

THE REST OF THE STORY

(Going Deeper into The Word for Application of Sunday Sermons)

Luke 13:22-35

Sometimes the Truth Hurts

Nobody likes to hear bad news. The mechanic tells you that the noise you hear under the hood of your car is going to cost hundreds of dollars to fix, or the tax man informs you that you are not getting a refund but instead owe the IRS (plus interest), or your doctor tells you the pain in your side requires surgery. You hate to hear tough truth but in order to fix the problem truth is needed, not sugar-coated, false positive talk that sounds good but masks the problem allowing it to just get worse and worse.

Near the end of Jesus' earthly ministry His popularity declined in proportion to fewer miracles performed, greater hostility of those who hated Him, and teaching by Him that was straight forward truth about life, death, eternity, and the narrow requirements for salvation and entry into heaven. Nevertheless, the Son of God was obliged to tell people the truth so they could truly repent, believe and commit themselves to Him. He would not be doing anyone a favor by telling them flowery, evasive things that might make them feel better but in fact give them a false hope about eternity.

The same thing happened with the Apostle Paul near the end of his missionary travels prior to his execution (*2 Timothy*). The same thing is happening again near the end of the Church Age as people (*even some professing Christians*) turn away from Scriptural truth about commitment, sacrificial service, and suffering for Christ in the last days (*1 Tim. 4:1-2, 2 Tim. 4: 1-5, 1 John 2:19-20, 2 Thess. 2:3, etc.*). As Christ's return for us at the rapture draws nearer and times get harder for dedicated Christians, there is a popular movement in Christianity that the Christian life is more about fun, entertainment, recreation, celebrations, and self-love instead of an urgency to get the truth of salvation to others whether its popular to do so or not.

Like surgery, the doctor will have to hurt you in order to save your life. As with the tax man - his truth that you owe more is disappointing, but it will keep you out of prison. And similar to the mechanic whose estimate of repairs to your car may alarm you, but protect you from a breakdown or a new car loan. The straight truth is better, in the end, than nice words that only disguise the facts.

In **Luke 13 through 18**, Jesus' straight talk in teaching and parables wasn't always heartwarming but it was truth about life and eternity that needed fixing as soon as possible in this life, to avoid consequences both here and now, and forever. We must '*speak the truth in love*' (*Ephesians 4:15*), because to not speak the truth really isn't love; but just the opposite (*apathy or neglect*). God's biblical truth is entrusted to every true believer to lovingly share with others, not to keep it to ourselves. If we don't, there will be consequences from the Lord for us plus the sad fate of those we just let slip into eternity (*Ezekiel 3:16-21*). The truth may hurt at the moment but in the end, it's the right thing to do and brings God's blessing "*...for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth, finding out what is acceptable to the Lord*" (*Ephesians 5:8-9*). PtL

Tough Love

(Straight Talk from The Word of God)

Luke 13:22-35

Synopsis: In the last few months of Jesus' public ministry, He and His disciples followed-up the converts of the '*The King is Coming Crusade*' of the 70 in Judea a few weeks before (*Luke 13:22, 10:1-17*). Presentation of the good news and discipleship of the saved became '**The Great Commission**' (*Matthew 28:18-20*).

- Discuss the importance of *follow-up* that includes discipleship, baptism, and Bible teaching for all new Christians.
- Why do you think the recent Guam crusade follow-up did not include reviewing the prayer of those who came forward to be sure they understood what they were doing, the need to be discipled, baptized, and getting into a particular church where teaching of the Scriptures is the primary function of that church fellowship?
- Did you receive good biblical follow-up (*Acts 2:40-47*)? If you did or if you didn't, how did it influence your spiritual growth (*or lack thereof*)? How can CBF do better in following up those who are new believers or whose growth has been delayed through poor follow-up?

Only A Few Will Be Saved

(The narrow gate of grace)

Jesus' popularity was declining in the days before the cross – He performed fewer miracles but taught more; the crowd size decreased and many defected from following Him (**John 6:66**) and His enemies became more hateful and public about getting rid of Him. This decline led some to wonder like the person in **Luke 13:23**, “**Lord, are there few who are saved?**” Jesus had already given the answer to this question a couple of years before up north during the Great Galilean Ministry (*see Matthew 7:13-14 & 7:21-23*). According to Scripture a relatively small number of people who ever lived will be saved and go to heaven (*the elect or remnant / Colossians 3:12, 2 Timothy 2:10, 1 Peter 1:2*). The doctrine of the *chosen few* (**Ephesians 1:3-4**) is unpopular today in a world that imagines that nearly everybody who dies goes to heaven. It makes people feel better about friends and loved ones who never really came to Christ or even showed much interest in spiritual things, but it has NO basis in Scripture.

- In these last days, discuss how is it becoming obvious that although many claim to be headed for heaven, relatively *few* actually show a transformed life characteristic of a true saved soul. Talk about how these *few* that are truly saved affect your world view and lifestyle philosophy.

Lost Souls Will Be Shocked

(The roadblock of iniquity)

In **Luke 13:24-3**, Jesus previews the future of those talking to Him that day who wanted to be saved but weren't going to be unless they repented and believed. He foresees them claiming to deserve salvation because they knew about Jesus and had heard His teaching, protesting their rejection on judgment day. Previously in Galilee, Jesus said a similar thing about many people who had a superficial knowledge of Jesus but lacked a true personal relationship by faith to Him (**Matthew 7:21-23**). In both teachings, the reason the religious person is lost and not saved is their unwillingness to repent of their *lawlessness* and *iniquity*. The *few* are willing to stop their *lawlessness* and *iniquity*, while the *many* lost want only an acquaintance relationship with Jesus instead of a commitment relationship to Him as Lord.

- Talk about people (*unnamed*) who know about Jesus and even do religion in His Name, but don't submit to Him and His Word. Did you used to be like the *many* before truly surrendering to Jesus as Lord? How do these warning verses of Jesus affect you and your understanding of God and His ways.

Disciples Must Be Courageous

(The security of serving)

- Discuss Jesus' casual, confident response to His enemies' threats (**Luke 13:31-33**). Talk about your and all other believers' invincibility as long as God has a purpose and mission for their life.

True Love Rejected Hurts

(The consequences of rejection)

In **Luke 13:34-35**, Jesus sadly discontinues trying to reach *Jerusalem* (representative of Israel in general) until the end of the age when He comes again (**Romans 11:25-27**). It was hard because He loved them so much, but they (in general) didn't love Him back.

- Talk about how hard it is for Christians to *stand down* in aggressively witnessing to family and friends they truly love but don't want to hear about Jesus, the Bible, salvation, etc.
- How can you tell when it is time to *back off* and wait until they show some genuine interest in spiritual things? Do you need to do this with someone in your life?
- How might *backing off* be something God can positively use in creating spiritual interest in a *hard to reach* person?