

02192023. overcoming Blind spots Luke 11:33-36

Your life is defined by the boundaries you set...not how you define yourself .. one of the healthy boundaries we need to employ in our lives ...is the acknowledgement that I have limitations... I have blindspots...for example...I know I don't know everything about anything... What I currently possess knowledge wise is limited...give exmples God, relationships etc., therefore if I want to be more capable in any area of life, I have to want to learn more... which sometimes means I have to change what I believe because new information renders that inaccurate and sometimes flat our wrong.

What does it feel like to be wrong? What does it feel like to be wrong? What comes to mind? Annoying, bad, awkward, embarrassing, ashamed, foolish...okay that is what it feels like to be wrong. No that it is what it feels like in the moment when you discover that you are wrong. But until that moment being wrong feels exactly like being right.

So we are all wrong about hundreds of things right now and we have no clue, and the only way you can find that out is by talking to people who think differently. And if you talk to people who think like you, you will never find it out. You will just dig yourself deeper into a hole.

New knowledge increases understanding and insight... thereby increasing my capacity to do life better...when this knowledge is

applied and mastered....I change I grow...I become better!! And everyone around me benefits

So because we have blindspots we do not see the whole picture when it comes to God's work in our lives ... what God is doing won't look like what you are expecting... nor feel like what you think it should feel like....

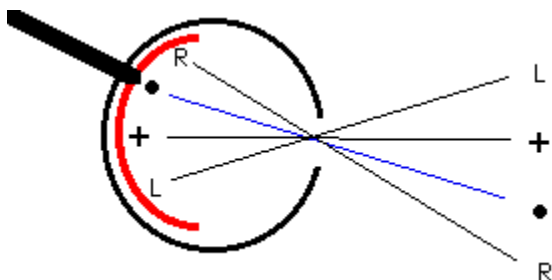
Why? We Are incapable of seeing the whole picture ... it's simple human nature to have blind spots in our thinking, and by definition we can't see our own blind spots,

******So it is an absolute necessary habit to get into to regularly challenge our presuppositions, and hopefully thereby identify and deal with those blindspots**

➤ **This truth can be demonstrated in the natural... by what we see...our eyes...**

Your eyes have blindspots... Most people (even many who work on the brain) assume that what you see is pretty much what your eye sees and reports to your brain. The fact is, your brain adds very substantially to the report it gets from your eye, so that a lot of what you see is actually "made up" by the brain.

Let me show you why...



The front of the eye acts like a camera lens, differently directing light rays from each point in space so as to create on the back of the eye a picture of the world.

The picture falls on a sheet of photoreceptors (red in the diagram), specialized brain cells (neurons) which are excited by light. The sheet of photoreceptors is much like a sheet of film at the back of a camera.

But it has a hole in it. At one location, called the optic nerve head, processes of neurons collect together and pass as a bundle through the photoreceptor sheet to form the optic nerve (the thick black line extending up and to the left in the diagram), which carries information from the eye to the rest of the brain.

At this location, there are no photoreceptors, and hence the brain gets no information from the eye about this particular part of the picture of the world. Because of this, you should have a "blind spot" (actually two, one for each eye), a place pretty much in the middle of what you can see where you can't see.

The blind spot also figures in some interesting discussion about how best to talk about what the brain does, the issue being whether the brain actually "fills things in" or instead simply ignores things about which it has no information.

If the eye is damaged or diseased...many more blind spots can be experienced...leading all the way up to blindness...

- Interestingly what the brain does not see it fills it in...usually with the same background that the others receptors pick up.
- Or ignores it...it is not there...denial

Our minds are much the same way...if we don't see it or get it...we fill it in...or ignore it...which usually creates problems for us ...the wise among us understand this and look to God to help us with what we don't see...for that to happen we must be challenged in my thinking.

➤ **the wise among us understand this and look to God to help us He who sees and controls what we don't see or control...for that to happen we must be challenged in our thinking.**

That is what we are dealing with today's study...

