

The Christian Response to the Oppressed

Luke, Pt. 22

Luke 6:46-49, Isaiah 1:10-20, Matthew 7:21-25

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I. INTRODUCTION

a. I have a slight change of plans this morning...

- i. Over the last four weeks, we have been reading together from Luke 6...which is Luke's version of the Sermon on the Mount taught by Jesus.
 - And Luke organized his version of the Sermon on the Mount by giving us five teachings from Jesus.
 - And what Jesus is doing in these five teachings is he is giving us five different fruits that grow on the Christian.
 1. Meaning, if you say you follow Jesus, if you say you're a Christian, if you say that Jesus has changed your life...
 2. Then there will be evidence...there will be fruit...that display that change and transformation.
- ii. And So, over the last four weeks we have talked about the first four teachings...the first four fruits...from Jesus.
 - Let me recap those for you...
 1. Long Game
 2. Mercy
 3. Self-Awareness
 4. Treasure Jesus above everything else.
- iii. Now last week, as we were talking about what it means to treasure Jesus.
 - I told you that the way we grow in how much we treasure Jesus is by investing more time with Jesus.



- And I said that today, as we talk about the fifth fruit from Luke’s version of the Sermon on the Mount, we would be talking more about how we can invest more time with Jesus.
 1. And this is where we are going to have a change of plans.
 2. Because as I was studying today’s Scripture over the last week...
 3. I felt the Spirit leading me to teach this from a different perspective.

II. ISAIAH 1

a. This week I was watching “Inside the NBA” on TNT.

- Charles Barkley, Shaq, Kenny Smith, and Ernie Johnson.
- i. And I believe this was last Wednesday, when several NBA teams decided to not play their playoff games as a form of protest due to the shooting of James Blake in Wisconsin.
- And as I watched players talk about why they made this decision, the sense I got was that they were so upset and traumatized by yet another police shooting, that basketball seemed...trivial, not important, almost inappropriate at the time...and so they didn’t play.



- ii. Then on the set of Inside the NBA, I watched Kenny Smith do the same thing.
 - You could tell that he couldn't continue with a show about basketball, and he walked off the set, because it felt out of place to him given the suffering of his black brothers and sisters.
- iii. And as I watched that...I was immediately reminded of a passage of Scripture in Isaiah 1.
 - You know, the book of Isaiah, especially the beginning of it, is God rebuking His people, for their sin and warning them that judgement is coming.
 - And I was reminded of what God says about His people in Isaiah 1...let me read this to you...and warning....this is harsh...so buckle up.

1. *Isaiah 1:11-15 (NLT) - "11 "What makes you think I want all your sacrifices?" says the Lord.
 "I am sick of your burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fattened cattle. I get no pleasure from the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.
 12 When you come to worship me, who asked you to parade through my courts with all your ceremony?
 13 Stop bringing me your meaningless gifts; the incense of your offerings disgusts me!
 As for your celebrations of the new moon and the Sabbath and your special days for fasting— they are all sinful and false.*



*I want no more of your pious meetings.
14 I hate your new moon celebrations and
your annual festivals.
They are a burden to me. I cannot stand
them!
15 When you lift up your hands in prayer,
I will not look.
Though you offer many prayers, I will
not listen...”*

- Wow. So, let me contextualize this for you...if God were saying this to us...Grace Hill Church (I'm not saying he is)...but if he was it would be something like this:
 1. I can't stand your worship songs.
 2. It bothers me when you lift your hands and sing to me.
 3. I can't stand all the things you do to serve around the church.
 4. I'm not listening to your prayers.
 5. I'm not impressed when you get up to do your quiet time.
 6. I do not accept all of your religious, pious activity.
- Why? What does God want them to do?
 1. *Look at v.16-17 (NLT) - ¹⁶ Wash yourselves and be clean! Get your sins out of my sight. Give up your evil ways.
¹⁷ Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows.”*



iv. So, here is what God is saying...

- If your faith in me, causes you to do all of this pious, religious stuff...but you don't care about the things that I care about and you don't do the things that I tell you to do...like seek justice and help the oppressed, then I am not interested in all your pious...religious stuff.
 1. They mean nothing to me!
- And I was reminded of this passage last week, because you had basketball players saying that if we as a country don't address the oppression on our streets, then basketball doesn't matter.
 1. Well, God is saying it's the same for us as a church.
 2. If we don't care about the oppression and suffering of our neighbors, then all the stuff we're doing here doesn't matter either.

v. And this is the fifth and final fruit that Jesus teaches us about in Luke 6...and this might be the ultimate fruit that grows on the Christian...

- They do what Jesus tells them to do.
- They live out their faith.
- Their worship isn't empty.
- Look at me: **THEIR PIETY DOESN'T MASK THEIR APATHY.**
 1. And could you imagine the impact and the influence the church would have...if we fought for justice and the oppressed with the same fervor that we put into all of these religious practices?



III. LUKE 6

a. This is what Jesus is getting at in Luke 6:46-49 (ESV).

- *46 "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? 47 Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: 48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. 49 But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."*

1. If you come to me, listen to what I have to say, and put it in practice...then it's like your building your house on the rock.
2. If you don't come to me, if you don't listen, if you don't do what I say, it's like your building your house on the sand.

i. Here in Luke, Jesus begins this teaching by saying - "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I tell you?"

- This is the Greek word KURIOS...which means that the person who is calling Jesus by this name is confessing verbally that Jesus is God...He is Lord.
- And Jesus is saying, why do you confess with your mouth that I am God and yet you don't do what I tell you to do.



