

The Danger of Religion
Cross & Resurrection, Pt. 2
Luke 19:28-44

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March 24, 2018



I. PRAYER

- i. Help us to be faithful to proclaim to our town their true Savior, Jesus Christ. Open our eyes to the lostness of those around us and give us the heart of Jesus, who weeps over those who do not know you.

II. INTRODUCTION

- a. How do you think the average person would define the word: religion?
 - i. I think most people would say a religion is some sort of system that helps people get to God.
 - That there is some sort of divine being or higher power.
 - This higher power has influence over our destiny and our future.
 - And a religion is a way of getting to this god or interacting with this god.
- b. Now, if you think long and hard about it...religion can be quite dangerous.
 - i. Most major religions in the world claim exclusivity. That their religion is the only way to God.
 - The rise of liberalism that says that all religions lead to God...whatever you feel is most important...is a rather recent development and is rejected by most globally.



1. They are a loud bunch but they certainly don't represent what most people believe.
- So, if all these major religions in the world claim exclusivity...this means most of them are wrong!
 1. Now, some would say that this very argument is an apologetic for atheism.
 2. That since we have so many different religions, this is evidence that religion is simply a human invention to help us make sense of the world.
 3. But rather, Ecclesiastes 3:11 says: "[God] has also put eternity in [man's] heart, but no one can discover the work God has done from beginning to end."
 4. We know in our souls that this is not all there is but due to our sin we have been blinded to the truth.
- ii. Another reason why religion can be dangerous is because religion can be manipulative.
 - If God has put eternity on our hearts and most of us are open to a religious system that connects us with God...than it is easy for false teachers and false religions to use this about us to manipulate us to give our money, to do things that we shouldn't do...
 1. For many atheists, this is one of their primary problems with religion.
 2. Many of history's most heinous crimes against humanity have been done in the name of a religion!
- iii. But, do you know what I think is most dangerous?



- When a religion is formed based on what this book (Bible) has to say...and yet it misses what this book says about how we relate with God.
 - I believe this is most dangerous because we believe that this book is the Word of God.
 1. We believe that this book contains the exclusive truth about how mankind relates with God.
 - And so, when a religion is formed around this book yet misses what this book actually says...it can be the most deceptive of all.
- iv. I believe there are many different religions...systems on how we get to God...that use this book...
- And they may use the title of Christianity...
 - But they completely miss what the Bible has to say is the way that we relate with God.
- c. And this morning, I want to read about some people that encounter Jesus, who although they knew the content of the Scriptures, they missed the message of the Scriptures.

III. THE MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE

- a. But, before we read this passage and learn from it this morning, what I want to do first is make very clear what the overall message of the Bible is.



- i. We believe that this book has one singular message and one singular story line.
 - I want to make that clear so that we can understand the danger of a religion that misses this message.

b. Creation

- i. The first pages of the Bible declare that God created us in his image.

c. Fall

- i. But, only three chapters into the Bible do we learn that humanity rejected God.
 - 1. So, mankind committed treason against the kingdom of God.
- ii. And this was a grave sin that broke all of creation.
 - Mankind was now enemies with God.
 - We were no longer allowed to be in his presence.
 - 1. So, although we had eternity set on our hearts, God had made it so that man would no longer know the way that we relate with God.
 - 2. This is why we have all these religions trying to figure out how we relate with God.
 - And since mankind was alienated from God, we now have corrupt and selfish hearts that has caused so much brokenness and pain in this world.
- iii. And what every single human being deserves for this sin is death.

d. Redemption

- i. But God, because he is a merciful God, set out on a plan for mankind to be redeemed from their sin and rebellion.



- He raised up the people of Israel as his people and he gave them a law...a religious system.
 1. The problem was that by God's design, the law was impossible to keep.
 2. This religious system was not designed to be the way to God, it was designed to show us that no religious system would be sufficient to allow sinful mankind to get to a holy and righteous God. (Repeat)
- ii. God is a merciful God, but he is also a just God.
 - And he cannot allow treason against his kingdom to go unpunished...a religious system wasn't going to solve the problem.
 1. The religious system simply helps us identify our problem, not solve it.
 - So, throughout the Old Testament as his people were seeking to follow this law...
 1. God kept on revealing to his people, that it was not through the law that they would be saved from their sin, but it would be through the Messiah...a Savior.
- iii. And so, when the time was right, the Messiah arrived.
 - It was Jesus Christ. Jesus was not just a man...but it was the Son of God...God Himself became a human to deliver his people.
 - And because God is just and merciful at the same time...this was the plan...
 1. Jesus would live a life without sin and therefore not be deserving of death.



