

The Long Game

Luke, Pt. 18

Luke 6:12-26

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I. INTRODUCTION

a. Now, as most of you know, I am a big fan of football and I am a disgruntled fan of the Washington Football Team.

i. Now, I am not sure if you know this or not but the Washington Football Team has a new nickname.

- Yes, after getting their best marketing minds together and after much deliberation...the Washington Football Team decided to change their name to...
- The...Washington...Football...Team.
 1. That's their new name!
 2. Yes, it is just temporary...and they will have a new name at some point...
 3. But for right now, the name is Washington Football Team.
- Now, there are a lot of people with a lot of opinions about what the actual new name for the Washington Football Team should be...

ii. But at the end of the day...here is how this is going to go...

- If the Washington Football Team continues to be a miserable organization, a toxic and abusive place to work, and a loser on the field...
 1. Well, everyone will hate the new name.
- But if the Football Team turns itself around, becomes a reputable organization and is actually competitive on the football field...
 1. Well everyone will love it's name!



- Because at the end of the day, it's not the label that matters, it's not the jersey that you wear that matters, it's what you produce that matters.
 1. I wouldn't be surprised at all...
 2. If the Washington Football Team won the superbowl this year...
 3. Well, that would majorly surprise me...
 4. But if the Washington Football Team wins the Super Bowl (which they're not)...
 5. I wouldn't be surprised if they decide to keep the name exactly what it is now...the Washington Football Team...
 6. Because the success on the field, the production, will endear it to the fanbase.

b. At the end of the day, labels don't mean that much if the person behind the label doesn't produce the fruit to back it up.

- i. And Jesus uses this same principle to talk about the people who wear the label of Christian...the people who wear the jersey for team Jesus...Jesus says, you will know who is actual followers are, not by their jersey, but by the fruit they produce.
 - This morning, we're going to continue in Luke 6 but later in the chapter (which we'll study more in depth in a few weeks)...Jesus says that you know a tree by its fruit.
 1. If I were to go to Merrifield Garden Center...and I see a tree there with Pears on it but a label attached to it that says "Apple Tree"...
 2. I am going to immediately know that the label is wrong...not the tree.



3. I'm not going to assume the tree made a mistake and that it needs to start growing apples.
 4. I am going to assume that the store made a mistake and put the wrong label on it.
 5. Because you know a tree by its fruit and not by its label.
- In the same way, you know a true follower of Jesus by their fruit and not by their label.

c. As we continue in our study of the Gospel of Luke...we have come to the place where Luke records his version of the Sermon on the Mount.

- i. The Sermon on the Mount is a famous sermon by Jesus.
 - Matthew records the most content from this sermon.
 - Here in Luke, we have a much shorter version.
 1. And over the next five weeks, we are going to study the different parts of Luke's version of the Sermon on the Mount.
- ii. But, I believe that Luke organized his recording of Jesus' sermon thematically...
 - And over the next five weeks, Jesus is going to teach us about five different fruits that is produced by a true follower of Jesus.
 1. Labels don't matter.
 2. Every follower of Jesus should be growing, not perfectly, these five fruits.



3. And if someone claims they follow Jesus and yet you don't see these fruits anywhere...
 4. Well, that might be the same thing as me putting on a Washington Football Team jersey and claiming to be the starting quarterback.
 5. Labels don't matter. The fruit does.
- iii. **And so, we are going to do a little mini-series as we study Luke 6 and the Sermon on the Mount...**
- And I am going to call this mini-series: HOW TO SPOT A CHRISTIAN.
 - And each week, we'll talk about the different fruits that are produced by a true follower of Jesus.

d. And before we read the text, let me say a word about why this is important...

- i. There are a lot of people and a lot of churches with a lot of different beliefs that claim the label of Christian and also claim the name of Jesus.
 - And I personally believe one of the reasons that we're seeing more and more younger generations walking away from the church is because they see that for so many people who claim the name of Jesus...there is not much fruit behind the label.
 1. And you know a tree by its fruit, not its label.
 - And my desire, is that we would be a family of Jesus followers who are willing to examine themselves and ask...



1. Is there fruit behind this label?
2. Do I represent Jesus and His transforming grace to the people around me?
3. Or, am I a tree with the wrong label on it?

II. LUKE 6:12-26

a. So, let's jump in to the sermon on the mount.

- i. And this morning, the specific fruit that Jesus says grows on his true followers is this...
 - True followers of Jesus play the long game and don't waste their time with the short game.
 1. Let me show you what I mean...

b. Read Luke 6:17-26

- i. Skip v.12-16
 - *¹⁷ And he came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, ¹⁸ who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. ¹⁹ And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all.*
 1. [So, you have this crowd of people and many of these people are suffering from all kinds of different things whether it be poverty, disease, oppression, hunger...and Jesus has compassion on them...but he also has a message for them...



- *20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:
"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
21 "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.
"Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.
22 "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! 23 Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.*

- *24 "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.
25 "Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.
"Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.
26 "Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.*

c. So, Jesus gives us here four things that we all want.

- i. Meaning that it is not bad that we all want these things...every single human being on this planet wants these four things!
 - Wealth - too experience abundance and have no lack.
 - To be full - where all the hungers of our life both literal and figurative to be satisfied.



