

FBC POWELL, 6-4-17 PM NOTES
"There Is Nothing Like the Gospel"
Luke 5:33-39
16 in Series, "The Gospel According to Luke"

The law that God gave to Moses had three parts.

First, there was the civil law that related to the administration of justice under a Theocracy (God as King).

Second, there was the moral law that is embodied in the Ten Commandments.

Third, there was the ceremonial law. The ceremonial law dealt with the worship of God. The ceremonial law answered the question, "How can sinful man worship a holy God?"

Leviticus 17:11 "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement."

Hebrews 9:22 "Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

Revelation 13:8b (NIV) Says "...the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world."

Hebrews 10:10-14 (NIV) "And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest [Jesus Christ] had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy."

Matthew 5:17 (NKJV) Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill."

Romans 12:1 "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."

Acts 4:12 "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

1 Timothy 2:5 "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

John 14:6 "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.'"

"Christians preach an exclusive Christ in an inclusive age."

—Francis Schaeffer

I. A Challenge is Put Forth (vv. 33-35)

A. A Question Is Asked (v. 33)

Luke 5:30 "The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, 'why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?'"

John 15:11 "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."

John 17:13 “But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.”

For the Pharisees, spirituality consisted of doing things you don't want to do and refraining from things you want to do.

B. The Question is Answered (vv. 34-35)

The Gospel of grace cannot be adapted to any legalistic system.

Revelation 19:7 “Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.”

“The name ‘bridegroom,’ like every name applied to our Lord in the Bible, is full of instruction. It is a name peculiarly comforting and encouraging to all true Christians. It teaches the deep and tender love with which Jesus regards all sinners of mankind, who believe in Him. Weak, and unworthy, and short coming as they are in themselves, He feels toward them a tender affection, even as a husband does toward his wife. It teaches the close and intimate union, which exists between Jesus and believers. It is something far nearer than the union of king and subject, master and servant, teacher and scholar, shepherd and sheep. It is the closest of all unions, the union of husband and wife—the union of which it is written, ‘what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.’ Above all, the name [bridegroom] teaches that entire participation of all that Jesus is and has, which is the privilege of every believer. Just as the husband gives to his wife his name, makes her partaker of his property, home, and dignity, and undertakes all her debts and liabilities, so does Christ deal with all true Christians. He takes on Himself all their sins. He declares that they are a part of Himself, and that he who hurts them hurts Him. He gives them, even in this world, such good things as pass man's understanding. And He promises that in the next world they shall sit with Him on His throne, and go out from His presence no more.”

—Dr. J. C. Ryle

II. A Change Is Proclaimed (vv. 36-39)

A. The Change Illustrated by a Garment (v. 36)

Galatians 5:4-5 (CSB) “You who are trying to be justified by the law are alienated from Christ; you have fallen from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.”

B. The Change Illustrated by a Wineskin (vv. 37-39)

“The religious institutions consisted of the Temple, the Sanhedrin, and the Synagogue. They were too far gone for reform. The members of the establishment were steeped in dead ritual, hair-splitting controversies, and endless man-made rules and regulations. The Lord had no intention of pouring the new wine into their old wineskins of legalism...”

—John Phillips

2 Corinthians 4:4 says, “In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

First Baptist Church Powell 06 04 17 PM Sermon 16: There Is Nothing Like the Gospel

Luke 5:33-39

Many people miss the connection between Old Testament Judaism and the New Testament Gospel of Jesus Christ. Judaism today is certainly not an acceptable to God alternative to Christianity, but true Judaism was the foundation for Christianity. In fact, everything in the Old Testament is foundational for Christianity. There are many who erroneously believe that the Old Testament law stands in opposition to Christianity. That is not true. The Old Testament Law given to Moses helped prepare the way for, and lay the foundation for the Gospel that we proclaim.

The law that God gave to Moses had three parts.

First — there was the civil law that related to the administration of justice under a Theocracy (God as King). Many, if not most, of the views of America’s founding fathers concerning justice, punishment, and the role of government, were derived from these civil laws in the Mosaic Law.

The **second** part or category of the law was the moral law that is embodied in the Ten Commandments. The moral law of God presents God’s righteous ethical standards. Those standards have not changed. The moral law of God was never intended by Him to be the means of salvation; the moral law reveals how far we fall short of God’s standards and how much we need a Savior.

