**The Gospel of Luke**

**Witness to the Gentiles - #16**

**Jesus: Four Imperatives for Daily Living**

**Luke 6:37-49**

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***Do Not Judge***

***37****“Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.* ***38****Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”*

***39****And He spoke a parable to them: “Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch?* ***40****A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.* ***41****And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye?* ***42****Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the plank that is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother’s eye.*

***A Tree Is Known by Its Fruit***

***43****“For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.* ***44****For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush.* ***45****A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.*

***Build on the Rock***

***46****“But why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?* ***47****Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like:* ***48****He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.* ***49****But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.”*

**The Four Imperatives**

**First: ‘Do not judge’**

1.   To imitate God our Father is almost natural for us for we are his image (Origen of Alexandria, *On the First Principles* 4:10). God does not begin with judgment, but with revelation of his goodness.

2.   Three common mistakes about Divine Judgment:

a. Old Testament texts taken out of context. They deal with the people who break down the covenant.

b. Second is that most of these texts deal with the sin of “apostasy ” which was not just sin but worshipping “Baal” and other foreign gods.

c. Third there is a clear statement about divine judgment but followed by declaration of “mercy” and accepting “repentance.” Whole books of Isaiah and Jeremiah are the best example if the reader does not snatch portions and leave others, (just read the whole of Isaiah 44)

**Condemnation is the kind of judgment that we should avoid**

1.   Judgment here means condemnation of the persons and this becomes clear from the text itself, “Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned.” Evil is evil and we can’t make it good or portend that it never happened. But we have to look for the mercy of God our Creator.

“If we sacrifice our anger and our vengeance we free ourselves from the residues of evil. If we keep our anger, we tangle ourselves into the net of evil. We can’t deny the existence of evil but we overcome its results by our forgiveness.”

- Abba Philemon

2.   The ancient remedy of the ancient church is spelled out by Cyril of Alexandria (5th century):

“He cuts away from our minds a very unmanageable passion, the commencement and begetter of pride. For while it is men's duty to examine themselves, and to order their conduct according to God's will, they leave this alone to busy themselves with the affairs of others: and if they see any infirm, forgetting as it seems their own frailties, they make it an excuse for faultfinding, and a handle for calumny.

For they condemn them, not knowing that being equally afflicted with the same infirmities as those whom they censure, they condemn themselves. For so also the most wise Paul writes, "for wherein you judge the other, you condemn yourself: for you that judges does the same things." And yet it were rather our duty to have compassion on the infirm, as those who have been overcome by the assaults of the passions, and entangled without hope of escape in the meshes of sin, and to pray in their behalf, and exhort them, and rouse them up unto soberness, and endeavor ourselves not to fall into similar faults.

"For he that judges the brother, as the disciple of Christ says, speaks against the law, and judges the law." For the Lawgiver and Judge is One: for the judge of the sinning soul must be higher than the sinful soul: but since this is not the case, the sinner will be your judge, "Why judgest thou thy neighbor?" But if you venture to condemn him having no authority thereto, it is yourself rather that will be condemned, inasmuch as the law permits thee not to judge others.

Whoever therefore is guided by good sense, does not look at the sins of others, nor busies himself about the faults of his neighbor, but closely scans his own misdoings. Such was the blessed Psalmist, falling down before God, and saying on account of his own offences, "If you, O Lord, O Lord, closely regards iniquities, who can endure?" And once again, putting forward the infirmity of human nature as an excuse, he supplicates for a not unreasonable pardon, saying, "Remember that we are earth." (Sermon 29 on Luke 6:37)

**You shall not be condemned**

Why is this so? If forgiveness is free and is for all who believe, why we are told even in the Parable of the “unmerciful servant (Matt18: 21-35) that the Father does not show mercy or forgive the unmerciful?

1.   If we lack mercy in our hearts we can’t receive mercy from God for there is no foundation.

2.  If we make our judgment final with no regret or shut the door of mercy in the face of those who do evil, we put ourselves on the side of Satan who is known as the “accuser.”

*“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brothers is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives to the death.”* Rev 12:10-11

*“Who can bring an accusation against God's elect? God is the One who justifies.”* Romans 8:33

 *“Satan is also the destroyer. The enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”* 1 Peter 5:8

*“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat.”* Luke 22:31.

**A Note from Philēmōn**

“Why was Satan was given these two names: the accuser and the destroyer?

I have meditated on the divine love and mercy all my life, but never meditated on the origin and the work of Satan, for the Holy Scriptures do not teach us to snoop or intrude into the divine providence. Who was he and why did he leave his rank? We are not told the full story, and so I leave it. Why does Satan fight us?  Our church tradition is because of his envy, the book of Wisdom of Solomon says, “*Nevertheless through envy of the devil came death into the world: and they that do hold of his side do find it*.” (LXX 2:24)

There are three basic differences between God and Satan:

1.   God has his mercy on what he has created because of His infinite Love.

2 Satan is not a creator, but a creature; he lacks this divine compassion of the Creator.

3. So Satan can destroy without mercy, after all creation does not belong to him. He sees how God loves His creation and becomes full of envy.

