

Contrasting worldviews exposed

WHAT JESUS WANTS YOU TO KNOW

The most important person you can build a relationship with is Jesus Christ, The offer of friendship with God is incredible – we deserved to die as God's enemies' and yet he longs to show us friendship.

But he is not an imaginary friend and you can't just pretend you know what he is saying.

AND our behaviour must change... the sins that made us enemies in the first place are still not acceptable.

His Love that saves us goes hand in hand with his Holiness that transforms us.

This passage from the Sermon on the Mount is reminder that we are not to take the friendship of God lightly. It is not just a buddy on Sunday kind of thing but a serious relationship that will last for eternity. One of the most dangerous things anyone can do is show no reverence for God. It is normal and healthy to be a little bit afraid of an all-powerful being who controls your destiny.

20 years ago there was a popular Christian Song called "my best friend's the creator of the universe" And heaps of people in the Youth group sang it loud and proud, but I remember getting so sick of hearing it that I asked one of them to tell me what the golden rule was - suddenly there was silence –they didn't know.

The problem is many people think that Jesus is their friend, because well-meaning Christians tell them that he is the friend of everyone. But very few people who think that Jesus is their friend devote their lives to what their friend has said. Many devote their lives to what they think Jesus said [but he may not have said it at all].

For example:

Jesus never said he was the friend of everyone, in fact as we will see today, he made it clear that there are some he is not friends with.

Do unto others...

Matthew 7:12 "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Not:

do unto others before they do unto you.

Here is the summary of the whole the Golden rule but then he warns them of the consequences Honouring God and his commands to love other people will result in God honouring you.

Matthew 22:37 Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' 40 The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

In short if you want to understand how to Love and serve God read the Scriptures.

The concept of taking guidance from the scripture is contrasted with taking guidance from any other source

You must let the Bible inform your worldview and establish your picture of God

From the Westminster shorter catechism

Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

Q. 3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

This is a repetitive idea:

Micah 6:8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

3:7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

I am not telling you anything that Jesus has not made very clear- You and I don't get to decide what is right or wrong, our eternal lives are not lived out in a democracy. God is our King, we trust the Lord and when our opinion [or someone else's] contradicts the word we simply must remember our place.

Never think you know better than God.

It doesn't matter what anyone else says [and yes you should even check up on what I am saying] you ground yourself in the word. If anyone has an opinion that is not based on truth that can be backed up in line with the overall message of the Bible- then it should never be in a sermon.

7:13 "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.

7:14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

The contrast between heaven and hell

Heaven is the hard road [sacrifice, service, and focused] some say narrow minded but it is about putting God and the desires he has for other people first.

Hell is the easy road [selfish, lazy and accommodating] some say broad minded but it is about putting self first or serving the selfish desires of others.

You must ask whose desires am I serving as you journey through life?

The road to hell is paved with good intentions – often the good you think you are doing is enabling a worse outcome in the end.

Example: Many people today think the church should change and essentially abandon the word of God, because this Generation doesn't find it appealing- but church you are not here to serve the whims and desires of this generation, we are here to serve God.

How foolish to think anyone would ever come to church when your very message is that you don't actually need to come. Only the most rebellious people would ever go.

The kindness is shown that we will bend over backwards to accommodate other peoples desires, but we cease to be distinctive in doing so.

We waste our efforts and Jesus tells us right here, by not being focused, we set people on the broad road to hell.

You know that I still meet some Christians who presumably have read the Sermon on the Mount and still somehow think that everyone is going to heaven-

I could be wrong in my interpretation of Jesus words, Jesus may not care whether we follow him or not and everyone may make it to heaven.

In which case obedience doesn't matter

And in which case I will apologise to anyone who has been offended by me when I see them in heaven

Here is the irony with universal salvation:

Even If I am wrong there is no consequence for me being wrong, therefore I am essentially right

But if I am not wrong and Jesus meant what he said about the straight and narrow way, then preaching that makes God out to be unconditionally accepting of all people is dangerous. In fact if I am correct; the consequence of bad preaching [as one of you reminded me earlier this week] will cause people to go hell.

Jesus clearly and repeatedly paints hell as a horrendous place of suffering after you die. When people talk about hell on earth what they mean is the consequence of sin in this life. Hell in Jesus teaching was the consequence of sin in the afterlife. Although It is fair to say that you either have hell or heaven in your heart.

7:15 *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.*

7:16 *You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles?*

7:17 *So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit.*

7:18 *A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.*

7:19 *Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*

7:20 *Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.*

The contrast here is between Good Fruit and Bad Fruit

We are told we will know false teachers by their fruit, but we are not told what their fruit is specifically.

As we have read the wolves behaviour is indistinguishable from the sheep. They behave well, therefore the fruits cannot represent their behaviour.

In the traditional interpretation of this passage the fruit appears [in this instance] to be referring to what they are saying-

Any student of the word should be able to detect false teaching even if the behaviour of the teacher is unquestionable. We always seem to think false teachers are the one who have affairs and get caught out in the end by their actions, but the fruits in this passage are not actions but doctrines.

Christ confirms his statement, that no man can be deceived by false prophets, unless he is wilfully blind: for the fruits as plainly discover upright servants of God, and unfaithful workmen, as the fruits point out the nature of the tree.