The **third** category of the Law was the ceremonial law. The ceremonial law dealt with the worship of God. The ceremonial law answered the question, “How can sinful man worship a holy God?” We see the summary of the sacrificial law in Leviticus 17:11 and Hebrews 9:22. Leviticus 17:11: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.” This timeless principle is summarized in the New Testament in Hebrews 9:22: “without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

Any Israelite who came with a repentant heart for having broken the moral law of God and who, in faith, offered a blood sacrifice as their substitute had their sins covered. Salvation in the Old Testament was by grace through faith. They just didn’t have the depth of truth that we have. In a sense, they were saved on credit, trusting in a payment that was not yet made. On this side of the cross, we are saved by trusting in a payment that has been made in time – almost 2,000 years ago on a hill called Calvary. God could save before the cross happened in time because He is above the time dimension and all things are “present” to God. Revelation 13:8b (NIV): says “...the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.” But in the Old Testament, this giving of a sacrifice was never ending. It was a pattern of life for the Jews: sin → sacrifice → sin → sacrifice, etc. When we understand that pattern, we can see the absolute joy a Jew would have experienced when he read the truth of Hebrews 10:10-14 (NIV):

And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest [Jesus Christ] had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

No more sacrifices are required! “Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe; sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow”!

This Judaism that I have described was the foundation for Christianity. Nothing in Christianity contradicts the Law; it simply completes the law. In Matthew 5:17 (NKJV) Jesus said, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

When Jesus died on the cross and on the third day was raised from the dead, the sacrificial law of God had fulfilled its purpose and was no longer relevant. The only sacrifice we need to make now is not for salvation, but because of our salvation. That sacrifice is detailed in Romans 12:1: “Therefore I urge you,

brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”

While God is not through with ethnic Israel (they have a huge part in future events), modern Judaism that rejects Christ as the Messiah is today a false religion. That is not an anti-Semitic statement; any religion that rejects Jesus as the only way to salvation is a false religion.

Let’s get back to the Gospel of Luke. Judaism, in the time of Christ, had been perverted to empty rituals and human works. Grace and faith had been removed. Judaism bore no resemblance to what God had given Moses in the wilderness. First Century Judaism was so perverted that when the promised One, the Messiah came, the Jewish leaders hated Him, rejected Him, and eventually crucified Him. However, little did they know that in their rebellion they were actually carrying out God’s plan of salvation by crucifying the one who was our substitute (Acts 2:22-24).

That lengthy introduction brings us to our text in Luke 5:33-39. What I desire for you to come away with is an understanding of the fact that there is nothing like the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We will be examining what theologians call, “The exclusivity of Christianity.” Christianity is not compatible with any other religion. It cannot be merged or mixed. It is not one of many ways to God; it is the exclusive way, the only way!

Acts 4:12: “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

1 Timothy 2:5: “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.’”

As much as this truth is rejected and hated by the world, it is foundational and non-negotiable. The scandal of the Gospel is as Francis Schaeffer said – “Christians preach an exclusive Christ in an inclusive age.” There is no substitute for the Gospel; there is no acceptable alternative to the Gospel; there is nothing like the Gospel.

Allow me to summarize the main teaching of these last seven verses of Luke 5. Out of Jesus’ confrontation with religious leaders over fasting, He sets forth the uniqueness and exclusivity of the Gospel. Jesus did not come to make a few tweaks to the perverted Judaism of His day; He proclaims a Gospel which fulfills the Old Testament and exposes the totally unbiblical nature of what Judaism had become. Jesus made so many enemies because the Gospel He preached was completely incompatible with the Judaism of His day. The perverted Judaism of Jesus’ enemies was concerned with self-righteousness and what men thought. The true Gospel focuses on heart righteousness and what God thinks. Apostate Judaism of Jesus’ day focused on external rituals while the Gospel focuses on the internal reality.

Since it has been a few weeks since we have been in Luke, let me remind you of the context. Levi (also known as Matthew) has just been called to follow Christ – an invitation he accepted. In response Levi had a great party where he invited a large crowd of sinners. That is the context where we see Jesus magnifying the Gospel.

I. A Challenge is Put Forth (vv. 33-35)

The salvation of Matthew just couldn’t be processed by these scribes and Pharisees. They had no comprehension of grace; all they knew was works, but even their works were phony and designed to impress other people. They had a question for Jesus (no doubt asked in a sarcastic tone).