- ii. Now, if we were to go over to Matthew's account of this teaching from Jesus, we will see that Matthew records more substance here...
1. (Remember, Matthew's version of the Sermon on the Mount is much longer)
- *Matthew 7:21-23 (ESV) - ²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' ²³ And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"*
 1. And then, starting in the next verse (24) Jesus gives the same analogy of building your house on the rock or building your house on the sand.
 - And so, same thing as Isaiah. There are going to be people who come to me and tell me about all of these incredibly pious and religious things they have done, they are even going to be theologically articulate...and yet...they are not a part of me because they don't care about the things that I care about and they didn't do the things that I have told them to do.
 1. Even though they appear to be the most impressive Christian you've ever seen, their house is built on sand.



b. And the way that we know that our house is built on the rock with a firm foundation is when we see our faith, not just express itself through piety, but also through life-altering love and compassion for others...especially the marginalized and oppressed. (Repeat)

- i. Like, if we're going to talk about fruit that grows on the Christian...if we're going to talk about how you spot a Christian...the ultimate fruit is that they have a heart that moves swiftly and compassionately to help the marginalized and oppressed.
- The Christian's knee-jerk reaction to the cries for help from people is not skepticism but compassion and mercy.
 - The Christian errs on the side of compassion...not on the side of skepticism.
 1. And what I mean by that is that the Christian is willing to be too compassionate before they are willing to be too skeptical.
 2. Can I say that again?
- ii. And we are in a day and age where we need to be really clear about this because so much of the church has been high-jacked by politics and we have too many people running around claiming to be Christians but they don't have an ounce of empathy or compassion towards the marginalized and oppressed!
- They're instincts haven't been trained by their savior, but rather cable news.



- And Jesus was crystal clear in his teaching about how His followers would relate with those who are hurting and suffering in this world...

1. Matthew 25:31-46 (NLT) - *"³¹ But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left. ³⁴ 'Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. ³⁶ I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.' ³⁷ 'Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? ³⁹ When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?' ⁴⁰ 'And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'*



41 "Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, 'Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons. 42 For I was hungry, and you didn't feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn't give me a drink. 43 I was a stranger, and you didn't invite me into your home. I was naked, and you didn't give me clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn't visit me.'

44 "Then they will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?'

45 "And he will answer, 'I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.'

46 "And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life."

IV. THE GOSPEL

- a. Is our piety...all of our religious worship and activity...is our piety a mask for our apathy towards the marginalized and oppressed.**
- i. Because the Bible is clear...in both the Old and New Testament...that God is not interested in our religion unless we love people the way He loves people and unless we do what He tells us to do.



- After God's rebuke to His people in Isaiah...he then says this to them starting in the next verse...verse 18...

1. *"¹⁸ Come now, let's settle this," says the Lord.*

"Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow.

Though they are red like crimson, I will make them as white as wool."

ii. God follows his rebuke with a promise of mercy.

- See, God is not calling us to do anything that He Himself does not do for us.

b. Could you imagine...if God's knee-jerk reaction to us...was skepticism and not compassion?

i. Think about that...

- When you go to God to ask him for help or to ask him for forgiveness...
- If his knee-jerk reaction to you was skepticism?!?
 1. He was like...oh you're back for something else. You know why do you only pray when you want something?
 2. Oh, your back for forgiveness. Didn't I forgive you of that yesterday?

ii. And if anyone has the right and ability to be skeptical of us it is God!

- God knows our hearts. He knows our mixed motives. He knows our selfishness. He knows how duplicitous we can be.
- And, yet, God's knee-jerk reaction to you is radical, scandalous, underserved mercy that is new every single morning.
 1. He does not tire of your pleas for mercy and help.



iii. And this is the kind of weird conduct and behavior that God calls his church to live out in this world today.

- To be people who move towards the suffering and oppressed with radical, scandalous, undeserved mercy that is new every single morning.
 1. All we're doing is loving people in the way that God loves people.
 2. That's God's call upon the Christian.

c. Now, as much as I would like to go into a bunch of examples of how we can begin to live this way in our lives...I don't have time for that this morning. But all of us can do two things...

i. First, we can examine ourselves and ask is my house built upon the rock?

- Do I express my faith simply through piety and religious practices or is it expressed through life-altering love and compassion towards others?
 1. Am I more skeptical of the cries of the oppressed than compassionate?
 2. Do I err on the side of skepticism or compassion?

ii. Secondly, we can all remember the cross of Jesus Christ, where Jesus not only said that He loved us, but He gave His life so that we could receive the mercy and grace of God.

- Which is why we are going to take communion together this morning.



1. Because when the church gathers together to take of communion together, we remember together the radical, scandalous, undeserved way that Jesus loved us by giving His life on the cross.
- Because when we remember how Christ loved us, not only are we reminded of God's mercy upon us, we're also reminded of the radical way that God has called us to love others.
 1. Because the Gospel is vertical and horizontal.

d. So, grab your communion cup...

- i. I'm going to pray for us. The band is going to play a little music and I want you to take these few minutes to reflect on these two things...
 - Take the wafer and reflect on the broken body of Christ...
 1. Because the body of Christ was broken for you, God is no longer angry with you, he is not annoyed, he is not skeptical...he's just merciful.
 - Take the juice and reflect on the shed blood of Christ...
 1. Because of the blood of Jesus, you are forever His. And that will never change.
- ii. And let's all pray that God would use us to love the people of this world in the same radical, scandalous, and underserved way that He has loved us.

V. PRAY

