Bible Study 64

February 1, 2023

The Gospel of Luke (continued)

Chapter 7 of Luke’s Gospel continues with John the Baptist sending disciples to Jesus enquiring of his purpose and mission. When Jesus sends them back to John it is with the message that now: “The blind see, the lame walk, the leper is clean, the deaf hear and the dead are raised.” Jesus is quoting from Isaiah who spoke those words as a prophecy of the coming Messiah.

What follows is in praise of John the Baptist. Jesus asks the question in a paradoxical way: “What did you go out into the desert to see...a man dressed in fine clothes?” He is forcing his listeners to revisit in their minds the prophets of old. They too came dressing humbly and speaking God’s word and truth.

He criticizes the scribes and Pharisees because they cannot see or appreciate what God has placed before them. They would neither accept John nor Jesus and their rejection defiled God’s purpose for Israel.

Luke then tells a strange story of Jesus going to the house of a Pharisee for dinner. A sinful woman anoints Jesus’ feet as is the custom. The Pharisee objects that he allows the woman to even touch him. Jesus tells the Parable of the two debtors who owe money to the master. Which will love the master more when he forgives both debts? - The answer is the one who owes the most.

Jesus says to the woman: “Your sins are forgiven you. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

The lesson in Luke is obvious. Jesus came to save sinners.

Image that any one of us die. We find ourselves walking in a beautiful garden. As we stand there, we see our whole life played out before us like a movie. Everything we did good and bad is presented to us. We see the times when we were truly sinners. We see the times when we were truly doers of good. What hurts us the most is the times we hurt others or held on to our sinfulness. We can see clearly that sin got in the way of us achieving the good we wanted and the person we wanted to be. We cannot forgive ourselves for our wrongdoing and sin. We feel that we are not saved, but guilty and condemned even by ourselves.

How could it be otherwise?

We hear Christ’s voice in our head saying. “I know how disappointed you are in yourself. I know how your sin and failure has hurt you. You cannot forgive yourself, but I forgive you. Your faith in me has saved you. Be at peace.

There will be tears in heaven when we hear those words. We can never deserve or merit those words. Our thankfulness we can express in acknowledging that without Jesus we are nothing. There needs to be a time when we all say: “I know my God loves me. Even when I do not love myself, God loves me. Even when I think no one else loves me, God loves me. Because of that I know I need make the effort to love myself.”

Read chapter 7