Jesus has just delivered a man from a demon and healed him from being both mute and blind...three groups of people there...

1)Those amazed...and their faith is emerging...they see Jesus differently...2)Those rejecting him and see not God but the devil at work..3) those not sure and want more signs so they can decide...who they see Jesus as...

For two years people have witnessed Jesus...and he says this to them

NLT Luke 11: 29 As the crowd pressed in on Jesus, he said, "This evil generation keeps asking me to show them a miraculous sign. But the only sign I will give them is the sign of Jonah. ³⁰ What happened to him was a sign to the people of Nineveh that God had sent him. What happens to the Son of Man will be a sign to these people that he was sent by God.

He tells them they have been given much info, seen with their own eyes miracles, demonic deliverance, heard him give many messages you have seen and experienced many signs... yet you insist in remaining blind...lying to your self that you don't see when you

do.... This is what makes you wicked... ...yet they hold fast to their view which has blindspots... **seeing what they want to see** This is what makes you wicked... ...

As Jonah was a sign to the wicked Ninevites...he is to them...then he says this:

³¹ “The queen of Sheba will stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for she came from a distant land to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Now someone greater than Solomon is here—but you refuse to listen. ³² The people of Nineveh will also stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for they repented of their sins at the preaching of Jonah. Now someone greater than Jonah is here—but you refuse to repent.

The point... They missing their visitation because the Messiah that came did not meet their criteria for a proper Messiah whom they expected...as if they saw correctly. Neither the Ninivites nor the Queen of Sheba did this!!

Lets break it down.... Queen of Sheba. Queen of South The location of the historical kingdom may have included parts or all of modern day Eritrea, Ethiopia and Yemen.

Lets pick up her story ... King Solomon’s fame was wide...along with his belief in God as he built the first Temple for worship

*NLT 1KI 10:1 When the queen of Sheba heard of Solomon’s fame, **which brought honor to the name of the LORD**, she came to test him with hard questions. ² She arrived in Jerusalem with a large group of attendants and a great caravan of camels loaded with spices, large quantities of gold, and precious jewels. When she met with Solomon, she talked*

with him about everything she had on her mind. ³ Solomon had answers for all her questions; nothing was too hard for the king to explain to her. ⁴ When the queen of Sheba realized how very wise Solomon was, and when she saw the palace he had built, ⁵ she was overwhelmed. She was also amazed at the food on his tables, the organization of his officials and their splendid clothing, the cup-bearers, and the burnt offerings Solomon made at the Temple of the LORD.

⁶ She exclaimed to the king, “Everything I heard in my country about your achievements and wisdom is true! ⁷ I didn’t believe what was said until I arrived here and saw it with my own eyes. In fact, I had not heard the half of it! Your wisdom and prosperity are far beyond what I was told. ⁸ How happy your people must be! What a privilege for your officials to stand here day after day, listening to your wisdom! ⁹ Praise the LORD your God, who delights in you and has placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the LORD’s eternal love for Israel, he has made you king so you can rule with justice and righteousness.”

- **She knew she did not know about Solomon and his God...but wanted to find out... she investigated... she saw what she previously did not...and believed...**
- **Someone greater than him is here and you choose to remain blind....**
- **And Jesus goes on**

NLT Luke 11: 32 The people of Nineveh will also stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for they repented of their sins at the preaching of Jonah. Now someone greater than Jonah is here—but you refuse to repent.

- **In fact Ninevah's blindness was so great that God said this about them to a defiant Jonah who had no compassion (therefore also blind to the heart of God) ...and felt God should not have compassion either...as these Ninevites from Assyria who hated the Israelites and had a long history of severely persecuting them...should be punished most severely**

NIV Jonah 4:11 And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right **hand** from their **left**—and also many animals?"