A. A Question Is Asked (v. 33)

These religious leaders just didn’t get it (as most people today don’t get it). In verse 30 we see their frustration with Jesus. Luke 5:30: “The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples,

saying, ‘why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?’” A part of the problem is that these religious leaders just couldn’t handle the joy of those who followed Jesus. The Pharisee’s idea of religion was to stop doing outward bad things and start doing outward good things. Theirs was a “do” and “do not” religion. In their view, you were religious and thus pleasing to God if you do the “dos” and don’t do the “don’ts.” There was no room for mercy, for grace, or for compassion in their perverted Judaism. The result of their perverted religion was that there was no place for joy.

Can you picture the joyous celebrating that was going on at this party? These outcasts, these people who were despised by the Jewish people, these tax collectors, and others like them, were considered the scum of society. Now some or perhaps all of them had become followers of Christ. They were full of joy. The Pharisees couldn’t handle that! Man’s religion has no joy. There is joy, biblical joy, true joy only in Jesus. You often find Jesus Himself experiencing joy in the Gospels. John 15:11: “These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.” John 17:13: “But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.”

In verses 33-35 of Luke 5, these Pharisees and Scribes find something new to criticize about Jesus. They already had been grumbling about the company He kept in verse 31. Now they zero in on His failure to publicly fast. Let’s talk about fasting. The Pharisees made a big deal about fasting. It seems that they had proclaimed that godly people fast twice a week (this requirement is not found in Scripture). In their view (not necessarily the Bible’s view), fasting meant mourning. Therefore, when fasting, the Pharisees tried to look as forlorn as possible. Some Pharisees even whitened their faces to get an “emaciated” look, they refused to wash, and they wore their clothes in shoddy disarray [Kent Hughes, *Luke, Volume One*, page 190] *For the Pharisees, spirituality consisted of doing things you don’t want to do and refraining from things you want to do.*

What does the Bible say about fasting? Fasting is often found in the Old Testament, but is nowhere commanded in the New Testament. In Matthew 6:16-18 Jesus assumes we will fast, but doesn’t command it. We know that the early church fasted and I believe that fasting is a valuable spiritual discipline. However, the Pharisees did it as a matter of show every Monday and Thursday. But Jesus said we are to not talk about our fast or disfigure our looks. We’re not to even tell others about it (Matthew 6:16). I think that, often, fasting can be the result of becoming so burdened about what we are praying for that we have no appetite. Also, fasting allows focus and clarity of thought in prayer (after you get over that early hunger that consumes your thoughts). But I repeat that fasting is not commanded and is certainly not a “tool” to show people how pious we are.

B. The Question is Answered (vv. 34-35)

Jesus never gave in an inch with these sour killjoy Pharisees and Scribes. *The Gospel of grace cannot be adapted to any legalistic system.* In these verses, Jesus takes the offensive. To make His point, Jesus uses the example of a Jewish wedding. Everyone hearing Him would get His point since the wedding customs were familiar to all. Jewish wedding feasts put our marriage ceremonies and customs to shame! There was usually a whole week of celebrating and especially celebrating by eating together. The bride and the groom were treated like a king and a queen. They were attended by chosen friends who were called “the attendants of the bridegroom” (v. 34). There was no fasting in a wedding celebration, especially by the *attendants of the bridegroom*; that would be considered totally out of place and taken as an insult to the couple and their families. In fact, we have evidence that the wedding guests were exempted from all fasting through a rabbinical ruling that said, “All in attendance on the bridegroom are relieved of all religious observances which would lessen their joy.” [Kent Hughes, *Luke, Volume 1*, page 191]

Jesus refers to Himself here as the bridegroom. In the book of Revelation, the church is referred to several times as “the bride” of Christ. Revelation 19:7: “Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.”

Dr. J. C. Ryle has written some of the most encouraging words I have ever read concerning Jesus as the bridegroom. Listen to what he has to say.

