

Innocence vs Evil

Welcome

If you are new (Welcome, Would love to get to know you, we are not a church that you slip in and out of unnoticed...), Today we are doing communion (watching online) Annie Armstrong, American Gospel.

Introduction

If you have your Bible, and I hope you do... (We like to go through books of the Bible vs by verse) 1/3 of the way through our roughly year and a half journey through the book of Luke) This account appears as well in Matthew 17 and Mark 9 so if you find my message boring this morning, feel free to explore those other passages as well. I genuinely believe that if my message, whether good or bad, drives you deeper into God's word, that's a win. Praise God.

As you turn to Luke 9, I want to show you [a famous painting by Raphael](#).

A 16th century master painter. This was his **final piece of art before his death** and it is taken from Luke 9. He was inspired by the section of Scripture that we find ourselves in today, and *he was struck, rightly so, by the distinction between Jesus in glory, and a young boy in misery.*

Here is what was going on. Jesus had just revealed himself to be God. Not only by saying it, but by showing it. Transfiguration - Glory revealed, Moses, Elijah, Cloud, God Speaks. "Listen to Him"

Luke 9:37-45

On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. 38 And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. 39 And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him. 40 And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." 41 Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." 42 While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. 43 And all were astonished at the majesty of God.

But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, 44 "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." 45 But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

Context

This is not the first time Jesus had cast out a demon from a person. Not even close. He had cast out hundreds if not thousands of demons so far in His ministry. He had even taught his disciples how to do it. He had equipped them with the tools to do so. What is striking about this narrative is not the demon getting cast out, but the lack of faith by which the crowd, the father of the child, and even the disciples themselves were operating in.

3 Points this morning 1. Children are a blessing. 2. Unbelief is sin. 3. There is nobody like Jesus

Children Are a Blessing (37-40)

1. Explain

- a. In that day, children were highly treasured, greatly valued among the people of God. The secular culture, in general, would oftentimes throw children away and discard them, and these children would be used for prostitution, and gladiatorial games, and the like. But the people of God read the Bible's words that children are a blessing. So, God's people aspired to be married, and have children. The more the better. Large families were not uncommon in that age with +10 children being normal. And being unable to have children was seen as shameful.
 - i. That's why earlier in Luke's gospel when **Elizabeth**, an older woman, was unable to have children, and then **God enabled her to give birth to John the Baptist, she said that, "The Lord has lifted my shame,"** taking her disgrace. She felt blessed by God.
- b. Contrast that to today, Children are not generally seen as a blessing. In fact, people routinely sacrifice their children on the altar of convenience. Children would prevent them from a career, a future, a happy life. The most dangerous place in America is in a mother's womb. in 2017 there were a total of "5,738 homicides in the nation's 50 biggest cities." That's tragic, but let's talk about the deliberate taking of 862,320 lives in the USA that same year.
- c. Unlike today, In the first century, the majority of people lived in small towns. The more children you had, the better, because it was more hands to help the family earn a living. It's exactly the opposite of today. The closer you get to a city, less people get married, less people have children, and children are very expensive. They're not a financial contribution to the family.
- d. I know this. I have three children, they contribute zero to the family income. I love them. They are absolutely worth it all, but they're not a huge financial support system. But in that day, the more helpers, the more income.
- e. But here was one of the challenges... The infant mortality rate was very, very high. **Only about half of children lived to see their fifth birthday. They oftentimes wouldn't even name a child till the child was a week old because so many children died during the first week, they didn't want to suffer even more grief with an intense emotional attachment like a name. Less than 40 percent of people who were born would actually live to see age twenty. So if you can imagine this, if you wanted to have two adult children, you would need to birth five and bury three.** And so it was a very difficult day in which to have children.
 - i. Legacy - Jackson, Michelson
 - ii. Family ensured you were taken care of when you got older

