong? Let it go. What are you fighting for?" People take people to court over money. Can you imagine that? Over power. There's a reason why 1 Corinthians 6 says, don't take a brother to court. You want to know the reason why? Because the lawyers that those people pick aren't interested in truth. They're interested in winning. So, he says, if you have a problem, go to the church. Don't take it in the courts, because the courts are divisive. Now, the wonderful thing is that God can supersede, and God is over all authority. But isn't that a wonderful grace gift that He's given the believers that will do the right thing? God will reward the one who does the right thing. He'll ultimately punish those who do the wrong thing. But how the world begins to focus on controlling rather than submitting, and that's the whole gospel. I believe that

God has good things for me. And because of that, I do what He says. Nevertheless, the world is against the truth.

And Jesus makes a statement in John 5:44,

“How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?”

That's an interesting question, isn't it? In other words, what makes people upset? Well, maybe it makes you look bad. Maybe they're worried about what people are thinking. Why are you worried about what people are thinking? Shouldn't you be concerned about what God sees in your heart and are you doing the right thing?

Don't worry about what everybody thinks. That's why the gospel is freeing. It frees you from the thoughts of man and it just says, “Just do the right thing.” And you feel the freedom, the chain's falling off as we sang in that wonderful song.

(John 7:24) “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”

In other words, judge according to what is right.

Obviously, throughout Scripture, there's a thought of, "Just please God." That's the gospel. It sets us free from the way that we used to think. And that's why we use the word "repent," because we're no longer thinking the way we think. We're changing our way of thinking. And it's God in us, the hope of glory that begins to empower us to hold firm to that truth.

Well, if you look at the passage, what He's fundamentally saying in verse 52 is that "You not only don't go the right way, you hinder others, and by virtue of your hypocrisy and by virtue of your selfish pursuits." And the world can see what oftentimes people proclaim one thing, but their lifestyle shows the opposite, and it literally pulls other people the wrong way. I mean, even when you think about religion, the focus on beads or crosses or whatever, you're focusing on the wrong thing. God's looking at the heart. So, religion will oftentimes take people away from God rather than bring them close to God, because God is interested with these things.

Now, if you look in verse 53, it reads this way,

(Luke 11:53) “When He left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile...”

I don't know if it means apoplectic or not, but that would be an explosive anger that would come out of them.

“... the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects,

(Luke 11:54) plotting against Him to catch Him in something He might say.”

Proverbs says, in many words there is a possibility of sin. In fact, sin is inevitable. So, I think what they're trying to do is, if they can get Him talking, they're going to trip Him up somewhere and they're going to get Him to say the wrong thing. Fundamentally, what we're dealing with is that they're not going to listen to reason, so they're going to try to show Him wrong. And that's why oftentimes the church is attacked so much. Because people don't like what was said to them. They don't like the stand that the church took, which is part of the gospel. But now, what they're going to do is they've got to prove the church wrong. And it's by the attacks of the church that they feel somehow vindicated. So, at this particular point, they

begin to try to find anything that could in any way indict Jesus.

In fact, there are a number of interesting examples of this. If you look with me in Isaiah 29, and then we'll jump it back to Luke. In Isaiah 29, which kind of reminds us, I mean, there's nothing new under the sun. I mean, 500, 600, 700 years before Christ, they were doing the same thing. So, we still had problems with lawyers then, and we still have problems with lawyers today. Not saying all lawyers are bad. It's just here again, there are those that are ruthless, and their only desire is to make money and to somehow prove somebody wrong so that they can win the case.

But if you look at Isaiah 29, it reads this way,

(Isaiah 29:20) “For the ruthless will come to an end and the scorner will be finished,

Indeed all who are intent on doing evil will be cut off;

(Isaiah 29:21) Who cause a person to be indicted by a word, And ensnare him who adjudicates at the gate...”

In other words, they would hear their court hearings at the gate. And what he's saying is that they try to trip somebody up as they begin to go through the things that are lawful. They try to find loopholes and things that they can indict with.

“... And defraud the one in the right with meaningless arguments.”

It doesn't have to make sense. It just has to confuse. That's all that it has to do.

Isaiah 32:7 reads this way,

“... He devises wicked schemes To destroy the afflicted with slander...”

That's what they use the most. You hear people gossiping? That's slander. Don't listen to them. Whatever they say, just say, “Look, I'm not going to listen to it. If it's not building up the body, I'm not going to hear it.” That's all you have to say.

But the passage makes reference to the fact that they defraud those who are right with meaningless words.

“... He devises wicked schemes To destroy the afflicted with slander, Even though the needy one speaks what is right.”

That's an interesting passage.

Amos 5:10 reads this way,

“They hate him who reproves in the gate, And they abhor him who speaks with integrity.”

In other words, get a person to speak the right thing and they hate him because he's telling the right thing.

Jesus will say this in John 18:20,

“... “I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret.”

And the thing about those that are godly is they're just going to tell you the way it is. “Why didn't you soft-sell?” I'm not going to soft-sell. It's the truth. We're going to be transparent, right? We want you to change. We want you to find freedom. We're not trying to flatter you.

This is why if you look with me in Luke 23, once again, you can see it going throughout Scripture. One of the reasons

why I give you other passages is so that you know that it's just really the heart of man that does this.

(Luke 23:1) “Then the whole body of them got up and brought Him before Pilate.

(Luke 23:2) And they began to accuse Him...”

Well, you know, if you don't like what He's saying, find something that you can indict Him with. Dig up something. It doesn't have to be true. It doesn't have to be right. It just has to be something that can destroy Him.

“And they began to accuse Him, saying, “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar...””