- We all want laughter, fun, and joy.
 - We all want to be loved and affirmed by others.
- ii. **Four things we all want!**
- You want it. I want it. Don't deny it.
- iii. **Now, Jesus does not say that it is bad to want these things...but what Jesus is saying is that there is a place where one can fully experience these four things, without limitation (think about that)...but it is not here...**
- And what it means to follow Jesus means to know that those things cannot be fully found here..
 - And so the Jesus follower doesn't organize his/her life around seeking these things here during this life.
 - They organize their life around following Jesus and trusting Him to bring them to the place where we will be truly rich, full, joyful, and loved.
- iv. **That's one of the pieces of fruit that grows on the Christian.**
- They don't play the short game and seek these four things here.
 1. They're not obsessed with getting wealthy.
 2. They're not always chasing something new to fill the void.
 3. They're not enslaved by the opinions of others.
 - They play the long game and trust that Jesus will bring them what their soul truly longs for.



d. And one of the reasons why a true Christian will grow this fruit is because they are rooted in the soil of the Word of God...which gives us some important information about who we are and the world we live in.

- i. So, as people who believe in the Bible...
- We know that at our most basic level we, as people, are image bearers of God and that God designed us to be fulfilled and satisfied when our lives are organized around God.
 - We know that we now live in a broken world.
 1. That the reason we have lives that can be full of anxiety, stress, hunger and sorrow is because we, along with every other person, have rejected God.
 2. The reason why we can so easily be enslaved by what people think about us and the reason that has so much control over our lives and our thoughts is because we have believed that these four things that our souls long for can be found in the world apart from God.
 - And we know that what we truly need is a Savior who will redeem us.
 1. Who will repair our relationship with God and point us to God's will in our life.
 2. And God's will for you is that you would enter into his Kingdom...where there is abundance, and fullness, and joy, and love.
 - Have you ever thought about that?



1. Jesus didn't just come to forgive you of your sin.
2. He did that through the cross.
3. But he came to bring us into His Kingdom, which is the place that your soul truly longs for.

ii. **See, this is the long game....**

- The Christian knows that their true citizenship is not here.
- But it is in God's Kingdom.
- And that the true longings of our heart aren't found here, they are found there.
- And that God's will for us here is not that we would spend all of our time chasing down wealth, happiness, and love.

e. This is the paradox of the Christian life.

- i. Jesus says - whoever spends their entire life trying to track these four things down...they'll lose it...but whoever is willing to lay these four things down for the sake of Christ will find it.
 - God's will for you is that you would drink deeply of these things that your soul longs for...but they simply are not found here...they are only found in Him.
 - And the reason that God keeps His people here...the reason that Jesus has not returned to establish His Kingdom...the reason that God's will for us in the short-term is to endure this world...
 - Is because God has put a mission on our lives to go and make disciples.



- To share the good news of the Gospel that there is an answer to the brokenness of the world.
- ii. **And so, for the Christian, we believe that the very reason we're still here and not in our Father's Kingdom, is because we have an assignment.**
- And that assignment is not to chase these four things in the world.
 - But it's to love our neighbor and make disciples until God' brings us home.
 - We play the long game and not the short game.
- iii. **And if this is true, here is one thing we all have to understand...**
- Spending our lives playing the short-game is fundamentally selfish and spending our lives playing the long-game is Christ-like selflessness.
 1. If you spend your life playing the short-game...then you have organized your entire life around you.
 2. And you will not be willing to sacrifice your comfort or take any risks out of love for your neighbors or for the sake of the assignment that God has given you to make disciples.
 3. Because these things are a threat to your short-term, futile quest for happiness.
 - But, when we have the long-game in mind.
 1. When we know that we will drink deeply of these four things for all of eternity.
 2. When we know that this is God's will for us but he has sent us on a mission in the short-term.



3. That is the key to unlock selflessness in our lives.
4. That is the key to unlock a love of your neighbor that will motivate you to get out of your comfort zone and take risks.

iv. And here is the paradox.

- It's when we play the long-game.
- It's when we're willing to lay our lives down.
- It's when we're willing to stop pursuing these four things and focus our lives on God and our neighbor...
- That's when we actually begin to taste true joy and fullness here in this life.

f. Is this a piece of fruit that is growing on you?

i. If you were to look at how you spend your time, how you spend your money, your goals in life...

- Are you playing the short-game or the long-game?
- Are you on a futile quest to find treasure that is simply not here while ignoring your neighbor and God's mission in your life?
- Or are you willing to lay that quest down and follow Jesus.

ii. Because this is what it means to follow Jesus...to do what He did.

- And in love for you...Jesus stepped out of the joy of heaven to come and be here with us as one of us.
 1. And he played the long-game...



2. Hebrews 12:2 - “[look] to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

iii. Just imagine if the church...if all the people of the church...had the reputation...

- That is a group of people who are willing to lay down their lives to love their neighbors.
- The people who live in that house will do anything to care for me.
- Those people really believe in Jesus and they really want me to believe in Him too, they don't care what people think.

g. I pray that God would continue to do work in all of us to grow this particular fruit in our lives so that we would be that kind of church here in our town.

III. PRAY

