

Church of Christ in the 21st Century – Lesson 13

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- 2 Kings 6
 - Syria was making war with Israel (vs 8)
 - The man of God (Elisha) was relaying the Syrian battle plans to the king of Israel (vs 9 & 10)
 - This upset the Syrian king and he hunted down Elisha in Dothan (vs 13 & 14)
 - But he was fighting a battle he could not win
 - He was fighting against the Lord
 - Elisha's servant saw a mountain full of horses and chariots of fire – the army of God (vs 17)
 - Syria couldn't win that battle and if you try fighting against the Lord, He will strike you with the sword of His mouth (Revelation 2:16) – you will not win this battle either
 - But Syria pursued anyways and was blinded as a result (vs 18)
 - Sometime after this, Syria began a siege of Samaria (vs 24)
 - This was a pretty severe siege – a great famine came as a result of this (vs 25)
 - And in 2 Kings 7:3, we read of 4 lepers just outside the entrance gate to Samaria
 - Instead of going in the city to starve, they decide to surrender themselves to the Syrians – perhaps they would spare us (this is their logic) (vs 4)
 - But when they get to the Syrian camp, they found no one (vs 5)
 - God took care of the Syrians (vs 6-7)
 - These 4 lepers had full access to the riches and food that the Syrians left behind (vs 8)
 - Vs 9-11
 - These 4 lepers were the only ones who knew of this at the time
 - But even they realized that what they started to do (pillage the food and riches for themselves) was wrong
 - Samaria is starving – we need to tell people what we found
 - And that's exactly what they did
 - Matthew 4:4 – *“But He answered and said, ‘It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”*
 - There's no doubt that the world is in famine of God's word
 - That is what we truly should be living by instead of bread
 - Bread will keep us alive in this life, but it will do nothing for us in the next life
 - We need to be focused on God's word
 - And we have so readily available to us the words of life
 - John 6:68 – *“But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’”*
 - In a world that is in famine for the word of God, we know it
 - We've believed it and been obedient to it as members of the Lord's church
 - We must tell others – it would be wrong of us not to
 - Evangelism must be a key part of our Christian walk through this life
 - And that is what we are going to talk about this evening
- As a brief recap...

- Lessons 1-4: foundational information of the church
 - Christ is the king, the head of the body
 - The church is His kingdom (Ephesians 1 and Ephesians 5)
 - We are servants in Christ's kingdom (Philippians 2, Mark 10)
 - There is only 1 church (1 Corinthians 1, Ephesians 4)
 - Anything else is really no gospel at all (Galatians 1)
 - And we become a member of the Lord's church by following His instructions
- Lessons 5-6: organization of the church
 - The eldership – how they are to shepherd the flock (Acts 20:28)
 - The deacons – how they are to serve in the church via assignments given to them by the eldership (Acts 6)
 - The qualifications, roles, and responsibilities of each – not just any person can serve in these roles (1 Timothy 3)
- Next we studied the acts of worship of the church
 - Lessons 7-11 – the Lord's Supper, singing, preaching and teaching the word, prayer, and giving
- Now we are discussing the church's interaction with the world
 - Last week we discussed embodying Christ
 - We will now discuss evangelism
- Allow me to offer you 2 different types of motivation for evangelism
 - 1 – Negative (**Matthew 21:42-44**)
 - The words of Christ are compared to a stone here
 - And that stone is quite important – the stone is the deciding factor here
 - If you fall on this stone, then you'll be broken
 - Broken in the sense that you must submit to a will that is not your own (Romans 12:1-2, just like Jesus did in Matthew 26:39)
 - Broken in the sense that you will have to deny yourself and take up His cross daily (Luke 9:23)
 - But by doing that and allowing yourself to become broken in this regard, you will ultimately become a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17)
 - He will see you clothed with Christ (Galatians 3:27) vs the filthy rags that we would otherwise be clothed with (Isaiah 64:6)
 - Or if you choose not to fall on this stone, if you choose to not be submissive then that stone is going to fall on you and it will grind you to powder
 - We know that eternal punishment is reserved for those who are not obedient
 - So when we think about trying to evangelize our fellow man, as Christians – we obviously do not want to see that happen to anyone
 - So perhaps, this may motivate us to evangelize to the best of our ability
 - 2 – Positive (**Luke 2:8-14**)
 - These shepherds were simply doing their earthly job
 - Watching their flock by night
 - When they were suddenly approached by an angel of the Lord – a messenger of His word