- **That saying means they are so in blindness ... they are like either young children who have yet to learn right from left or adults who do not understand right from wrong.**
- **Yet They who hated the Israelites and had a long history of severely persecuting them ...heard the message of Jonah...(accompanied by no miracles) to repent or face judgment ...they saw and repented**
- **Yet you who think you know your left from your right hand...and see clearly ...remain most blind!**
- **AS one greater is here...The Messiah replete with signs and wonders...and preachingyou see miracles with your eyes, hear preaching with your ears, ...and still choose choose to not believe...**
- **The last sign will be like Jonah ...in the fish belly for three day...I will be in the earth three days....and you still choose blindness**

The point...The problem is not that you have blindspots...but that you hold onto them as if you see clearly ... you need to see

correctly and realize that your blind spots can fool you, mislead you, cause you to fall...and sometimes we hold on to them as if

Jesus goes on to speak to these people...the word of God heals our blind spots... is there an area of your life you have blind spots?

Be open to receive new information than act on it...like the Ninevites and The Queen of Sheba

end

Your Eye is the lamp...but in your case ...That is what Jesus is saying next...

NLT Luke 11: 34 “Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. But when it is unhealthy, your body is filled with darkness.

So what is Jesus saying...

1. your eye is your mind or heart or soul...the place of perception...the place of decision making
2. The lamp is your body...what you do...

So, then, says Jesus, the light which gets into any man's heart and soul and being depends on the spiritual state of the eye through which it has to pass, for the eye is the window of the whole body

NLT Luke 11: 36 If you are filled with light, with no dark corners, then your whole life will be radiant, as though a floodlight were filling you with light.”

Know you have blindspots...the rproblrm is not that you have blindspots...but that you hol onto them as if you see clearly

dark corners... look to have them exposed...so hey can be healed so that you may receive more lightwhen they ae exposed ...receive the light so that you may be healed! Check your blindspots... to whom much is given much is expected! end

end

So, then, says Jesus, the light which gets into any man's heart and soul and being depends on the spiritual state of the eye through which it has to pass, for the eye is the window of the whole body.



➤ Our eye is the receptor of this light...if the eye is functioning well ...we receive it and we see...

➤ If the eye is bad...when something is wrong with our eyes, we have levels of blindness going on!

- we can't use the light—even if the world is illuminated by the brightest light, we cannot receive it...nor do we see, that we don't see!

*1CO 13: 12 Now we **see** but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

- **A mirror does not reflect everything just what is immediately In front of it... they even give warning on the door mirrors of a car..." **objects in mirror** are closer than they appear" to get a full picture we must look over our should or count on the blindspot detector if we have one.**
- **likewise we are incapable of seeing or comprehending everything that is going on around us in the natural... let alone the supernatural.....**
- **we see simply what is placed before us...like a mirror thereforeWe know in part...**

But we shall know fully when presented face to face...in the context that means when God meets us in the totality of eternity.

What ever The world is still in great need of light... Light is a very common metaphor in the Bible, appearing in nearly 300 verses. Here, it almost certainly stands for people's opportunity to perceive the truth about Jesus.

end

We have been studying about the big picture.... **The Big Picture keep the main things the main things** Why? We are living in a complex society and we are complex individuals, which overwhelms adults and causes great anxiety in people especially young people; children....

The calming and safety needed to keep us balance and moving in the right direction are called boundaries...boundaries give direction and establish borders in our behavior

think...

He gives the example of a lamp...

LK 11:33 "No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light."

- To us in America, light is no big deal. We have lights on our key rings, on our cell phones and even on our children's shoes. Without even thinking about it, we flip on a switch and our room is instantly filled with light.
- Well, for those men and women perched on the mountainside listening to Jesus' message that day, things were very different.
- Back then, light was not taken lightly. Light was considered a precious commodity.
- There were no light switches to turn on, or flashlights or street lights for the roads. Light was a luxury and keeping a lamp lit in the house was a priority.

Explain light in a roman/Jewish household...

- Oil fired lamps are critical in a land without electricity...in America we do not appreciate this fact ...but much of the world would.
- Lit once and then stayed on all the time or transferred the light while the oil was refilled...when they left the house the lamp was placed under an earthen shelter..kept lit...but used to avoid accidental fire...

