

The Kingdom of God, pt.11, 10.28.07

The Values of the Kingdom, pt.1

Luke 6.20–26

## The Values of the Kingdom vs the Values of the World

- I. Intro: Read text.
- II. This passage has direct application to America. The very things Jesus confronts are the core values of our culture. It's either Christ or comfort. You can't have both.
- III. Values are beliefs that drive our decision making & priorities. (Look up values definition on our website)

It's either the Kingdom of God or the American dream that determines your decision making. It's either Jesus or Money, Popularity and Comfort that influences how you spend your time, money & the direction you go in life. You will be held captive by one or the other.

- IV. Context – Jesus called his disciples out from among families and the religious establishment. There was an immediate response. Some thought it was good, others bad and others waited. When Jesus began advancing His Father's agenda there was an immediate reaction from the devil, family members, the religious community and the political establishment. When you advance the KOG (follow after Jesus) there is resistance all around you that causes discomfort, physical privation & eventually leads to rejection.
- V. Example of calling a group of 10 from the audience to come follow after me as we start our own church. What does that create in you? Anxiety, anger, resistance, curiosity and maybe support. For most, we resist and especially if I say things like...(use Js' words)

He had just called his disciples (6.13–16) and now they're beginning to feel or about to feel the pinch of standing with Jesus – poverty, lacked resources, loss of job, rejection, loneliness, ostracism, exclusion, etc.

VI. Competing Values

- a. The Kingdom Value – Jesus above everything else
- b. The World's Value – Comfort above everything else
- c. I believe that in several ways it is harder to live as a whole hearted follower of Christ in a land of plenty and freedom than in a land of want and persecution. Jesus states it: Luke 18.24f.
- d. It is harder to move from comfort & privilege to Jesus than from lack & hardship to Jesus. The latter sees it as a trade up and the former see it as a losing proposition.
- e. American Christians aren't battling political or religious structures that are radically opposed to us, but rather cultural more of comfort that is quietly asphyxiating our witness. The older we grow the harder it is to fight off the fumes...

VII. The Price You Pay For Putting Jesus First –

- a. Intro – Putting Christ first means he is at the center of your decision making.
- b. Poverty –
  - i. He's not pronouncing a blessing on a social class though that social class does most quickly respond to Him. It's rather both those who have experienced poverty due to the demands of the Christ and those who know they have nothing to offer Him. The disciples fit both categories.
  - ii. Appl – you may not fit the financially impoverished category, but we each fit the spiritual one. We have nothing in ourselves to offer God. I'm a instrument with a will. I'm a sleeping child with potential

1. Example of hammer with a will & it communicates, “use me.” It’s of no use otherwise.
2. Until I’m awakened I can’t experience my Father’s love or hear His voice.
3. the impoverished know they are asleep and of no use until the Lord awakens them and they give themselves to His service.

c. Hunger

- i. This was literal and spiritual. They didn’t have a consistent meal b/c they left their comfortable surroundings. They went after Jesus gave up the daily meal plan. They also hungered for more of him and His ways.
- ii. Appl – What about you? Do you hunger and thirst after God? I’m not asking if you’re interested in God or have a few questions for God. I’m asking do you want more of God in your life? Is there a hunger for the Word...serve others...be with other believers...experience God’s presence...give...advance his agenda in the work place & world? If not, you’re more driven by the value of Comfort

d. Weeping & Rejection –

- i. Over broken relationships & loss experienced by putting Jesus first. This happened & would continue to happen to the disciples.
- ii. Ostracism, insults, snubbing, loss of position & influence. These things happen when you put Jesus first. You can’t get around it. Jesus said, “I didn’t come to bring peace, but a sword...”
  1. Illust – Christian persecution
- iii. When you put Jesus first, it will make people uncomfortable & they will try to discourage you & others will pull away. In marriage, your spouse might grow cool and/or resistant.

