

Sermon notes for Oculi 2010

Jeremiah 20: 7-11a

Luke 9:57-62

Ephesians 5:1-8a

“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly beloved children 2 and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us. And gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

Grace, Mercy and Peace from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

Jeremiah – its hard to be a Christian

He is complaining about God having given Him a job, an assignment and then not making it easy.

God. Pashhur the priest had just had Jeremiah beaten for prophesying negativity. Jeremiah complains that the Lord has given Him a task that is too tough, but even if he, Jeremiah wants to keep quiet, v9, **“But if I say, “I will not mention him or speak any more in His name,” His word is in my heart like a fire, I am wary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.”**

Even his friends are waiting for Jeremiah to stumble, because then they can turn and mock him, asking where his God is now?

Is it not so too with us, do we not often want people to stumble so that we can take them down a peg? Do we not enjoy pointing a finger at others for their sin, their infidelities, their crass jokes or their lifestyle? We mock them so that our sinful lives would seem less sinful.

How often are we like Jeremiah and might complain about God making faith so difficult to live, but with confidence we know and feel compelled to talk of Him and declare His glory in all the world?

Are you struggling to be a Christian? What needs to change?

Luke – excuses, excuses, excuses

*“No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”*v62

If there are things in this world, people, or jobs, or sports, that are more important to you than God, then you are not fit for the kingdom of God, that is what this text is reminding us.

And each of us has an excuse why what we are doing is not putting God second, and how we still love God even though we are not in church. Each of our excuses seems right in our minds and in our eyes, but what does God say.

In this text, even wanting to do something for your family, where you would get leave from work to bury your loved ones, if it is more important than God, you have no place to serve in His kingdom.

We are reminded that our excuses should be Godly, and not because everyone else is doing it; that they should get us out of trouble with God and not just explain our bad behaviour toward God and our faith.

Be without excuse when the Lord asks you to work for Him, be without excuse when He asks what you have done for Him, and be found worthy of His praise.

Does your behaviour promote Christ and the Christian faith in the eyes of the world, or are you proud of the example that you are setting?

Ephesians – Worshiping God in Forgiveness

v5 here is the text that reminds us that when we seek after things, greed, lust, immorality, we become idolaters, making something more important than God, they become our god and we replace God himself. Even worse is when we are proud of what we are doing, believing that what we are doing is acceptable in God's eyes.

If we then have had sex before marriage or cheated on our spouses, looked at pornography, sexually lusted after things (sexually immoral); or if we have married a person that is not Christian, or been lewd or crass in the way we talk, treated women or men badly (impure); or if we have been dishonest about our business practice, inflated prices for our own gain, worked on the Sabbath to promote ourselves, and not cared who suffers or gets hurt, as long as we come out on top (greed); if we have done any of this, do we **“have any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God”**? v6

There are those who would preach that if you have sinned sexually or if you speak crassly or lewdly, or if you have committed dishonest business practices, that then you cannot be part of their church, that you must find somewhere else to worship, and that you cannot inherit the kingdom of Christ and of God. And they are wrong. Though such practices makes you an idolater, someone who worships something other than God, with repentance there is forgiveness and no condemnation. But if you are not repentant of what you have done, or if you desire to continue in your behaviour with no understanding of guilt or remorse, then you cannot and will not inherit God's kingdom, because God cannot forgive you your sins.

“7b A man reaps what he sows. 8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.” - Galatians 6:7-8

Yet again, he who stands before God and says as Luther reminds us, **“Forgive me Lord for I have sinned.”** that person will be forgiven because that is why Jesus came, to save the repentant sinner. We will stumble in life, we will sin, we will do things that others consider to be mortal and unforgiveable sins, but God says that they are all forgiveable, when you repent.

There is only one reason why God would want to not forgive you your sins when you come to Him and repent, and that is when you refuse to forgive another who has sinned against you.

There is not sin the excludes you from the kingdom of God, no sin that you repent of that makes God turn His back on you. Yet we who call ourselves Christians turn our backs on so many people when they sin, we judge and condemn them and then turn to God and want Him to forgive our sins.

“If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive you.”- Matthew 6:14-15

How is it that we are to imitate God? It is not in us to be like Him, but it is in us to strive to be like Him, “to live a life of love, just as Christ loved us.” this is not difficult when you put aside your personal and own desires. To live a life of love is to see the best in everyone, to seek to help where you can, and to always want to help rather than help yourself.

To imitate Christ, is to live a life that sows to please the Spirit, but also that forgives and asks to be forgiven by God and all whom we offend and are offended by. To be like Christ is to be forgiving, caring, to consider others first, but to put God before all. It is a life that is self-less, that does not have idols, that turns from the world and seeks the things of God. It is a life that reaps eternal life because of its focus. It is the life the God wants for us.

Amen

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What life are you living? Is it not time to change it?