Jesus goes on to explain some things about light...

1. One ..the lamp is lit by someone else...the lamp is lit by a light...Jesus the lighter...we are the lamp...the lamp does not light itself it is lit by another
2. Two it is not lit to be hid...but to be visible..

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B) Jesus ascribes himself as the light of the world...

JN 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the **light of the world**. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." ...

John 12:46 I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

- Here, it certainly stands for the world's opportunity to perceive the truth about Jesus.
- Jesus is saying the world is in great need of light...I am that light
- his light is used to guide...light reveals and is not deceiving..light guides
- **LIGHT EXPOSES DARKNESS...AND LIGHT SHOWS THERE IS A WAY OUT INTO LIGHT!**
- *We are the lamp that hold the light...but what we hold is in the eye...of the beholder...our perception...*

C) Your Eye is the lamp...That is what Jesus is saying next...

Luke 11:34 Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness.

- So, then, says Jesus, the light which gets into any man's heart and soul and being depends on the spiritual state of the eye through which it has to pass, for the eye is the window of the whole body.
- Our eye is the receptor of this light...if the eye is functioning well ...we receive it and we see...
- If the eye is bad...we cannot receive it...nor do we see...

The eye is an organ designed to catch light for the body to use. When the eye is sound and right and light is shining, the eye enables us to fully use the light—we can see where we are, how to walk, and how to do our work. But when something is wrong with our eyes, we can't use the light—even if the world is illuminated by the brightest light, if an

eye is damaged, it won't help. The whole body is then wrapped in darkness.

So what is Jesus saying...

1. your eye is your mind or heart or soul...the place of perception...the place of decision making
2. The lamp is your body...what you do...

The eye is regarded as the window by which the light gets into the whole body. . . . If the window is clear, clean, and undistorted, the light will come flooding into the room, and will illuminate every corner of it. . . .

So, then, says Jesus, the light which gets into any man's heart and soul and being depends on the spiritual state of the eye through which it has to pass, for the eye is the window of the whole body

Luke 11:36 Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you."

The world is still in great need of light... Light is a very common metaphor in the Bible, appearing in nearly 300 verses. Here, it almost certainly stands for people's opportunity to perceive the truth about Jesus.

The Gospel of Mark paints this picture for us

MK 4:21 He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand? 22 For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. 23 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." MK 4:24 "Consider carefully what you hear," he continued.

"With the measure you use, it will be measured to you--and even more. 25 Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him."

D) you give off Light to the world

It may well be said that this is the greatest compliment the Lord could pay anyone...for in it Jesus commands the Christian to be what he claimed himself to be...

MT 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

When Jesus stated that his followers were lights to the world he said they were to be like him to the world ... The eye is regarded as the window by which the light we are illuminated by reflects out into the world. . . .

If the window is clear, clean, and undistorted, the light will come flooding out and into the room, and will illuminate every corner of it. . . .

So Jesus is saying that we are light to this world we are meant to be visible...interesting because sometimes we try to be invisible...

We are meant to be seen...I think the reason often times we want to be invisible is because we do not measure up to what we think the light in us should...

But don't you see...that is part of what God wants the world to see...authentic light

when we try to act like were all together...it is a fake light...it's light by mirrors

MT 5: 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

There are a number of aspects to good deeds... one is being authentic....real light exposes reality

1. One of the good deeds is being a real in our world...
2. not perfect but growing...that is real
3. when wrong admitting it...real
4. not judging... but loving...real
5. Basically living life in the open... we are meant to be seen...but we are not different from others ...we have the light...it is Jesus

Secondly light is used to guide...light reveals and is not deceiving...light guides

1. Because there are thing in me it is better for you not to follow...I won't brag about my failings and neither will I act like I have none...
2. The world, our country, our cities, our neighbors live lives of insecurity and fear about the future.... We cannot conform or isolate from it...but as Jesus says we must be a light...