The name ‘bridegroom,’ like every name applied to our Lord in the Bible, is full of instruction. It is a name peculiarly comforting and encouraging to all true Christians. It

teaches the deep and tender love with which Jesus regards all sinners of mankind, who believe in Him. Weak, and unworthy, and short coming as they are in themselves, He feels toward them a tender affection, even as a husband does toward his wife. It teaches the close and intimate union, which exists between Jesus and believers. It is something far nearer than the union of king and subject, master and servant, teacher and scholar, shepherd and sheep. It is the closest of all unions, the union of husband and wife, - the union of which it is written, 'what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.' Above all, the name [bridegroom] teaches that entire participation of all that Jesus is and has, which is the privilege of every believer. Just as the husband gives to his wife his name, makes her partaker of his property, home, and dignity, and undertakes all her debts and liabilities, so does Christ deal with all true Christians. He takes on Himself all their sins. He declares that they are a part of Himself, and that he who hurts them hurts Him. He gives them, even in this world, such good things as pass man's understanding. And He promises that in the next world they shall sit with Him on His throne, and go out from His presence no more.

[Dr. J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels, Volume Two*, pages 154-155]

Jesus' answer shows the utter foolishness of expecting His disciples to fast while He is bodily with them here on earth. Lest anyone get the idea that Jesus is *anti-fasting*, He makes clear in verse 35 that there will be a time when He is gone away from them, and then fasting would be appropriate. But while the Bridegroom is here, His disciples are acting correctly by feasting rather than fasting. It was totally irrelevant to the Pharisees and Scribes that sinners have just passed from darkness to light, and from death to life. These religious leaders were so blind in the darkness of their legalism.

II. A Change Is Proclaimed (vv. 36-39)

The two-part parable that Jesus gives illustrates the uniqueness of the Gospel (see the title of this message – *There Is Nothing Like the Gospel*).

A. The Change Illustrated by a Garment (vv. 36)

Jesus made clear that He did not come to affirm and practice Jewish traditions which were man's additions to God's Word. He said that would be like taking an old worn out garment with a hole and patching it with a piece of cloth that was new. It wouldn't work because when it was washed the new cloth would shrink and tear away from the old cloth. Jesus did not come to patch up the old; He came to give something that was new – totally different from the perversion and legalism of what Judaism had become. The new that He brought was in reality the fulfillment of all that true Judaism taught.

Another application of this parable is that the new garment would be ruined if a part of it was cut out to sew up the hole in the old. To try to adapt the Gospel to man's legalistic systems of working for salvation results in the new garment being rendered useless and the old garment not being able to adapt to the new. That is the problem of every "branch" of what is called "Christianity" that tries to combine law based works and the grace permeated Gospel. It just doesn't work. Paul described it this way to the Galatians who were trying to combine human works and the Gospel of grace. He said in Galatians 5:4-5 (CSB): "You who are trying to be justified by the law are alienated from Christ; you have fallen from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness."

When it comes to being in right relationship with God, faith and works do not mix. To try to add works means that you have ruled out coming to Christ through faith. When it comes to obtaining salvation faith and works cannot be mixed. I believe that there is also an application of this parable for those who try to patch a little of Jesus on to their old life and think that they are rightly related to Him. Jesus is not like a vitamin you take along with your meal. He is the meal itself – He is the "bread of life."

B. The Change Illustrated by a Wineskin (vv. 37-39)

Jesus gives a second illustration of the same truth. Grape juice was stored in animal skins. When these skins had been around for a while they would become dry and brittle. When they were filled with

unfermented juice and the juice began fermenting, the gasses would expand the inflexible skins and they would crack and the wine would spill. Jesus was not saying that He came to do away with the law. He was saying that He came to do away with the Jewish traditions that had grown up and actually contradicted the Old Testament. Jesus is saying that Judaism was too far gone to reform.

John Phillips gives a great summary of what Jesus is saying in verses 37-39. “The religious institutions consisted of the temple, the Sanhedrin, and the Synagogue. They were too far gone for reform. The members of the establishment were steeped in dead ritual, hair splitting controversies, and endless man-made rules and regulations. The Lord had no intention of pouring the new wine into their old wineskins of legalism...” [John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Luke*, page 107]

The Lord’s final illustration in this passage describes the tragedy of those who reject the Gospel of grace and continue in their false religious system of justification by works, or even works mixed with grace. Jesus compared them with those who are content with the old wine they had been drinking and had no desire to taste the new. The application is that false, works based religion deadens the spiritual senses. Satan convinces spiritually dead people to stay with the rituals of their works based religion because they are familiar and thus comforting.

Conclusion

There truly is nothing like the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. Make sure that you have not tried to mix that glorious Gospel with human works, human merit, and dead rituals.