- And the angel tells these shepherds in vs 10 *“Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.”*
 - Christ has been born
 - Imagine the sight that these shepherds would have seen when the heavenly host appeared (vs 13)
 - In Revelation 5:11-14, we read of another heavenly host
 - And the number of this heavenly host was ten thousand times ten thousand, thousands of thousands
 - All praising the Lamb
 - So try to imagine the sight that these shepherds must have seen
 - And they were all praising God
 - *“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”*
 - This would have been something that the shepherds would have not forgotten
 - And unless their minds were already made up that they were not going to have anything to do with God nor His law, they would not have been able to refuse this offer of good tidings
 - We have good tidings to bring to the world
 - Christ is risen and we can rise with Him (Romans 6)
 - And if the world sees us embodying Christian values and worshipping God in our lives, and if they fully understand what we’re doing, and if their minds are not already made up to not serve in any capacity, then it’s an offer that they won’t be able to refuse
 - So perhaps we use that as our motivation to evangelize
- Whatever our motivation to evangelize is, we know that we must do our best to evangelize those around us
- It is our duty to take God’s word to the world (**Matthew 28:18-20**)
 - It is our duty to make disciples of all nations
 - Baptize them, teach them to observe all things that God commands
 - It is certainly the case that not everyone will accept the gospel
 - Christ knew it was going to get him killed
 - Paul didn’t know exactly what awaited him when he was to arrive in Jerusalem, but he did know that he was going to be chained and face tribulation (Acts 20:22-23)
 - But what is amazing about that is not only did Paul go despite that, but he hurried to Jerusalem (Acts 20:16)
 - Paul was on a mission – to teach that which he had learned from Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24)
 - Paul faced persecution everywhere he went
 - Yet he was so eager to preach the gospel that the Holy Spirit had to forbid him to go to Asia in one instance (Acts 16:6)
 - We should make this our attitude as well
 - We should love our fellow man so much that we should either want to give them the good tidings that is the gospel or we should try to at least warn them of the stone that will fall on them if they refuse the gospel

- Acts 20:26 – *“Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men.”*
 - Paul had no regrets about teaching the gospel despite all of the persecution he withstood while doing so
 - He was innocent of all men’s blood
 - Reminds me of Ezekiel 3:17-21
 - There we find God telling Ezekiel that he is a watchman for Israel
 - And as watchman, he has the responsibility to deliver Israel a message from God
 - If Ezekiel delivers the message and the people do not repent – that’s on the people, Ezekiel would be innocent of their blood
 - However, if the message is not delivered – the people suffer and their blood will be required at the hand of Ezekiel
 - So the response of those we teach is entirely up to them
- Anytime we teach people, we must do so with love and gentleness
 - Galatians 6:1 – *“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”*
 - Matthew 7:3-5 – *“And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”*
 - When we remove the plank from our eye, when we submit our lives to God (Romans 12:1-2), we still have the responsibility to remove the speck from our brother’s eye
 - The eye is a very delicate part of the body
 - You only have 2 of them and sight is a very critical part of life
 - So when I have a speck in my eye – how do you think I would want you to remove it?
 - Very gently – in love
 - We should take the same approach when trying to evangelize our fellow man
 - Paul met some people where they were – he leveled with many people in order to teach them the gospel
 - **1 Corinthians 9:16-23**
 - Paul says that it is necessary that he teach the gospel
 - And as Christians, it is necessary that we do so as well
 - There are people who are lost in this world, and we have the food that they need (just like the lepers in 2 Kings 7)
 - And Paul says *“woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!”*
 - As Christians, as members of the Lord’s church, we have been entrusted with the great responsibility of teaching the gospel to others
 - Let’s do so – not for our own glory
 - Paul speaks against this in Philippians 1 – if you are preaching for your own glory, then at least you are preaching, but be careful
 - Because the church is about what God has done, not about what you have done

- To the Jews, Paul became a Jew
 - To those under law, to those without law, to the weak, to all men despite their physical circumstance – that’s what Paul became
 - All in an effort to bring souls to Christ
 - What a wonderful example for all of us today
- Let’s conclude by looking at some more of Christ’s instructions
- In Matthew 10, Jesus sent the 12 out to preach the gospel
 - He spends this entire chapter giving them clear, detailed instructions on how to do so – what to teach, where to go, what to do if someone rejects the message, etc.
 - Let’s look at a few key verses from this passage
 - Vs 6-8
 - Go to the lost sheep of Israel
 - In this instance, Jesus specified that they were to not go to the Gentiles yet
 - His reasoning? I’m not fully sure, but that was His instructions
 - We know that later in Matthew 28 (as we ready previously), where they were told to go was the world
 - But in this instance, just the lost sheep of Israel
 - Deliver to them the following message: *“The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*
 - *“Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons.”*
 - Serve your fellow man physically, and also serve spiritually
 - Whatever talent we have in this life – use it, and use it for the glory of God
 - Brother Jeremy told me of a friend of his who is a good metal worker
 - And he’ll perform his services for people and their expense? A Bible study
 - You and I should be looking for these opportunities as well
 - Vs 14-15
 - If someone does not accept the message that you bring them, that’s fine
 - It’s not on you
 - Shake the dust off your feet and go on to the next
 - There are others who may accept and you should try to find them
 - No different than what God told Ezekiel in Ezekiel 3 (what we discussed a little earlier)
 - Vs 16
 - As we discussed earlier, we must be gentle with people
 - People are not converted by force
 - This is a decision they need to make on their own and we just need to show people the gospel and let them realize that they need to be obedient to it sometimes
 - Have them realize that on their own
 - But at the same time – we need to be wise as serpents
 - We need to know the Bible well, and be prepared to respond to any false doctrine that others may try to teach us
 - Vs 17-20
 - God gave us the message that we must preach
 - A message of Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

- When you are talking to others, don't worry about trying to reinvent the wheel
 - Don't worry about what you are going to say
 - God has provided the message
 - We just have to take it to the world
- We're going to close our study on the church with Daniel 2:44
 - *"And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."*
 - Christ established His perfect church and it will stand forever
 - Christ is the savior of the body (Ephesians 5:23)
 - If you are a faithful member of His church, I encourage you to remain that way
 - Regardless of what life throws at you, realize this world and the things herein are temporal
 - If you are not a member of the Lord's church, I would highly encourage you to become one
 - Your body may not live forever, but your soul will
 - It is just a matter of where – and that choice is up to you