3. Can we truly say we love God, when so much of the World is in turmoil and need and not do anything about it?

After the emperor Constantine MADE Christianity the religion of the empire, there came to the throne another emperor named Julian who wished to turn the clock back and to bring back the old gods. His complaint as Isben put it...have you looked at these Christians closely? They brood their lives away, unspurred by ambition: the sun shines for them and they do not see it: the earth offers them it's fullness, but they desire it not: all their desire is to renounce and to suffer that they may come to die.

As Julian saw it, Christianity took the vividness the light out of life...

Oliver Wendell Holmes once said...I might have entered the ministry if certain clergymen I knew had not looked and acted so much like undertakers...

Now I hope you and I reflect that type of light....but there are those whose impression of Christianity is just that...and sadly there are many Christians who live that way....

You see...

- In a worried world the follower of Jesus should stand out as calm
- In a depressed world the follower of Jesus should be the light of hope
- In a fearful world the follower of Jesus should stand out as fearless
- In an unstable world the follower of Jesus should stand out as a model of stability and steadfastness in the midst of change

- In a selfish world the follower of Jesus should shine in their selflessness
- In a world filled with pain, follower of Jesus should stand out for their compassion a healing balm
- In a world filled with confusion, the follower of Jesus should stand out for their understanding...
- In a world filled with immorality and corruption... we should stand out as people of integrity and honesty
- In a world filled with hate...we should stand out for our love..

Wherever we are we the light of Jesus' love and compassion should be there... If we choose to not be what we are...a light to the world

- Than what good are we to the world?
- My dad used to say if your not part of the solution your part of the problem...
- Let us be people who are used by God to change that perception... as those perception and blind spots are changed in us ...we will be used of God to reflect him...in every place we find ourselves...

The achievement of walking as light is a lifetime undertaking and one that can never be wholly completed...light is it not dependent on how big the light is...for a little light will draw attention in a larger dark room.... As we learn we become brighter...we influence by example...

Light, illuminates darkness, directs and lights the way, brings clarity, use the example of a little light...candle...light dispels darkness wherever it is placed...

We do not have to be a huge beam give light...we just have to be light... And a light first causes a shrinking back when it is lit in a dark place...

Our tendency sometimes is to cover or blow ourselves out...so as not to offend, people please, fear of what they will think of us...

Or hide our light among other Christians who seem to have a brighter light

Or worse compare our selves with others light to see whose is brighter and bigger...or to gather together to see how big a light we all can make...

But the goal is to let God's light shine in the lamp of our lives and as we go reflect that light gently to others...we are to shine our light ...not blind others with our light...

1PE 3: 15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

We are not the source of the light...we are the candles...we hold the light... And remember Jesus is the sun...take any of our lights outside...in the sunlight no can't even see it....use what you have...learn and you will become brighter

The brightness of our light is not the key....any light we have comes from the lamp lighter...the brightest among us are candles compared to Christ he is the sun...

The truth is the more we let the light of Jesus illuminate the dark places in us...the more we will reflect that light to others...

That is our mission...

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091408 following Jesus is serious business....

It has been pointed out that we only divide over people and things we take seriously, issues that we care about -- and it is true. There is good reason they say do not bring up religion or politics at family gatherings... someone and sometimes everyone takes those issues real serious.... On the other hand If we don't take an issue or certain people seriously...we tend toward whatever attitude...

For instance, "There would be no debate over stem cell research, abortion, the environment, religion, being liberal or conservative, democrat or republican...if no one took it seriously. And there would be no division over Jesus if no one took Him seriously. Had not the crowds, the prostitutes, the sinners, the women, the demon-possessed, and the diseased taken Jesus seriously: there would have been no division with the religious leaders of the day. The high priest, Sanhedrin, and Romans would have ignored him."

Very simply, the study today is about taking Jesus seriously. And in that passage of scripture the Lord is acknowledging that any time and any place where people take the Jesus seriously, there probably will be division of one type or another.

