

Insulted by God?

Luke 11:45-54; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 2-18-18

⁴⁵ *One of the lawyers *said to Him in reply, “Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too.”*

⁴⁶ *But He said, “Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers. ⁴⁷ Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them. ⁴⁸ So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs. ⁴⁹ For this reason also the wisdom of God said, ‘I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, ⁵⁰ so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, ⁵¹ from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.’ ⁵² Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering.” ⁵³ When He left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects, ⁵⁴ plotting against Him to catch Him in something He might say. – Luke 11:45-54*

The ‘What?’ (Explanation)

A lawyer challenges Jesus’ criticism of the Pharisees. (45) ‘Lawyers’ in 1st Century Israel were experts in the Law of the Old Testament. Their job was to interpret and apply the Law for others to obey, like the Pharisees. In fact, many of the Pharisees were also lawyers or scribes. This lawyer felt ‘insulted’ (a strong word for mistreatment that is not justified). There is no doubt that the Lord Jesus was calling into question their character and conduct, but that does not mean it was not justified! Jesus has just charged the Pharisees with being like dishes that are clean on the outside but filthy on the inside (39), being like those who strain out gnats and swallow camels (42; see Matthew 23:24), being people-pleasers who love the applause of men, and being like unmarked graves that unwittingly make people ceremonially unclean. The lawyer essentially replies, ‘That’s a terrible insult for our buddies the Pharisees and it sounds like you might be talking about us too!’ Jesus essentially replies, ‘Yes, you’re right. I am talking about you. And another thing ...!’

Woe 1: Jesus says they are burden-makers not burden-bearers. (46) (see Matthew 23:1-4) The Lord Jesus charges the lawyers with ‘loading the ship’ with burdens that no one can carry and then either (1) doing nothing to help people or lighten their load and/or (2) avoiding doing what they teach by crafty loopholes in their legal tradition and interpretation of the Law (which only they knew about). They won’t even lift one finger to help or to obey!

Woe 2: Jesus says they are just like their fathers and will be judged for the murder of the prophets throughout history. (47-51) (see Matthew 23:29-39) The lawyers would argue that they decorated and maintained the graves of the prophets because they loved the prophets and would never have killed them like those before them did. The Lord Jesus says that they really give attention to the graves of the prophets because they are simply completing the work begun by their fathers! They build the tombs of the prophets because they are murderers just like their fathers and agree with what their fathers did! How could this be? The fact that they were

rejecting and would ultimately put to death the One the former prophets prophesied about is evidence that they are no different than their fathers and deserve to be punished as if they had killed all the other prophets as well! What Jesus is talking about here was fulfilled in AD 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army.

Woe 3: Jesus says the leaders are misleading. (52) (see Matthew 23:13-22) The key of knowledge is the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:14-17). The Lord Jesus is saying that the very people who were supposed to help people rightly understand and apply the Law of God in the Old Testament were obscuring the true meaning of the Law and misleading the people in how to apply it to their lives. As a result, they were not entering the Kingdom of God and they were keeping others from the saving knowledge of the truth that they need to enter as well.

The scribes/lawyers and Pharisees become more hostile not less. (53-54) Instead of seeing their sin and humbling confessing and repenting and asking for mercy, the religious elite become enraged and go on the attack as if they are ‘hunters lying in wait in order to trap a dangerous animal.’ They surround Jesus and besiege Him with questions in order to try to get some statement that they can use to ‘hang Him’!

The ‘So What?’ (Application)

- 1. Be prepared to be insulted when you encounter the Word of God: it’s a cure for the sick, not good advice for the healthy.** We are more like our ‘fathers’ (those who have gone before us) than we want to admit. – Exodus 20:4-5
- 2. Don’t add to the Bible: it’s just what we need, no more and no less!** The Bible is all we need for life and godliness. Yet we like to add to it and subtract from it for our own advantage. Our expectations for others is high but creatively low for ourselves. – Matthew 15:1-9
- 3. Don’t try to avoid what the Bible tells you to do or only appear to be doing it: hope in God for the help you need.** Instead of looking for ‘loopholes’ in God’s Law, we need to look for a Savior who can deliver us from the penalty and power of sin! – Matthew 23:25-28
- 4. Don’t think you are better than others: rest in Jesus and His righteousness alone!** Our knee-jerk reaction is to distance ourselves from other sinners. We are ‘outraged’ at others until we hear the verdict: ‘You are the man!’ - 2 Samuel 12:1-7; Matthew 7:1-5
- 5. Pray to be hostile to sin and not hostile to God: hope in God for the happiness your heart longs for.** Reading the Word and listening to the Word preached/taught will either make us hostile to sin or hostile to God. We should pray for a tender rather than a hardened heart! (Isaiah 6:1-13; 55:11)

- Are you resting in Jesus?
- Are you hoping in God?
- Are you pursuing love?