Calvin's commentaries

We are warned that appearances can be deceiving, just because someone appears kind and behaves nicely does not mean they are good. They may have ulterior motives.

Ravenous wolves are driven by their appetite [desires]. Gods people [the sheep] get bothered if they notice this.

The sheep that is calm in this situation is very often the wolf.

Sometimes a congregation may behave badly because a false teacher [who looks calm in the storm that they have created] has been introducing false doctrine. But as soldiers in the Lords army our first target is the Ideas that rise up against God. We often spend too much time treating the symptoms of the disease that we never deal with the cause.

Heresy and distorted picture of God are not to be tolerated.

It should be obvious to you by now that I think anyone who tells you “Everyone Goes to heaven” is a false prophet.

But there are many heresy's that affect the church today.

If there is time

Read from tozer:

"Heresy is not so much rejecting as selecting. The heretic simply selects the parts of the Scripture he wants to emphasize and lets the rest go. This is shown by the etymology of the word heresy and by the practice of the heretic."

-A. W. Tozer, *We Travel An Appointed Way*.

If you struggle with some passages in the Bible, then they are the ones you ought to focus on. Do not ignore them.

I submit to you this text as evidence of the fact that there are some people who are completely wrong in what they believe and if you agree with them you are completely wrong as well.

These people may be very sincere, but they are sincerely wrong.

They are forcing what they want to be true onto the bible and they cannot cope with a God who is big enough to be both Holy and Loving.

Because they hate the idea of making anyone feel guilty they avoid talking about the need to repent of our sin. They accommodate this error by over emphasising love and excluding holiness in their teaching. This, in turn, diminishes the quality of the love of God that they are talking about. What we are left with is either humanism or a sentimental type of Love, which is underwhelming in comparison with the sacrificial Love of a Holy God that was displayed on the cross.

False prophets lack the faith to believe that it is ok, when people are confronted with the Holiness of God, to feel guilt or shame. It is only in the context of this Guilt that the demonstration of the Love of God on the cross makes sense.

If I ever met a False prophet [someone who didn't like what Jesus actually said] I would say this to him:

Excuse me sir, if you disagree with what I am saying that is fine, but please confront me. Don't just pretend we can agree to disagree. That kind of pc postmodern crap is what causes churches to fall apart.

If you claim to be a follower of Jesus I need to know how you justify ignoring his words.

Because as a leader in this church I am fighting to get people into serious relationships with the guy who spoke these words. If you disagree with them then I need to advise you to stop letting yourself be influenced by poorly thought out junk theology.

I would also ask the false prophet:

What is your motive for disagreeing with Jesus?

Is it that you think you understand the love God better than him?

Or are you trying to make God more accessible to other people by pretending he is different than he is?

If you read the Bible you will see False prophets always said what people wanted to hear
Real prophets spoke harsh truth that few people liked.

2Timothy_4:3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,

7:21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

7:22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?'

7:23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

The contrast between thinking you are serving Jesus and knowing Jesus

What a Friend we have in Jesus,

All our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry

Ev'rything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Ev'rything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged:
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness—
Take it to the Lord in prayer!

Are we weak and heavy laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Saviour, still our Refuge—
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In his arms he'll take and shield thee,
Thou wilt find a solace there.

The lord knows everyone and every thing so he does not mean I don't know who you are. This knowledge is intimate loving knowledge. In short God is saying to these people "you are not part of my family"

You may have done some things in my name but you did not:

Come to me in prayer
For solace
For refuge
In times of trial
In your weakness
And to deliver you from your sin
You are a liar when you sing "What a friend we have in Jesus" and you have no place in the family of God.

John 12:26 *If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honour him.*

If you love me, keep my commandments.
John 14:15

Just because you go to church and say the word and sing the songs doesn't mean you are a Christian.
Just because you sit in the garage doesn't mean you are a car.

Matthew 7:24 *"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.*

7:25 *And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.*

7:26 *And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.*

7:27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

The contrast of hearing the Word and obedience and hearing the word and ignoring or down playing

The house on the sand was the great work done in the name of the Lord, but was never commissioned by the Lord

It was a church where the word was not attended too or given priority

The house on the Rock was a church founded on the teachings of Jesus and of Moses and the prophets and the Apostles. These words matter.

So I end by asking you; do you think you know the Jesus of the Bible or do you actually know him?

How is your relationship going?

How is your relationship with Jesus being informed?

Is it based on the sand of this foolish generation or is it based on the eternal truths of the word?

You need to pray and read your bible [every day if possible] or you will not be able to build anything in your life on any foundation other than a made up one

Most of us are guided by our hearts – and humanly speaking that makes us compassionate.

But you cannot trust your own heart, and you must not build your faith upon it.

Build your faith on the heart of God and he will transform your heart.

Let's pray:

Help us to keep the golden rule –putting the needs of others before our own

Help us to be grounded in the word

Use us to lead others on this narrow path to faith

Protect us from false doctrines and false teachers

May our lives bear Good fruit for you

Help us to build our relationship with you and not some false version of you we have been exposed to

Thank you for your promise of friendship to believers

Forgive us and correct us when we get this wrong

Make our foundation sure

Help our faith withstand the storms of this life and prepare us for the floods ahead

Amen

<http://www.thetruthproject.org/about/culturefocus/Dr-Ravi-Zacharias-on-Relativism.aspx>