Following Jesus can be weird...many people look at that as an affliction rather than an affiliation...a weakness or crutch rather than a strength or relationship.....but for those of us who love him it is more than an affiliation it is a lifestyle...and that can even freak people out more...

listen...A story told by Father Andrew Greeley, the best-selling novelist who also is a Roman Catholic priest writes: at the end of a summer vacation, a young man called his mother and father and brothers and sisters together after a day on the beach. There was something important he wanted to tell them.

He was going into his third year at Ohio State. His grades were wonderful, he was charming, and popular, and successful. Everyone expected he would do important things in life.

His father was a medical doctor and from the day this eldest son was born, he assumed that the boy would follow him into the profession. There had never been any discussion of the matter. No discussion was necessary. It was taken for granted.

So what was the important subject the young man wanted to talk about? Well, maybe you guessed it. He had the crazy idea he wanted to be a priest. In fact, he told his family he would be starting his studies at seminary in September! . .

There was a moment of dead silence. . . . Then the father said that no son of his was going to become a priest. He had no respect for priests. They were parasites. If his son wanted to be a priest, then he would no longer be his son. Then the father stormed out of the room and left everyone in silence. . . . "You have ruined our family," his mother told him. . . . **You would have thought this young man said he wanted to be a murderer..**

- I'm telling you, if you've got Jesus Christ in the core of your being, you're going to make other people a little uncomfortable. And that might even include members of your own family.
- It seems Jesus values obedience over prominence
- And It will also cause discomfort with in ourselves

Another story...There was a young man who came to see Jesus, This rich young man knew the religious law and observed it faithfully, **but he couldn't bring himself to take Jesus seriously when the Master told him to sell everything he owned and follow him.**

MK 10:17 As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him.

"Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

MK 10:18 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good--except God alone."¹⁹

You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.' "

MK 10:20 "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."

MK 10:21 Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

MK 10:22 At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

- He turned and walked away sadly. He made his choice. Interestingly Jesus did not chase him...to get him back
- In his heart of hearts he did believe Jesus was good until Jesus asked him to sell his possessions then give away the proceeds...that was definitely not good...even if it included a promise of far greater treasure to be received later...
- He did not at that time take Jesus seriously enough to obey his directions.. now....even if it included a far greater treasure later...
- Boy does that sound like us sometimes.... God is good until it requires a choice or we experience a circumstance...that we would consider not good...even if what Jesus promises that the exchange will be greatly profitable in the future.
- A leaving of something...power, position, prestige...or the loss of something or someone for the gaining of something better...always requires serious consideration...and a choice
- The bottom line is we each have a choice to make. We must decide for ourselves whether we will take the words of Jesus Christ seriously, and give our lives to him without reserve. He asks us for nothing less. . . .

Which takes us to chapter 12 of Luke today...

- Jesus spends much of the 12th chapter of Luke's Gospel reassuring and encouraging his disciples. In fact, in verse 4 of the 12th chapter of Luke, Jesus says; "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that can do nothing more," and then in verse 22,
- Jesus says; "Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life," and again in verse 32, Jesus says; "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." But we see that this same chapter ends on a seemingly far less positive note.

- Rather than continue to encourage and reassure his disciples, Jesus says that his ministry will cause division.
- After spending 45 verses trying to quiet the anxiety of his followers, as they are in the midst of a semi hostile throng...
- Jesus tells them that he came to bring fire to the earth...and this fire will separate people...

LK 12:49 "I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!"⁵⁰ But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!

- When Jesus said He came to bring fire on the earth, He was talking about bringing judgment--not the judgment of others but rather His own judgment.
- It is a judgment that the Messiah will bear for others, not one He will inflict on others. "I've come to start a fire on this earth -- how I wish it were blazing right now! I've come to change everything, turn everything right-side up -- how I long for it to be finished! Do you think I came to smooth things over and make everything nice? Not so. I've come to bring fire from heaven...
- **The fire will, create a burning enthusiasm among some and fierce antagonism among others, deplorable, but inevitable, and the sooner kindled, the better.**
- **The clashes that would be caused by the Gospel, some people rejecting, others accepting it and even its friends opposing one another in their interpretation of its meaning.**
- **Jesus, of course, does not mean to say that it is His wish that there should be dissension and strife. He is rather speaking of the actual results of His message and work.**
- **How he wishes it was already kindled...he was already at the cross...**

Luke 12:50 But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!

