

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

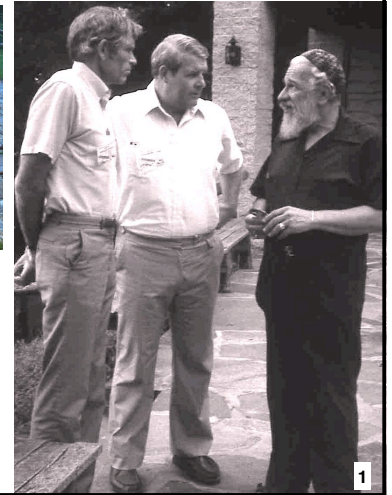
Matthew 21:23-32
Lesson #19
Blessed are the Sinners
02/02/2020

Wildacres Retreat - The Greater Carolina Association of Rabbis



Christian Orthodoxy
(faith based)

Jewish Orthopraxy
(behavior based)



1

Much of Jesus' ministry addresses
the spiritual condition of
God's **covenant people**

with **principles** that apply
to both ancient Israel
and the present church.

"He who has an ear to hear,
let him hear."



2

The context of Matt.21:23-32

Jesus curses the fig tree - vs.18-22

"²⁰ And seeing this, the disciples marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither at once?" ²¹ And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith, and do not doubt, you shall not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even **if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it shall happen.** ²² **And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.**"

"this mountain" = The Temple mount (O.C.), which the disciples would with authority (at Pentecost) displace as predicted in Matt.19:28

"believing" = what Jesus is introducing with his death and resurrection - New Covenant.

3

Matthew 21

"²³ And when He had come into the temple, **the chief priests and the elders** of the people came to Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?" ²⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them, "I will ask you one thing too, which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ The baptism of John was from what source, from heaven or from men?" And they began reasoning among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Then **why did you not believe him?**' ²⁶ But if we say, 'From men,' **we fear the multitude;** for they all hold John to be a prophet." ²⁷ And answering Jesus, they said, "**We do not know.**" He also said to them, "**Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.**"

Why is John the Baptist an issue?

John 10 gives us a hint.

4

John 10

"¹ Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. ³ **To him the doorkeeper opens,** and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out."

- **John the Baptist** was the "door keeper"
- To see the Shepherd (Jesus) the sheep needed to **go through John.**
- The Law that John preached was to **break hearts so they would see** the glory of and need for the Cross of Christ.

5

The message of John the Baptist

Matthew 3

“2 **Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3 For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet, saying, *‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness, **‘Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight!’**”*

Humble yourself before the Law of the Lord because the promised kingdom is near.

Walk in the Light - hunger and thirst for righteousness.

6

1 John 1

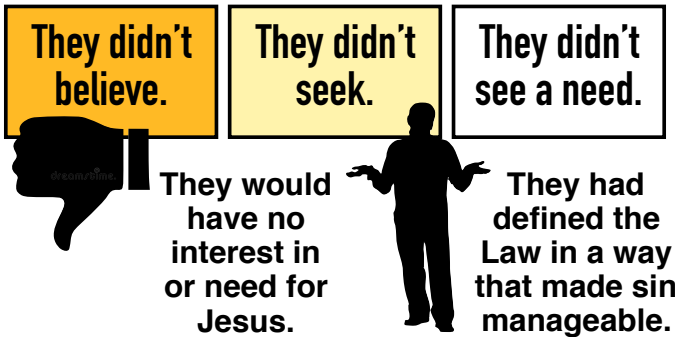
“7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.”

Cultivate a heart sensitive to the light.

7

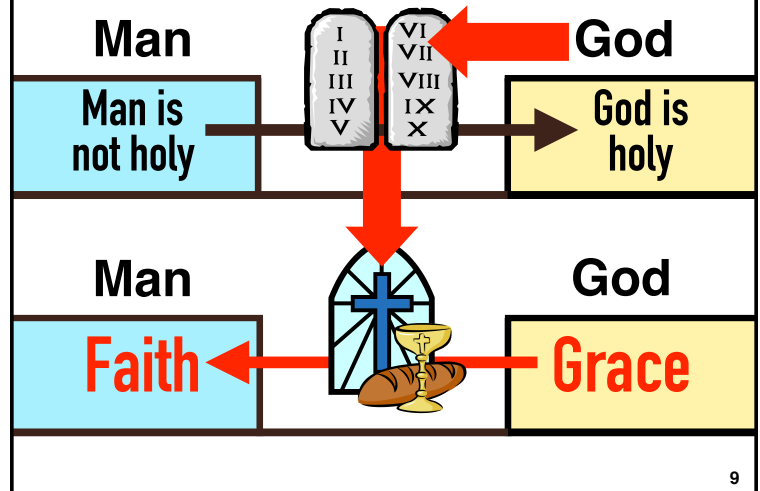
The message of John the Baptist



If they rejected John's call for repentance they would misunderstand Jesus' message.

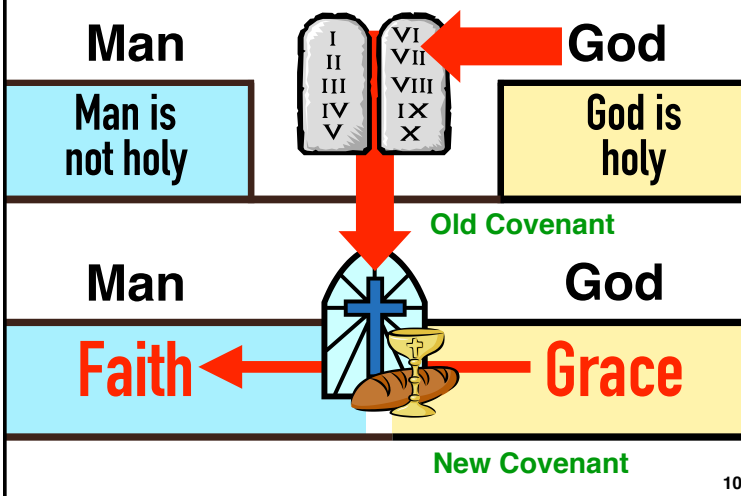
8

Using the Law lawfully (rightly)



9

Using the Law lawfully (rightly)



10

The stumbling block to the Kingdom is not the moral standard of the Law which was addressed and satisfied at the Cross.