- iv. Fire causes a reaction. To some it warms & gives direction and to others it scares. When the HS shows up, there is a reaction. The person reacts and what's inside the person reacts.
- v. One of the reasons people react is b/c we have to speak the truth. Luke 4.23–27 – just like the people in the past, so you also will not receive God's messenger.
- vi. Recently receiving articles from people about the relative nature of truth and that falsehood should have the same standing as truth.
- vii. We are living in a time no different than the early church experienced where there were competing views about origin & purpose, monotheism or polytheism, etc.
- viii. We are blessed to be a nation with a Christian heritage, but today it's a philosophical and theological free-for-all with the loudest & weirdest having equal value to the clearest & most sane.
- ix. Controversial statement: I don't think we have to defend our faith to prove its truth. In other words, out argue the other side. The truth is we can win the debate, but that doesn't bring transformation to the heart. I think the place for Christian apologetics is to strengthen our faith and to provide answers for those seeking the truth.
- x. We preach the GN and let the chips fall; the GN is confrontive but Js didn't get into roaring arguments with people. He moved on & he instructs us to do the same – Lk.10.5–12. He didn't apologize either.
- xi. What I have seen is that the real reason many people reject Christianity is b/c of a lifestyle issue (they don't want to give up something), pride (biggest reason Phar didn't turn to Jesus), hurt from Christians or they're too lazy to seek the truth & thus they hide behind a rouse of intellectualism or spirituality.
- xii. When you put Jesus first the price you pay is rejection.

xiii. Summary: Putting Jesus first, impacts your economic wealth (how you spend it at the minimum) & your emotional health (how others interact with you).

VIII. Putting Comfort first means you pursue

- a. Intro -
- b. This means you place your financial and leisure desires and/or your status at the center of your decision making. You ask: "How will this help me, my family, agenda or desires...make me richer, happier, feel good...make me look good or popular? How will this make my life more comfortable/enjoyable/easier
- c. Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Daniel & others were rich and influential. Yet, their riches & influence came as they followed the Lord. They sought first the KOG.
- d. The big difference between the two is the core question each asks. One - Jesus, what do you want?; the other - what do I want? One looks to the Word for answers and the other turns to the world for answers.
- e. What are the pursuits?
  - i. Riches - stuff
  - ii. Personal Satisfaction - what makes you feel good
  - iii. Happiness - entertainment/leisure
  - iv. Popularity & influence - speak well of you
    1. Huge trap for everyone. We want people to like us & we want to live at peace with everyone.
    2. Putting Christ first means you will have to say some things that aren't popular and will meet with instantaneous resistance & anger.
    3. Ill - Listening to John Hagee speaking on Dennis Prager show & unashamedly declaring that salvation is found only in Jesus. His intentions are to bless the Jews and if they wanted to know

about why He believes Jesus is the Messiah then he would unload on them.

- f. Again, God isn't opposed to those things, but rather He's concerned about the question that drives your life. Is it- Jesus, what do you want?; or - what do I want? One looks to the Word for answers and the other turns to the world for answers.

- IX. The gifts you receive for putting Jesus first...
  - a. With the exception of the last, these are in the present tense. low, you receive them in this life.
  - b. The Kingdom of God - the power, passion & character of Christ. Luke 12.32 - It gives the Father great happiness to give us the KOG. I bring the weather system of Heaven into this realm. I bring personal & societal change. He has given me dominion where I have influence.
  - c. Satisfaction - deep, lasting peace
  - d. Joy - hope, contentment
  - e. A great reward in Heaven but leap for joy now
  
- X. Putting Comfort first means you receive
  - a. Your prize in this life - like Jesus said to the rich man in Luke 16
  - b. Lack of contentment - gnawing unrest
  - c. Sorrow - regret for the Christian & anguish for the unbeliever
  - d. Momentary popularity followed by eternal rejection
  
- XI. Jesus makes an authoritative declaration. You are either under His blessings and His woes.

- a. **Blessings** – Blessed (happy--<sup>[a]</sup>with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, apart from your outward condition--and <sup>[b]</sup>to be envied)
- b. **Woes** are an expression of regret, “How terrible it is for you.” You can sense Jesus’ compassion on those who don’t appropriately respond...”I’m really sorry you missed out.”

Conclusion:

- I. Which are you pursuing? Comfort or Christ?
- II. Putting Christ first means I place His agenda/will at the center of my decision making. It will impact your money, relationships, influence...what you can & can’t do in this life. You’re stating to God, “I will choose pain over pleasure; hardship over friendship; and poverty over power.”
- III. But the payoff is worth it. You get the KOG, joy, deep satisfaction and a great reward in Heaven.