Now, all you have to do is go into Luke 20:22-26 and read what Jesus said. “Should we pay taxes or not?” He goes, “Well, whose face is on the coin? Render to Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's.”

That's what He said. But now, what they did was they said, “He's telling people not to pay taxes.” That's not what He said. Nevertheless, they continue to accuse Him. Of course, Pilate is asking Him, “Are You the king of the

Jews?” And Pilate ultimately has to come to a point of saying, “Look, I don't find any guilt in this man.”

Unfortunately, Pilate in John 18 will literally state that he knows that there's no guilt in this man, but he also knows that he has to kill Him. So, what does he have to do? He has to throw out truth. So, he'll become an instant agnostic at that point. He'll turn to Jesus and he'll go, “What is truth?” And he'll just throw away truth. And that's what you have to do when you don't want to do what's right. You ultimately have to throw out truth. You have to throw out the whole Jesus thing, and that's why He's hated so much, because He's so contrary to the way you want to live.

The disciples said at the beginning of Luke 11, “How should I wish?” And He says, “You wish, ‘Thy kingdom come.’ You'll be okay if you do that.”

If you look in verse 5,

(Luke 23:5) “But they kept on insisting, saying, “He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea...”

Stirring up the people? It's not Jesus that was stirring up the people. It's the Pharisees that were stirring up the

people. And I've often thought that was interesting. I watch the news sometimes too. And the very thing that people are accusing somebody of doing is the very thing they're the most guilty of doing themselves. And it's like they're trying to take the focus off themselves. The Pharisees were so much stirring up the multitudes that ultimately it will culminate in the greatest insurrection of all time in which the Jewish nation will become so hateful towards the Roman government that the Roman government in AD 70, will have to go in and literally level Jerusalem in order to find any kind of peace. I mean, that's how much they were stirring up the problems. So, once again, be sure the problem is with them, certainly not with God.

And we do this in subtle ways too. Lest we divorce ourselves from that whole sense of, "Well, at least I'm not a Pharisee." I just want to remind you that, remember the whole thing with Mary and Martha and the fact that Lazarus, their brother had died? And it seems as if Jesus had taken His sweet time about coming. They let Him know beforehand, but He's late in coming and He

purposely delays. The text says He purposely delays. And the first thing that Martha comes and says to Jesus is, "Had you been here, he wouldn't have died." That's the first thing she says. And Mary will say the same thing. Now, the text actually opens up, these are people that Jesus loves. But what it demonstrates is, when something happens, when it's disagreeable with our way of thinking, we began to falsely accuse God. Because if you think of that statement, that's accusing God of not caring; that's accusing God of not being able to do something.

Whatever thought is in your head, it's accusing God. And Jesus says, "You don't understand. This is for the glory of God. This is for something far greater. And even if he dies, he'll live. Do you believe this?" They go, "Well, we believe that someday we're going to resurrect." He goes, "No, do you believe?" And then, of course, He raises Lazarus from the dead. The point is that we're very critical.

And when I think of, interestingly enough, that passage in John 12, where Mary comes in and she's anointing the feet of Jesus, and Judas looks at it and goes, "Why are you wasting this expensive oil on His feet? This could have

been sold and given to the poor.” Now, you think about, “Wow, that's a really thoughtful thing.” But Scripture says that Judas used to pilfer the money and put it in his own pocket. So, he wasn't concerned for the poor. And a lot of times you'll hear people, “Well, you put God first? You could be helping somebody somewhere else.” Putting God first **is** helping somebody. Because by virtue of me putting God first, God begins to work in ways that you and I never could. Do you believe? See, you're going to be accused of all kinds of things. You need to concentrate. I need to concentrate on doing the right thing. And Jesus was always ever walking whatever pleased the Father. He wasn't concerned about hurting people's feelings. As the lawyers say, “Don't you know that you offend us?” He wasn't concerned about that. And that kind of echoes really as you go into the Book of Galatians. And as Paul says, “There are people of reputation.” And he says, “That they're of reputation makes no difference to me. I'm going to do the right thing.”

I've got to leave you with my favorite verse. I have it in my home. And it was the verse that was life-changing in my

own life. And almost all of you that have been with me know exactly what the verse is, but it's Galatians 1:10.

And the verse says,

(Galatians 1:10) “For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.”

God has called you to proclaim the gospel. The gospel is both beneficial and virtuous. It does not compromise either. And so, you and I need to be bold in proclaiming that wonderful message, because really, a person can't be healed, they can't be helped, and there is no redemption without Jesus. And that's our hope.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and we give You thanks for Your word that reminds us that there's going to be hostility against those that speak the truth, those that live by the truth. And there will be a tearing down of those that walk in integrity. Nevertheless, it will not be

true. It will not be right. And You ultimately will be the Judge. Father, we come before You today, and we surrender our lives to You. We tell You that we want to follow You, and You look at us and say, "Well, pick up the cross because following Me is not going to be easy." You certainly have not soft-sold this to us. You told us, "The foxes have holes, the birds have nests, but the Son of Man doesn't have a place to lay His head. If you want to follow Me, it's not going to be easy. However, **it is** going to be wonderful." And we're so thankful that we are able to follow our Savior, we're able to follow the truth, and we're able to ultimately be with Him in glory forever.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed. What we're asking you to do is not live a life of compromise, to not worry about what everybody else is thinking, but to do the right thing. Follow Christ. It's not confusing, the right thing. The Word of God became flesh, dwelt among us, and we beheld the glory of what the right thing looked like. And certainly, we see it in Jesus. I am calling upon you to be imitators of God and walk like Jesus. At times

you'll be embraced, at times you'll be hated, but do not compromise.