

Series: Luke
Text: Luke 7:29-35
October 11, 2015: Gospel Community Study Guide

This Study Guide is based on a sermon by Dr. Joshua Mack. You will find the link to the sermon here.

<http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?sid=101215517302>

Getting Started:

Have you ever shared the gospel with someone only to have them understand what you are saying, but reject it?

Perhaps someone might tell a story about a time when that happened to them.

The Big Idea:

If you have ever had someone reject the gospel after you presented it to them, you are not the first! Many people rejected both John the Baptist and Jesus as well. While the Bible stresses the importance of faith, it also recognizes the dangerous reality of unbelief. During our time together, we want to think a little more carefully about what is happening when people reject Jesus and why it is such a serious problem. We are going to begin by looking at an example of people who rejected the gospel.

Into the Bible: 7:29-35

Read Luke

Before we look at exactly what is being said in this passage, let's take a moment and make sure we see the context.

If we go all the way back up to verses 1-10 of chapter 7. This story is about a centurion, his sick servant and Jesus. What did the centurion do that amazed Jesus?

Now, let's look at the story that follows this one. You can see the heading is, "A Sinful Woman Forgiven." Does anybody know what this story is about? Look specifically at verse 50. What does Jesus say to the woman?

What do both of those stories have in common then? If you need help, finish this sentence: These stories emphasize the importance of _____.

In the middle of these two stories that emphasize the importance of _____, we read a story that begins with John the Baptist. In verses 18-23, what is happening with John the Baptist and why?

After John's messengers go away, Jesus turns to speak to the crowd about John. Why do you think he might have done that? What does he emphasize about John?

This crowd Jesus was speaking to then was very privileged. They had listened to a prophet. They had the very messenger whom the Old Testament had prophesied about come to them and point out Jesus as the Messiah. And yet, as we look at verses 29 and 30, there were two very different responses to the message of John the Baptist. What were those two different responses?

Unfortunately, the second response became the more common response. Most of the people ended up rejecting John the Baptist and Jesus.

Now, let's think about that rejection was so surprising. What are some reasons out of all the people in the world, these individuals should have responded with great excitement to both John and Jesus?

Sometimes we think of unbelief as merely a matter of not having enough information. But these Pharisees and lawyers indicate something more might be going on. They had plenty of information.

What could be going on then? Why do people reject the gospel? Turn to Romans 1:18-23. Read this passage out loud. What does this passage give as the reason people reject the truth?

On Sunday, we began thinking about why that rejection of the gospel is such a serious problem. Luke describes the Pharisees as rejecting the purpose of God for themselves. Rejecting the message of the gospel equals rejecting the purpose of God for oneself.

Let's take a moment and think about that. What other sins were the Pharisees committing in refusing to submit to the gospel?

How were they demonstrating pride?

In what ways were they showing disrespect to God?

How was their refusal to listen to God's messenger a sign of ingratitude towards God?

How did their unbelief lead to disobedience?

Some people minimize the sin of unbelief. But how do people normally respond to someone who acts like they are superior to them? How do people normally respond when someone shows disrespect? How do people normally respond when people are ungrateful? How do people normally respond when people rebel against authority?

Obviously, people get upset. Most people wouldn't tolerate this kind of behavior towards themselves, and yet their unbelief, leads them to treat God in just this way. In other words, unbelief really is a very big and dangerous sin.

Jesus shows what an ugly kind of sin the unbelief of those who rejected the gospel really was in verses 31-35.

Who does he compare these unbelievers to?

Can someone explain what is happening in this illustration? Why might we call these children spoiled brats?

After giving us this illustration, Jesus explains what he means by it by applying it specifically to the way they responded to John and himself. What excuse would they have given for rejecting John and Jesus? How does Jesus show those statements were just an excuse? What can we learn from this about what's really happening in an unbeliever's heart?

It might be tempting to think this was just true of the Pharisees and lawyers, but turn to Colossians 1:21. What does this tell us about what we were like before we were saved? What do the words used to describe our minds mean? Now, if you have time, look at Ephesians 4:17,18. How does this passage describe the way Gentiles walk? (Gentiles are a description of unbelievers here. So what is true of unbelievers before they are saved?)

Bringing it Home:

I hope all of this wasn't too discouraging. It's just important we have a realistic view of what it means to be an unbeliever. Unbelievers aren't neutral towards the truth, they are hostile to it.

What hope is there then as we go out to share the gospel?

Obviously there are people who hear the gospel and believe in Jesus. Not everyone responded like the Pharisees and the lawyers did. For example, Peter responded in faith. How was Peter able to see Jesus for who He really was when the Pharisees weren't? Look at Matthew 16:16,17. What reason does Jesus give?

Sometimes when people share the gospel and others reject it as foolish, they are tempted to compromise the gospel message. How does what we learned today show that is incredibly foolish?

Instead of compromising the gospel message in the face of people's rejection, we should continue to proclaim it because God uses the gospel to reveal Jesus to those who are His children.

Who are you tempted to not share the gospel with because you are afraid of their reaction? In what ways can you take steps this week to move towards telling them about Jesus?

Summing Up:

What are some of the main encouragements or challenges you have taken from what we have studied together today? Is there any specific word of praise you would like to give to God for what you have learned about Jesus today? How about questions? Do you have any thing you are still wondering from what we have talked about? What are some of the practical differences what you studied makes on your life? What would you like to share with someone else? Is there any specific issue that this study has brought up that you want the members of your gospel community to be praying for you about?