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THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

Bad Religion

John 5:1-16; Luke 6:1-11

The Gospel of Jesus

- I. Words with Authority
  - a. In Luke 4 we read that the crowds were “astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority”
    - i. They were not mere words, Jesus established His authority through supernatural displays of power
    - ii. The healing of the sick and diseased, the deliverance of the demon possessed, granting sight to the blind – all acts of great compassion, personal acts, life changing miracles
      1. Jesus wasn’t simply establishing His ability and authority to heal physical ailments
      2. When a paralyzed man was lowered in front of Him, Jesus made a blasphemous claim in the eyes of the Pharisees – “Your sins are forgiven” – you are now right with God, you have been made clean
        - a. And the Pharisee’s thought to themselves “who can forgive sins but God alone?” There was more pride in that thought than appeared on the surface – “we are God’s spokesmen”
      3. Jesus said “Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" and He told the man to “arise, pick up your mat, and go home.” And that’s exactly what He did
    - iii. The people were fine with the miracles, and the signs, and the wonders – they wanted more of them but as soon as Jesus started making claims about His deity, His authority, who He was and why He had come, that made people very uncomfortable.
      1. We saw this early on in Luke when Jesus was rejected in His home town of Nazareth – they sought to throw Him off a cliff
  - b. That animosity towards Jesus will continue to grow throughout the gospels until it crescendos at the cross
    - i. We will see that Jesus doesn’t avoid it, in fact He encourages it. He goes looking for it so that He may draw it out. He knows what lives in the hearts of men.
    - ii. What is in the content of Jesus’ message that the Jewish leaders find so offensive? Sticks and stones...doesn’t seem to apply. Jesus is saying something that is stirring up wrath in their hearts. We get a glimpse of what it is in
    - iii. ***Luk 5:33-39 Then they said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?" And He said to them, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days." Then He spoke a parable to them: "No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was taken out of the new does not match the old. And no one puts new***

**wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved. And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'** "

1. The first question Jesus asks is have you ever been to a wedding without food? Have you ever been to a celebration and everyone is fasting?
  2. Then Jesus gives a warning – No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one for two reasons – the new garment has not shrunk yet and when it does it will tear the old garment apart and it will make the old garment look even worse than before
    - a. It would be like putting super nice rims on a Geo Metro – it will look ridiculous
  3. No one puts new wine in an old wineskin – new wine was always placed in a new wineskin to ferment. As it fermented it would release gases and the new wineskin would stretch and expand to accommodate the gases
    - a. What would happen if you put new wine in an old wineskin that has already expanded? – it would burst
- c. In this parable we see the intention of the people – they want to fit Jesus into their existing religious systems
- i. Jesus, you and your miracles can stay, as long as you play by our rules.
  - ii. But Jesus doesn't allow for that. He says it would be a disaster if they attempted to fit Him into their religious system.
  - iii. As David Guzik points out "You can't fit His new life into the old forms. This explains why Jesus did not begin a reform movement within Judaism, working with the rabbinical schools. Jesus didn't come to patch up their old practices. He came with a whole new set of clothes."
    1. But human nature likes the old, likes the familiar, likes being comfortable
    2. That is why the epitaph on the tombstone of many dead churches reads: "We never did it that way before."
  - iv. This is the personal message of the gospel – Jesus isn't asking that you make Him a part of your life. He is asking for your life.
    1. He's not a patch you put on your existing jacket or something new you insert into your calendar to give you an extra boost for the day – He asks for everything, to be the center of everything
    2. The Jewish leaders hated Him for that – they liked the old ways of doing things, because that was the source of their power and influence
    3. A man who rejects Christ because of what he is afraid to lose rejects Him violently

## II. Jesus Heals the Paralytic Man

**Joh 5:1-4 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.**

- a. Bethesda
  - i. John is very specific about the location and design of this pool and the time of year that these events take place.
    1. Jesus entered Jerusalem during what was quite possibly the Feast of Pentecost – the celebration of the giving of the law
    2. No matter where you were Jerusalem was described as up – the temple was located there so it was the center of worship for the Jewish people