- Here we have a second metaphor. He is speaking of His baptism of blood, His crucifixion, and death. Look at Mark 10:38.

MK 10:38 "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"

- **This is one of the fairly numerous statements in which Jesus predicts His Passion. Whenever He thought of it, sorrow assailed Him. . . .**

- Verse 50 shows the anxiety of Jesus with which *He views His coming death. It is similar to John 12:27*

JN 12:27 "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.

- **He shudders but He does not shrink from it.**
- **That is significant for us...the cross must proceed the resurrection...**
- **The cross is the kindling for the fire...the resurrection and Pentecost are the flames igniting the world.....**

Luke 12:51 Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. ⁵¹

- He insists that he will not bring peace. Instead, his ministry will bring division among families and friends.
- For his followers they will change...and some people will not embrace the new you...
- **there are times when separation must take precedent over loyalty...**

The question here is what kind of peace is Jesus talking about...

John 14:27. He assures His own of peace, but not as the world gives peace.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

- In his spirit or the inner person... the believer is at peace with God But that will not make life a heaven on earth.
- And Peace" of the world means the kind of peace which humans desire, the total absence of trouble. Circumstance and relationship driven...
- For some reason followers of Jesus mistakenly look for a life of complete peace at home, at work, in the church, and elsewhere.
- this is false sort of peace which people long for.
- Sometimes we will have to choose between being a God pleaser or a man pleaser...or a self pleaser...
- Because some of God's demands do not please...even us
- nor are our chosen method for dealing with a particular situation or relationship ...so whose method do we go with....

His peace is the peace that will govern..but it is progressive...not an event...it is found internally...working it's way out externally...

ISA 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ISA 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

- The terms in red...are a progressive movement...his Kingdom come...the Jews believed the messiah would bring peace on earth...but he was bringing peace with God...first
- *Jesus has taken away the fatality of our existence and given our lives eternal value."*
- Our only protection midst all this sin and division in the world is the Word of Jesus

JN 16:33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

And this trouble will sometimes happen with those closest to us...sadly enough...the ones who ought to be for our new lives often give us the most trouble...

Luke 12:52 From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three.⁵³ They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

The picture is of a family of five: father, mother, daughter, son, and son's wife. The mother and the mother-in-law are the same person. The son's wife has come to live with the family.

- " He is not saying on which side the two or the three are. The emphasis is on the word "divided against."
- There is a difficulty that will arise when one chooses loyalty to Jesus... this hostility will be because they do not regard Jesus...who he is and what he represents... the same as you...
- Just expect it...so the man or woman worthy of following Jesus will consider this part of the cost...it divides because it is serious business...
- Jesus experienced it his followers will experience it...God is the one who deserves and demands our highest allegiance...

Note the parallel thoughts spoken by Jesus in Matthew 10:35-36.

MT 10:36 a man's enemies will be the members of his own household. ^{MT 10:37} "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸ and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

- The prohibition...do not love anyone more than me...this will bring problems in some of your relationships...they will want you to love them more...by demonstrating you love them more than God
- And you will also struggle with allegiance to yourself..or allegiance to God...
- But if your life is lost in God you will find it...

This persecution arises from a lack of knowing God...and especially his character...

John 15:20-21. ²⁰ Remember the **words** I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. ²¹ **They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me**

- They do not understand who he is nor where he is from...
- But the preaching of the **Word** causes divisions, not because of God or because of the Word, but because of unbelief...