Whenever there is envy there is hatred. This is the warning that St John handed over to us, “*For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother’s righteous. Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.”* (John 3:10-12)

**The Second Imperative: ‘Give with generosity’**

Luke 6:38 - “*Give, and it will be given to you … a good measure … give a full measure*.” Literally this is talking about “a measure of grain.” This is where generosity and kindness give not what is little, but the full measure. Such a treatment will provoke the others to do the same. Good leads to another good as evil can create another evil. Here giving is attached to forgiveness. No one who can forgive is stingy but is kind and his kindness is expressed naturally.

There is great difference between someone who is nice and polite and someone whose heart has compassion. Just watch and see when it comes to giving. The polite will give to avoid criticism and will do what is required but the compassionate person exceeds what is required.

**The Third Imperative is a Parable: ‘Be like me’**

**Luke 6:39-40** “*He spoke a parable to them: “Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch?  A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.*”

1.   This parable was necessary for the disciples were about to be the initiators and teachers of the world: it was necessary for them to be like their Teacher Jesus himself.  They are no longer blind but have received their sight, and their mind was illuminated with the divine light of their Teacher.   For it is not possible for men, enveloped in the darkness of ignorance, to guide those who are afflicted in the same way into the knowledge of the truth: for should they attempt it, they will both roll into the ditch of wastefulness.

2. Jesus wanted to overthrow the bragging passion of boastfulness, to which most of us give way.  We have to strive to be like our Teacher.  He added; "*The disciple is not above his teacher*;" and even if some make such progress, as to attain to a virtue that matches that of their teachers, they should not forget that the disciples are imitators of their Teacher as Paul himself said "*Be imitators of me, as I also am of Christ.*"

3.   More Important is the fact that the Teacher did not come to judge the world but to save the world. Why do we judge? If I, Jesus says, “Judge not” to his disciple, what is the ground of our judgment?

**The Sin of Projection**

Luke 6:41-42 *“And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the plank that is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother’s eye.”*

This should be written on the doors of every church.

We project our sins on others.

1.    Being created in God’s image, we have a desire of self-reflection. This is given to us as a means of revealing ourselves to communicate and to share. But like many things in our life our self-love allows us to be the “measure” of everything. We want all around us to do what we like or to do it in our way otherwise whatever they do is wrong.

2.   We condemn others to hide our own defects and point to their failure to point out that we are not like this or that; like the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector.

**The Fourth Imperative: A Good Tree brings Good Fruit**

1. This last section deals the inner life. This is being said in a different way in Luke 11:39-41 - from the good treasure of the heart.

2. The fruit is what is seen in the relationship. “Out of the heart” said almost 2,000 years before Freud told us that a slip of a tongue reveals what is hidden.

3.   Here we can see the beginning of the Christian understanding of cleansing of the heart rather than the outer ritual washing which does not reach the heart.

**The Firm Foundation: My Rock and My Fortress**

1. A rock is a reference to character, it is figurative:

 “*A house of defense to save me* - Psalm 31:2-3

 "*He clave [split] rocks in the wilderness*

 *and gave them drink abundantly as out of the depths.*

*He brought streams also out of the rock ,*

*And caused waters to run down like rivers"* - Psalm 78:15,16.

2. It is a symbol of God:

*"Yahweh is my rock, and my fortress"* - 2 Samuel 22:2; Psalm 18:2; 71:3)

*"God, the rock of my salvation"* - 2 Samuel 22:47 (compare Psalm 62:2,7; 89:26)

*"…my God the rock of my refuge"* - Psalm 94:22

*"…the rock of my strength"* - Isaiah 17:10

*"…Lead me to the rock that is higher than I"* - Psalm 61:2

And repeatedly in the song of Moses (Deut 32:3,4,18,30,31; compare 2 Sam 22:32).

3.   Paul applies the rock smitten in the wilderness (Ex 17:6; Nu 20:11) to Christ as the source of living water for spiritual refreshment (1 Cor 10:4, Rom 9:33; 1 Pet 2:8).

4. A rock is a symbol of hardness (Jer 5:3; compare Isa 50:7). Therefore, the breaking of the rock exemplifies the power of God (Jer 23:29; compare 1 Ki 19:11). The rock is also a symbol of that which endures (Job 19:23, 24).

*“Have something firm to stand on such as the Person of our Beloved Jesus, and his promises. More important is the assurance that we are members of his body. He does not hate his body,* - Ephesians 5:29

**A Note from Philemon**

“Please let your words and your deeds come from your heart and by your will. Never say anything that you don’t mean. If you can’t say the truth be silent. For we fabricate our life and lead a false life when we split our words and our deeds. Never say Jesus is Lord unless you really mean that Jesus is the Lord of your life.

I say Jesus is my Lord because:

1.  He is my life; my true life – whatever if from Jesus – will live for eternity; whatever I have added to his grace of the new creation will expire.

2. Jesus is the Truth and the only Truth. All that is in me is from his truth or an indication of his truth.

(This is enough for now)

***Pope’s Notes***

**Class Contacts**

George & May Bebawi Bob & Pam Walters

403 Shoemaker Dr. 12281 Blue Springs Lane

Carmel, IN 46032 Fishers, IN 46037

317-818-1487 317-694-4141 / 317-727-7917

*Audio at GeorgeBebawi.com* rlwcom@aol.com