- ii. Sheep gate was the gate that the sacrifices were brought into the city
  - 1. Near this gate was this pool called Bethesda – which means House of Mercy
  - 2. This pool had 5 porches – the number 5 in scripture is often a reference to the Pentateuch – the first five books of the law: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy
- iii. John, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is drawing our attention to the law – the Old Covenant
- b. What do we see when we get there? A pathetic scene.
  - i. Jon Courson points out, the Greek text has no quotation marks. The author is explaining the prevailing wisdom or superstition of the day
  - ii. A great multitude of sick, blind, lame, and paralyzed people fighting to be first into the pool because of a vain superstition.
    - 1. A sad scene indeed. What is even more depressing is how accurate of a picture it paints of mankind.
- c. I've seen this pool before. Not this one exactly, but one similar to it.
  - i. When I worked in health insurance one of my accounts was a large casino company that owned around 30 casinos in the US
  - ii. Part of my job was to put on benefits fairs – introduce new health benefit plans for the year – during my trips I was often given tours of the casinos and there was one in particular I remember in Peoria, IL on a riverboat that had been converted to a casino
    - 1. I watched as a predominantly older population played the slots and my heart broke – is this all they had left to live for?
  - iii. All over the world people are fighting to be first into their respective pools so their lives will be changed – so they will be made whole
    - 1. Lottery tickets, American Idol, that next promotion, if I can just attract the attention of the right person, the right diet, the right pill, the right circle of friends, the right hobby
    - 2. If I can just be first into the pool, that will change everything, that will give me what I need – I will be accepted again, I will find purpose
  - iv. No different than the scene before us this morning
    - 1. And like the law – none of these things have the power to change an individual's heart – to meet their deepest need
    - 2. Their circumstances may change for the moment but that is never enough

***John 5:5-8 Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk."***

### III. Jesus Seeks Out the Weakest of the Weak

- a. John doesn't mention the nature of his infirmity but instead draws our attention to the length of his infirmity – 38 years
  - i. (Law of first mention) ***Deu 2:14 ESV And the time from our leaving Kadesh-barnea until we crossed the brook Zered was thirty-eight years, until the entire generation, that is, the men of war, had perished from the camp, as the LORD had sworn to them.***
  - ii. 38 years of Israel's wandering in the wilderness, waiting for the generation of unbelief to die so that the generation of faith could enter into the Promised Land
    - 1. Another reference to the old being replaced by the new
- b. Jesus seeks out THIS man

- i. Every moment of Jesus' ministry is deliberate and planned out – every interaction one of purpose – so why this man?
- ii. His faith? No mention of it. In fact, we learn he didn't even know who Jesus was.
- iii. One thing we do know – he was the least of the least by society's standards – spending his days trying to get into this pool and continually getting beat out by the other sick, blind, and paralyzed
  - 1. Ignored and passed over by everyone – no one willing to reach out to him, no one willing to help
  - 2. Here is a man who lays completely powerless to fulfill the requirements placed before him
    - a. In his mind if he can make it to the pool first he will be healed, the problem is, he can't make it to the pool
    - b. This man is a picture of Israelites – laying powerless before the righteous requirement of the law – hoping to try a little harder or sacrifice a little more or dig a little deeper and enter into that pool
    - c. Even if they got into the pool nothing would change
- c. Jesus says "Get up, take up your bed, and walk."
  - i. Jesus doesn't help Him into the pool, Jesus doesn't ask if he believes, Jesus simply seeks out the man who is a state of hopelessness and desperation and heals him with His spoken word.
  - ii. For what reason? Reflects the heart of His Father. Gives us a picture of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. But even more than that, Jesus is picking a fight.

***John 5:9 And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.***

- iii. This man wasn't terminal. He would have still been there tomorrow. Jesus knew exactly what day it was, and He was calling the Pharisee's out by name.

***John 5:10-16 The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed." He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.' " Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you." The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.***

- d. A man is healed and what was the response of the Jewish leaders? Praise God! Tell us how this happened!
  - i. No, they were more concerned about who told him to brake the law. That is what legalism does. We become more concerned about policies and procedures then we do people.
  - ii. How much time do you think these teachers of the law spent at the pool of Bethesda? How much time do you think they spent loving these people.
    - 1. Instead they stood afar off and pronounced judgement on them
  - iii. And then, when someone walked right into the midst of these hurt and broken people, and healed them – their first response is criticism
- e. One of the most discouraging in ministry is watching Christians who are doing nothing criticizing Christians who are doing something
  - i. It's one thing if the world hates us, but it is really sad when we pick apart each other
  - ii. Instead of picking apart those who are serving try to come alongside them and help

iii. Jesus has ruffled some feathers and He's done yet

**Luk 6:1-11** Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first that He went through the grainfields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate them, rubbing them in their hands. And some of the Pharisees said to them, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?" But Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?" And He said to them, "The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath." Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered. So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him. But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, "Arise and stand here." And he arose and stood. Then Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?" And when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

#### IV. Jesus vs. Religion

- a. Ever tell your child not to do something and they look right at you and do it anyway
  - i. That is kind of what Jesus is doing to the Pharisees
  - ii. Jesus is purposefully exposing the hearts of these so-called religious leaders
  - iii. He is exposing them and the systems they are trying to protect...and they hate him for it
    1. They weren't concerned about the people and their relationship with the Lord. They were nothing like their hero Moses who interceded for the people.
    2. They were only concerned about their positions and their power. Their ability to control the people.
- b. We must guard against that kind of attitude – that critical spirit that judges from a distance
  - i. And let's spend a little more time at the pool of Bethesda pointing others to the true source of hope and healing and maybe a little less time in our self-righteous temples deciding who is worthy and who is not