The point is division. And division within the family... **You don't have to raise your hands, but I wonder -- have any of you ever experienced division within your own family because of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?**

Let me put it another way: Is there any one of you who hasn't experienced division within your family, because of the reality of the Resurrected Christ?

Any family that is divided by an issue will suffer the same sort of agony, and the agony is destructive unless it is caused by someone choosing a better way. The virtue of suffering is determined by the merits of the cause of the suffering.

I'm telling you, if you've got Jesus Christ in your heart (and in the core of your being), you're going to make other people a little uncomfortable. And that might even include members of your own family.

LK 2 ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

later on...when he was twelve...

*LK 2:49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my **Father's house?**" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them.*

still later...

*MK 3:20 Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. ²¹ When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is **out of his mind.**"*

A little while later they found him...

*MK 3:31 Then Jesus' **mother and brothers** arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your **mother and brothers** are outside looking for you."*

MK 3:33 "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. ^{MK 3:34} Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

And his brothers.....

JN 7:1 After this, Jesus went around in Galilee, purposely staying away from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take his life. ² But when the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near, ³ Jesus' brothers said to him, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. ⁴ No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." ⁵ For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

- His brothers were willing to place their brother in harm's way ...because they thought it might bring him publicity...they did not believe in him..but enjoyed the miracle magic show...
- And misunderstood his motives...they thought he wanted to be a popular public figure...

Some acknowledge the Gospel as true, others not. The Gospel is a "scandal," a foolish thing, to the unbeliever it was to Jesus brothers...it might be to ours....

The solution.... don't give up...James and Jude two of Jesus brothers eventually came around...as Paul reports staying true to that which is of first importance stay on fire.....and boy did they catch on fire..

*1CO 15:3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to **James**, then to all the apostles,*

*GAL 1:18 ¹⁹ I saw none of the other apostles--only **James**, the Lord's brother.*

JAS 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings. JAS 1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴ Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Jude came around...

JUDE 1:1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ: JUDE 1:2 Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

If we stay on fire ...we may yet win our loved ones and friends...the key is stay on fire...but even if it does not happen yet...sometimes we have to quit chasing those who do not want to get caught...and eventually they will stop running and unite with those heading on the same path...

listen to these words of encouragement...

LK 18:28 Peter said to him, "We have left all we had to follow you!"

LK 18:29 "I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God ³⁰ will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life

But here is the kicker...Have you seen the bumper sticker that reads: "I like Jesus. It's his followers that drive me nuts"? I'm going to get one of them but I am going to create another one to go right under that one. It would read: "And I'm one of them. Sorry." We will even have issues with those who love the lord...this is so we get the opportunity to practice the two great commandments love God and Love others ...

And remember...There is a peace promised beyond the challenge of following Jesus; a united family beyond any division that faith may have caused or bring. There is no conflict, no division in the kingdom of God. That was Jesus' ultimate prayer! It is our ultimate goal! It is where we are heading...keep your lamps lit...until we jettison this earth suit...and enter the divisionless kingdom of God...

end

If we stay on fire ...we may yet win our loved ones and friends...the key is stay on fire...but even if it does not happen yet....

Listen to Peter's statement to Jesus...

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So what's the point for those of us here today? What was Jesus getting at when he spoke these demanding words, while making his way to Jerusalem? And how is it relevant to you and me?

The bottom line is we each have a choice to make. We must decide for ourselves whether we will take the words of Jesus Christ seriously, and give our lives to him without reserve. He asks us for nothing less. . . .

Even the Gospel's friends oppose one another in their interpretation of its meaning.

How true! I am not always right and there are times when I dislike someone simply because he does not agree with me but later I see that he was right. I must beseech God's mercy and repent.

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There is a peace promised beyond the challenge of following a Crucified Savior; a united family beyond any division that faith may have caused or bring. There is no conflict, no division in the kingdom of God. That was Jesus' ultimate prayer! It is our ultimate goal!

We don't like that part of faith that tells us that growth happens in the trenches; we want to gain wisdom by osmosis, not because we have had to walk through a few dark and scary valleys.

end

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