- iv. But Jesus did not come just to be our example Jesus came to be our Savior.
- He offered himself to die in our place. To take the judgement that we deserve for our sin against God in our place.
 1. And so, he died on the cross not because he deserved death but because we deserve death and God took our sin and placed it on Jesus and allowed Jesus to take the judgement of God in our place.
 2. But God not only placed our sin on Jesus, he then places the righteousness of Jesus on us.
 3. So, for those who trust in Christ, not only have they had their sin removed but they have gained the righteousness of Jesus.
 4. It's as if we have completely fulfilled the law...the religious system to get to God.
 5. But it was not us that got ourselves to God, it was God who came and got us.
- v. And all of this is sealed and verified by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus died and was buried. But three days later he was raised from the dead verifying that the power of death had been broken.
 - The judgement of death that we deserve for our sin had been fully fulfilled and is no longer required to satisfy God's wrath.
- vi. And so now, God has established his church which is comprised of everyone who believes that all of this about God and Jesus is true.



- People who believe that their only hope is the cross and resurrection of Jesus.

e. Restoration

i. And we wait.

- Because we know that one day Jesus will return. And at his return, everyone who had not trusted in Christ will be judged because they are still in their sins.
- And everyone who had trusted in Christ will live forever in God's Kingdom where sin will be no more, there will be no more tears, no more hurt, no more evil...for all of eternity.

f. This is the message of the Bible. It's not about how we get to God...it's about how God brings us to Himself in Christ.

i. And notice the climax of this message.

- It is the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Without the cross and resurrection of Jesus...mankind is left in an impossible religious system to somehow claw their way back to God.

ii. Religion without the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ is dangerous.

- It has no answer for our sinful, inconsistent hearts.
- It's easily manipulated to exploit people.
- And what's worse, it leads people to death and judgement.



IV. SERIES PLUG

- a. This morning, I said I wanted to read about some people that Jesus encounter who know the Scriptures but they missed this message.
 - i. We're going to read the account of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
 - Today is Palm Sunday. The Sunday before Easter where the church typically commemorates when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem where within that week, he would be arrested and executed on the cross and three days later, raised from the dead.
 - ii. We are going to read a passage about Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem where he is about to initiate the climax of all of history...
 - ...yet in our passage this morning, we see that Jesus weeps over the city of Jerusalem because they've completely missed what is happening in their midst.
 - iii. As Jesus enters the Holy City of Jerusalem, we'll see that the religion of God's people caused them to miss their savior.

V. READ LUKE 19:28-44

- i. Now, as we read this account of Jesus entering Jerusalem, I want us to look at what Jesus has to say to the crowds who are praising him and to the Pharisees who weren't so pleased.
- b. The Crowds Praising Jesus



- i. Now, so Jesus is coming into Jerusalem on a colt.
- This is an important detail because the Old Testament tells us that the Messiah will ride into the Holy City...Jerusalem on a colt.
 1. Zechariah 9:9 - "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."
 - So, the Scriptures have revealed these things beforehand.
- ii. And so, Jesus is riding on the colt...and **Read v.37-38.**
- What these disciples are shouting is a direct quote from Psalm 118:26, which Kathy read from earlier.
 - Now, other accounts of this entry in Jerusalem in Matthew, Mark, and John tell us that it was not just the multitude of Jesus' disciples but there were crowds of people praising Jesus.
 1. And these accounts record that these crowds were shouting the word Hosanna!
 2. Hosanna is Hebrew for "Save us, we pray!"
 3. This is a direct quote from Psalm 118:25
 - So, the people of the Holy City of Jerusalem had knowledge of the Scriptures.
 1. They were seeing prophesy being fulfilled before their eyes as their King and their Messiah rode on a colt into the city to bring Salvation.