The chief obstacles to the Kingdom now are the **grace of God** at the Cross and **faith in Christ** that links us to it.

11

The emphasis of the Gospels

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

The Passion and Resurrection

12

Gospels

The Passion and Resurrection

the ethical teaching and deeds of Jesus

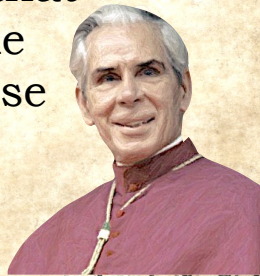
The emphasis of the Epistles

Epistles

13

“Of all the great religious leaders of history, Jesus is unique in that he alone came for the purpose of dying.”

Fulton J. Sheen



14

Paul's testimony of his insight into the Law

Romans 7

“¹⁰ and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; ¹¹ for sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me.”

Interpretive paraphrase

“I had been deceived into thinking that the Law was given as a pathway to life through MY obedience. Instead, it killed me and my hope.”

15

Romans 7

“¹² So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.” ¹³ Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.”

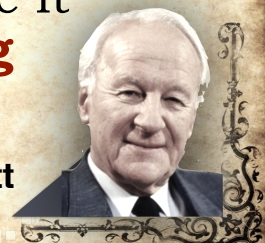
Interpretive paraphrase

“Now I see that the Law was a needed tutor exposing my sin, breaking my prideful heart, and pointing me to Christ who would become my righteousness through faith. Without the Law I would not have appreciated the depth of my sin and the significance of the Cross.”

16

“Before we can begin to see the cross as something done for us, we have to see it **as something done by us.**”

John Stott



17

Matthew 21

"²⁸ But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go work today in the vineyard.' ²⁹ And he answered and said, 'I will, sir'; and he did not go. ³⁰ And he came to the second and said the same thing. But he answered and said, 'I will not'; yet he afterward regretted it and went. ³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The latter." Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you that the tax-gatherers and harlots will get into the kingdom of God before you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax-gatherers and harlots did believe him; and you, seeing this, did not even feel remorse afterward so as to believe him."



What does it mean to obey the father?

It's not about putting our hope in keeping the Law but about being humbled before it.

18

"³¹ . . . Truly I say to you that the tax-gatherers and harlots will get into the kingdom of God before you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax-gatherers and harlots did believe him; and you, seeing this, did not even feel remorse afterward so as to believe him."

Sinners will get into the kingdom not because they have fulfilled the Law but rather are humbled (broken) by it and seek salvation from its condemnation in Christ.



The "self righteous" don't get this because they feel no remorse.

19

A parallel teaching

Luke 18

"⁹ And He also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: ¹⁰ Two men **went up into the temple** to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. ¹² I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'

¹³ But the tax-gatherer, **standing some distance away**, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house **justified** rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.'"

20

Those outside the faith need to hear that

God is not looking for saints, He is looking for sinners who know they need Him and will listen to Him.

His message is simple: it's not about "do" it's about "done".

21

The word "Gospel" means



not "double down" on the Law

but freedom from the Law's condemnation "good news"



22

"Holiness is not the way to Christ; Christ is the way to holiness. Better still, Christ is our holiness."



Charles Spurgeon

23

Blessed are the sinners!

Matthew 5

"³ Blessed are **the poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Blessed are those who **mourn**, for they shall be comforted. . . . ⁶ Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness**, for they shall be satisfied."

Romans 5:20

"And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but **where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,**"

1 Corinthians 1

"²⁸ God has chosen, the **things that are not**, that He might nullify the things that are, ²⁹ that no man should boast before God."

24

Jesus is seeking "Prodigal Sons"

The **Incarnation** is a message of God's identification with the poor, forgotten, the left behind, left out, over looked, dispossessed, and rejected.

Jesus' **ministry** underscored this reaching out to sinners.

Jesus' **crucifixion** punctuates this with an exclamation mark.

The **Gospel** is good news message for the poor in spirit.

Jesus' **church** is called to illustrate grace with humility.

25

Christians need to remember:

Worldliness and defilement come not from being in the world

but from a heart that has lost contact with its own brokenness and God's grace.

26

Truths that should set us free

1.
God **resists the proud** but gives grace to the humble.

2.
Jesus came to seek and save sinners **who know they are lost**, not sinners under "successful" management.

3.
Our **hard hearts** are more damaging than our moral failures and the **Cross of Christ** is a greater security than our damnable "good works".

27

"The longer I live the more clearly I see my own depravity and God's grace in Christ toward me."

John Stott



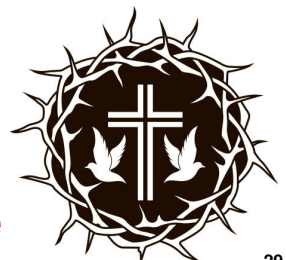
28

The kingdom of God asks:

What's in your **heart**?

Last week - **kingdom priorities**

This week - **sensitive conscience**



29