1. There weren't such things as hospice or nursing homes. Instead, you had a son, and when your son was little, you'd look after him, and change his diaper. And when you were old, he would return the favor, and that's how it worked.
 - f. Vs 38 - "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my ONLY CHILD" Everything is riding on this boy. This child is all he has.
 - g. A few other details are given in Mark 9 and Matthew 17. It says that sometimes this unclean, unholy, unhelpful spirit, this demon, would take the boy, and throw his body into the fire. It says as well that sometimes it would throw him into water. Now, if you're a parent, imagine this, imagine a boy who has the equivalent of epileptic seizures, who is overtaken by a demon, whose body is ravaged and wracked. This is a little boy covered in burn marks, and scars, and scabs. You have no idea when this demon might attack and harm him. And occasionally if he's rendered mute, that means he won't scream or cry for help if he's burning or drowning. Parents, this is our worst nightmare.
 - h. But despite the hopelessness, and helplessness, This boy finds his way to Jesus Christ and his set free. So must we! No matter how dark your life seems, there is hope in Christ.
2. Apply
 - a. sometimes when we see children stricken by an illness or an issue we begin to ask the wrong questions.
 - b. Many of my pastoral counseling appointments in recent months have been, Christians who are suffering asking, "Why does God do this?" My answer is, "God's not evil, Satan is." God is good. If something evil is happening, that's not God. Now, God in his sovereignty can use everything for his good. He used something as horrible as the betrayal and murder of Jesus to atone for the sin of the world. So God is sovereign, and God does work out everything for good, but that doesn't mean that everything that happens is exactly what God wants because there's sin, folly, rebellion. God's not in heaven, for example, saying, "I want her raped, him beaten, and that kid demonically tormented." That's not our God. Our God is grieved at sin. He is angered by sin. He comes to take away sin, to crush Satan who instigates sin, and who brings suffering.
 3. Here in the church, let's see children as a blessing not a nuisance. If we have kids distracting people in service, praise God! It is evidence of the next Generation of God's Church! I pray that there are so many children here that we are tripping over them after service! The Elders and I have been praying that we would fill up our children's church so much that we wouldn't have the volunteers to take care of them all. This prayer has been answered. Now we are praying for more volunteers. So if you want to be an answer to prayer, please let me know after service! Children are a blessing.

Unbelief is Sin (vs 41)

1. Explain

- a. Jesus is annoyed. Here's what he says, "How long am I to be with you and bear with you?" Most of the translations say, "How long do I have to put up with you?" And Jesus says this in front of a large crowd. This is a bummer day to be a disciple, right? You are now an illustration for a negative point, right? **Some of you are like, "I don't want to talk about my sin or my unbelief. It's a private matter. We're not gonna talk about it in small groups. We're not gonna talk about it with my friends."**
 - b. Jesus just calls them out in front of everybody, "Faithless and twisted generation, how long do I have to put up with you disciples?" Now, what this tells me, there's a holy way to be annoyed, and an unholy way to be annoyed
 - i. Most of the time that I get annoyed, it's really not for a holy righteous reason like Jesus. **Jesus is annoyed because a boy has been suffering and his followers do not have the faith to cast out the demon.** They had not prayed to the Lord! That's a good reason to be annoyed. **Selfless**
 - ii. My reasons for being annoyed are far more carnal. They didn't put enough chicken in my burrito at qdoba, the driver in front of me is going a mile below the speed limit. The kids didn't behave in a way that was convenient for me. My pants are fitting anymore. **Selfish**
 - c. For those of you who are like me, this is not a verse for us to say, "Jesus was annoyed. I'm annoyed. I'm like Jesus." That's not the point. **Ultimately unbelief is the issue here. Jesus is annoyed that people do not have faith in God.**
2. Prove
 - a. We see this exemplified in the parallel account in Mark 9:22b-24 if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." 23 And Jesus said to him, " 'If you can!' All things are possible for one who believes." 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"
 3. Apply
 - a. When Christ utters harsh words to His people, He never means to destroy but to call our attention to our sin that we may repent and be restored. Thus, **whenever we find Jesus rebuking others in the Gospels, we should see how those words apply to us.** Then, let us turn to Him in repentance, confident that He will forgive us and strengthen our faith
 - b. Let me ask you a hard question: how annoyed is Jesus with you? Because see, what annoys Jesus in the context of this story is they don't trust him. They're not praying. How annoyed is Jesus with you? You don't trust him, and you don't talk to him. And what parts of your life are just kind of on autopilot? "I don't need to pray. I don't need to start my day in prayer for my commute, or my job, or my relationships. I've got all that figured out."
 - c. What happens is sometimes we don't even talk to Jesus until we've made a mess of everything, and that's exactly what happens here. This boy is suffering. Everything is a mess. "Oh, I guess now's the time to talk to Jesus." And Jesus is saying, "You know, we call it prayer, you should have talked to me before you

made a mess of it.” And see, that is the way that we, as disciples, oftentimes work. We just live our life. It falls apart. We wonder if God is good, and then we talk to him as a last resort. God is good, and we should talk to him as a first priority.