- iii. So, it would seem that these people had not missed the message of Scripture.
 - But if that was the case, why was v.42 Jesus' response to their praise and their declaration that peace had come.
 1. Read v.42.
 - The people are declaring that peace has come now that Jesus has arrived in Jerusalem but Jesus is saying you don't know what makes for peace.
- iv. See, for the Jews of the day that inhabited Jerusalem and for many of Jesus' followers, they didn't understand that the salvation they needed was from themselves...from their own sin...
 - No, they believed their primary problem was Rome, who had occupied Jerusalem.
 1. The enemies of the Jewish nation.
 - And the peace they were proclaiming was the peace that they will have when the Messiah establishes the Kingdom of God.
 1. And yes, Jesus was there to begin to establish his Kingdom, but he wasn't offering a salvation from Rome, he was there to die on the cross and bring salvation from their sin.
- v. See, the problem here with the religion of the day was it misled the people to believe that their problem was external and not internal.
 - They missed the message of the Scriptures because they missed the problem.



1. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is good news to us because of the bad news that, although we might have many external problems and although God does care about those problems, our primary problem is inside.
 2. It's our sinful hearts that have rebelled against God.
- See, we as humans, have a tendency to believe that we would actually be better people if our external problems resolved themselves.
 1. My marriage would be better if my husband noticed me...or if my wife respected me.
 2. I would be more content in life if my boss was a better manager.
 3. I would be more generous if I weren't in so much debt or if I lived in a less expensive area.
 4. I wouldn't be as angry and frustrated all the time if my kids would just listen to me!
- vi. But, the danger with seeing our primary problem as external and not internal...the danger with missing the problem...is we miss the Savior.
- I wonder how many in this crowd shouting Hosanna were later in the week shouting "Crucify Him!" when they realized he wasn't in Jerusalem for what they thought.
- c. The Pharisees
- i. As Jesus was riding into Jerusalem on the Colt and he was being praised by all of these people...the Pharisees weren't so pleased.



- Reminder: The Pharisees were very strict Jewish leaders who knew the Old Testament very well.
- ii. **Read v.39.**
- See the Pharisees did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah they were waiting for...and therefore, by receiving the praises of the crowd and accepting the shouts of Hosanna, the Pharisees felt this was blasphemous.
 - “You are receiving praise as if you are the Messiah, but you’re not, rebuke your disciples!”
 1. Although God the Father announced the identity of Jesus at His baptism.
 2. Although Jesus performed miracles that were indicative of the coming of the Kingdom of God.
 3. Although Jesus was fulfilling prophecy before their very eyes.
 - The Pharisees, the religious leaders of the day who were Old Testament scholars, missed the Savior.
 1. And Jesus says to them in **v.40.**
 2. All of creation has been groaning in its brokenness for this moment where the Messiah would come to Jerusalem to make available the redeeming grace of God.
 3. This is the climax of all of history.
 4. Even the rocks will testify to it.
- iii. **And listen, if we miss the problem then we are going to miss the Savior.**
- If we believe that our problem is mainly outside of us and not inside of us, then we’re going to look to God to deal with our circumstances and not look to God to deal with our hearts.



- Maybe this is one of the most dangerous religions of all.
 1. Make sure you read your Bible. Make sure you attend church. Make sure you keep your mouth clean. Make sure you don't drink too much. Make sure you give to the poor. And above all, make sure you pray.
 2. You do these things. You keep this religious system. Then God will take care of your circumstances. He will save you from your external problems.
- God, I feel like I've done everything that you asked of me...why is my spouse still the way they are?
 1. But you don't need to be saved from a lousy spouse, you need to be saved from a heart that seeks to be served rather than serve.
 2. You need to be saved from a heart that puts you at the center of your marriage...a heart that says I will be a better spouse once they are a better spouse.
 3. And listen, Jesus is riding on a colt into Jerusalem so he can suffer and die on a cross for that sin.
 4. So he can redeem your heart. Forgive you. And allow you to begin to change.
 5. Does God care about your marriage. YES! Does he care about the conduct of your spouse? Yes! Can you pray to God about that? Of course!



