

February 26, 2023 – (full notes)

“Parable of the Ill-mannered Children”

Luke 7:31-35

Last week we read and studied **Luke 7:29-30**. Let’s look at those two verses again, before we move on.

Both John and Jesus were fairly well accepted at the beginning of their ministries; but over time, some of the common Jews, and most of the religious leaders, grew tired of hearing them preach the need for people to repent of their sins, get right with God, and do what pleases God, or suffer His wrath to come.

The religious leaders rejected John’s message, who was executed by Herod; just as they rejected Jesus’ message, leading to His execution, a couple of years after John, because Jesus didn’t fulfill the expectations of the religious leaders in Israel, that the Messiah-King would free Israel from the oppression of Rome and usher in a time of peace and prosperity, as the Son of David.

Read Luke 7:31-35... Jesus compares those who reject John and Himself, to being like bratty children, who are disobedient and discontent, with an uncooperative and obstinate attitude toward authority.

Disobedience was considered a capital crime in Israel.

Deuteronomy 27:16, “Cursed is he who dishonors his father or mother. ‘And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’”

Deuteronomy 21:18-21, “If any man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or his mother, and when they chastise him, he will not even listen to them, then his father and mother shall seize him, and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gateway of his hometown. They shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey us, he is a glutton and a drunkard. ‘Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death; so you shall remove the evil from your midst.”

Aren’t we glad we are not living under OT Law, for disobedience is so offensive to God that it was punishable by death in the OT; and that shouldn’t surprise us, for the first act of humanity that brought the curse of sin upon all of us was an act of disobedience (**Genesis 2:16-17**), The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

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Aren't we glad we live under the Grace of the NT?

Romans 3:21-26, “But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

Romans 8:1, “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

But you know, apart from the love of God that is given to us in and through Jesus Christ, the Bible tells us (**Genesis 8:21**), “the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth.”

2Timothy 3:1-5, “But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men.”

In **Luke 7:31-32**, Jesus is providing an analogy [or parable], comparing how Israel has responded to God's Prophet (John the Baptizer) and God's Messiah (Jesus).

Last week we studied how John called people to be repent and be baptized and then directed them to Jesus Christ for salvation, as we read (**Matthew 3:8-12**), “Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance... The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ...I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I... ...He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

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Water symbolizes a desire for a clean conscience (cf. **1Peter 3:18-21**), to acknowledge your sins publicly, seeking God's forgiveness. The **Holy Spirit** speaks of the spiritual birth (**John 3:5-8**) of each genuine believer who (**Ephesians 1:13-14**) is indwelt by God's Spirit, and has been (**1Corinthians 12:13**) spiritually placed into the Body of Christ, the Church (**Colossians 1:18**), of which Christ is the Head. **Fire** symbolizes judgment for those who reject Christ; for they do not have the Holy Spirit, and are therefore doomed to a fiery and eternal destruction.

Look again at **Luke 7:31-32...** Jesus is comparing the current generation to children playing in the market place. The word *generation* is used in Luke's narrative regularly as a term for an unbelieving and wicked people.

Luke 9:41, “You unbelieving and perverted *generation*, how long shall I be with you and put up with you?”

Luke 11:29, “This *generation* is a wicked *generation*.”

Luke 17:25, “He [Christ] must suffer many things and be rejected by this *generation*.”

We also see the negative use of the word *generation* when comparing those who belong to God and those who reject Him, as Peter proclaimed in Jerusalem (**Acts 2:40**), “Be saved from this perverse generation!” Paul, exhorting the believers in Philippi declared (**Philippians 2:15**), “prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.”

What Jesus says in **Luke 7:32** is really interesting, when you look at the significance of the two major events in Jewish culture: weddings and funerals. Jerusalem had no playground areas or parks, but it did have a large open area [*agora* = a place for public gatherings] in the middle of the town, used as a market place where commodities could be sold and purchased; but when it was not being used for business, the children would often play there. And what is one of the first things little children often play? dress up, I'll be the daddy and you be the mommy, or vice versa.

Jesus seems to first be telling a story of some children who were trying to engage other children in playing a make-believe wedding, “We played the flute for you, and you did not dance.” Jewish weddings were extravagant and sometimes lasted a week, with lots of music and dancing and feasting, in houses and through the streets. Evidently some of the children chose not to participate, but instead to mope and brood and resent those who were having fun.