6. But we must always understand that the message of the Scriptures is that our problem is internal before it is external and Jesus is our Savior because he went to the cross to save us from our own sin.
- God, I feel like I've done everything you asked of me...why do I still not have disposable income like everyone else around here it seems...
 1. But you don't need to be saved from your financial situation, you need to be saved from a heart of greed and the belief that you'll be satisfied when you have more financial freedom.
 2. And Jesus is riding on a colt into Jerusalem so he can suffer and die on a cross for that sin.
 3. So he can redeem your heart. Forgive you. And help you change.
 4. Does God care about your money. YES! Can you pray to God about that? Of course!
 5. But our problem is internal before it is external and Jesus is our Savior because he went to the cross to save us from our own sin.
 - God, I feel like I've done everything you asked of me...why do I struggle with anxiety...why am I always so fearful...
 1. But you don't need to be saved from your anxiety, you need to be saved from a heart that struggles with unbelief and fear that this life is all there is.
 2. And Jesus is riding on a colt into Jerusalem so he can purchase your life on the cross.



3. So he can redeem your heart and give you assurance that this life is not all there is and the best is yet to come in God's kingdom.
 4. Does God care about your anxiety. Yes! Does he desire for you to pour out your anxiety before him and cast your cares on him? Yes!
 5. But the solution to our problem is not the reduction of external circumstances beyond our control, it is in our Savior who has rescued us from our greatest fears and the brokenness of this life.
- iv. See, when we miss the problem, we miss the Savior. And when we miss the Savior...we miss the whole point of our religion.
- d. So, what is Jesus' response to this?
- i. **Read v.41-44**
 - And what we see here in these verses is Jesus' own prophesy of the destruction of Jerusalem that would occur about 40 years later when the Romans surrounded, besieged, and then burned the entire city in AD 70.
 1. If you go to Jerusalem today, you can go stand on top of the pile of stones that is still there on the side of the Temple Mount where the Romans burned down the Temple and rolled the stones off the side.
 - ii. Jesus weeps because Jesus knows the judgement that Jerusalem will endure for missing the Savior!



VI. CONCLUSION

- a. Listen, the message of our religion. The message of the Bible.
 - i. Is that God has created us to worship him and we have said no and therefore we deserve God's judgement.
 - But God in his grace and mercy has reached down to us in and through Jesus Christ and made a way that we could be reconciled to Him.
 - He has made a way that we could live our lives in the way that he created us to.
 - He has made a way that we could live for all of eternity with him in his kingdom.
 - ii. But if someone does not trust what Christ has done for them, if they don't repent of the true problem which is their sin...then they will experience the judgement of God...like Jerusalem did.
 - They, like Christ, will endure the wrath of God but they will never walk out of the grave and they will spend eternity suffering for their sin.
 - The judgement of God is an awful thing that is not to be minimized...
 - iii. The question is this...do we weep over those who do not know their Savior?
- b. So, two take-aways from this...
 - i. #1 – This is why we say we are a Christ-centered church.
 - Because if we have a message to proclaim that does not contain the climax of all of history.



- If we have something to say that does not contain the cross and resurrection.
 - If we are not faithful to boldly declare, even when people feel it is offensive, what the true problem is and who the true Savior is...
 - If all we're about is helping you live a better, more moral life...
 - Then we are nothing but a false, therapy session.
 1. A dangerous religion.
- ii. #2 – Being a faithful church and being faithful followers of Jesus means we make known the true Savior to our town.
- Our religious activity as Christians should be to worship God in response to what he has done for us in Christ and to worship God by making known the true Savior to those who are lost.
 - This is a tough question for us...
 1. But what emotional response do we experience when we think of the people that we know that do not know their Savior?
 2. Are we indifferent or do we weep?
 - And the question that we need to answer both individually and corporately is: How are we going to make the Savior known?
 1. How are you, personally, going to make the Savior known?
 2. You could start with Easter. Next week!
 3. Who are you going to invite to come with you to Easter.
 4. But even beyond Easter, who in your life is walking towards the judgement of God.



5. Because what grace God has shown them by putting you in their life...someone who knows the Savior!

VII. PRAY

- i. Take a minute to think of a few names.
 - People you might invite to Easter.
 - People who do not know the Savior.
 - Let's pray for them.