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Jesus also seems to be speaking of the other major event in Jewish culture that children might play, a make-believe funeral, “We sang a dirge [lament, burial hymn], and you did not weep.” Funerals would involve both private and public mourning, a long procession of friends and family taking the dead to be buried, and all the while there was fasting and weeping.

In this analogy, the spoiled, dissatisfied, ungrateful, and ill-mannered children who wouldn’t join in and play, represent the unbelieving in Israel who rejected the message of the gospel that came through God’s Prophet and God’s Messiah, as it will become more clear in **verses 33-34**, these unbelievers remain at enmity with God, dead in their sins.

Read Luke 7:33-34... Jesus now uses the illustration of a wedding and a funeral to apply to Himself and to John. Jesus says John came neither “eating nor drinking,” i.e., John didn’t live like the common Jew, he wore camels hair clothing (far from wedding attire) and ate locusts and wild honey, and lived out in the desert away from civilization, associating with no one and never participating in normal Jewish culture or religious celebrations.

John demanded that the people of Israel repent and do what is right; the people, especially the religious orthodox, were resentful of this wildman from the desert, some evidently said John must have a demon to live the way he did. People soon tired of his crude and uncivilized look, and his constant call for them to mourn over their sins, repent, and get right with God or suffer God’s wrath. John’s life and very short ministry was like a funeral without any celebration or joy.

Jesus, the Son of Man [His favorite name for Himself], grew up and lived a fairly normal Jewish life, compared to John. Jesus traveled throughout Israel, attended the major feasts and celebrations in Jerusalem, and He had close contact with hundreds (if not thousands), teaching, comforting, feeding, healing, forgiving sins, and challenging others to follow Him.

Although Jesus attended funerals (**Luke 7:11-16; 11:1-44**), he always raised back to life those who had died; but Jesus’ life was much more like a wedding, and His disciples (cf. **Matthew 9:15**) were called, “The attendants of the bridegroom.” Jesus’ first miracle (cf. **John 2:1-11**) was at a wedding, where He made wine out of water, the best wine anyone had ever tasted.

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It was said that Jesus came eating and drinking and that He was a glutton and a drunk who associated with sinners. The religious leaders were appalled that Jesus would gather with sinners (**Luke 15:1-2**), “Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. Both the Pharisees and the scribes *began* to grumble, saying, ‘This man receives sinners and eats with them,’ and so they confronted Jesus’ Disciples (**Matthew 9:11**), “When the Pharisees saw *this*, they said to His disciples, ‘Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?’”

But the truth is, although Jesus mingled with sinners, He never sinned Himself; for He came to save us from the consequences of our sin, by taking our punishment upon Himself at the cross, as the Lamb of God.

John 1:29, “John saw Jesus coming to him and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”

2Corinthians 5:21, “He [God the Father] made Him [God the Son] who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

Hebrews 9:22, “All things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness,” **26-28**, “But now once at the consummation [completion, fulfillment] of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him,” (**Hebrews 10:10**), “We have been sanctified [made holy] through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all,” **14**, “For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified,” **17-18**, “‘And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.’ Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.”

Read Luke 7:35... Jesus said (**John 8:32**), “you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free,” (**John 14:6**), “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

Wisdom [the truth of God’s Word] is vindicated [validated, justified, made effectual, proven to be true] by her children. In Matthew’s parallel account of this narrative it says (**Matthew 11:19**), “wisdom is vindicated by her deeds,” i.e., true believers demonstrate new life in Christ (**2Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10**).

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There are two main responses to the gospel in every generation, one of wisdom, and one of folly:

Those who hear and believe in Jesus Christ are children of wisdom (**Proverbs 4:11**), “I have directed you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in [the way of righteousness], (**Romans 11:33**), “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!”

Those who hear and don’t believe in Jesus Christ are like ill-mannered children who have chosen the way of the fool that ends in destruction (**Psalms 53:1**), “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God,’” (**Romans 3:16**), “Destruction and misery are in [his] path.

Both John and Jesus called Israel to repentance, all those who genuinely repented and trusted in Jesus received forgiveness; all those who rejected God’s messengers and God’s message, received judgement.

The same is true today, those who reject the message of Christ remain outside of the Kingdom of God, dead in their sins; but those who repent of sin and believe in God’s Son for salvation, receive forgiveness and eternal life, for they are children of God and citizens of God’s Kingdom, now and forever!

1John 5:11-13,

“And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

Pastor Mike

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