- d. **Help my unbelief** - this man is right to call out to Jesus, “help my unbelief” And we should do the same. **Faith is a gift of God**, This is why we pray for God to move in the hearts of people who don't know Him! We pray because we believe that God can help their unbelief! This is evidenced in Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
 - i. Have faith in Jesus, Believe in Him, He is the only one who can deliver you from sin and death. There is nobody like Him. And that brings me to my third point...

There is Nobody Like Jesus (42-45)

1. Far too often we place our hope in things that can't deliver. **Ira, 401k, Insurance companies, crash test ratings, Political leaders, wealth, education, physical health.** None of those things could solve this problem. There were Jewish exorcists in that Day. We read about them in the book of Acts. They apparently had no luck with this boy. The father of the child couldn't fix the problem, the disciples even failed. The demon is victorious! Oh, wait, here's Jesus. Easy. Done. No talking television. No freaky priest. no holy water. no bizarre cross. no voodoo, Jesus just says, “Demon, go.” And he is gone. That is true authority.
2. And as the crowd is mesmerized, they've never seen this kind of authority. Jesus is in a category unto himself. He tells the disciples, and those who are present, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.” What he's saying is, “I'm gonna be arrested. I'm gonna suffer. I'm gonna be crucified. I'm gonna die.”
3. Two weeks from now, the tone of Jesus' entire ministry will shift. Luke 9:51 - Jesus will set His face toward Jerusalem, and He will begin to walk toward His death.
4. He begins his journey toward the big city of Jerusalem, toward the temple, and the priest, and the sacrificial system, and the atonement for sin, and he is going there to fulfill all prophecy, and to die, and to shed his own blood. As our temple, the presence of God; as our priest, our mediator between us and God; as our sacrifice, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.
5. We are right on the brink of his beginning journey toward Jerusalem. And he reveals to them who he is because they're wondering, “Who is this Jesus?” And he says, “I'm the Son of Man, and it won't be long before I suffer.” **What he's saying is that he is a greater Son than this son, and he will endure a greater suffering than this son endured. That yes, a great battle had been won in that moment for the life of this boy, but a great war was still looming. One that would determine the ultimate fate of mankind.**
6. And here's the way it works, because we are sinners by nature and choice, we have aligned ourselves with Satan in rebellion against God, and Satan has claim to us

because of sin. And Jesus, our great God and Savior, he comes to live without sin, to die as a substitute in our place for our sins, to break the bondage that binds us to our enemy.

- a. When Jesus was born, it was prophesied that He would set the captives free. We are the captives. Bound to sin, Satan, and rebellion. He dies in our place while we were still his enemies. To free us from the enemy and give us hope.
 - b. The only one who could do it is Jesus Christ. There is nobody like Jesus. He is the only one who is worthy of placing our hope in.
7. Through his death our sins are forgiven, through his resurrection our hope is alive, through his life in us and through us we have victory over sin and Satan.
 8. **Will you follow Jesus? Do you realize the lengths that Jesus has gone, to redeem you? At the foot of that mountain, Jesus set this boy free from grasp of the enemy, gave him hope and a future. And on the cross, Jesus did the exact same thing for you and I. Let's pray.**

Lord's Supper

Here at Celebration Church we practice an open table for The Lord's supper. What that means.

- Christian - feel free to join us even if this is not your home church
- For the non-Christian... this is not for you. We ask that you let the plate pass you by, and urge you to take Christ instead.

This morning as we come to the table, we look back to the cross. the place where our Savior's body was broken for our sins.

Dave Bowman - Prayer for the bread

Take a few moments now in prayer remembering the cross and what was done for you there

the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me. TAKE AND EAT

Just as we looked back with the bread, we look forward with the cup, longing for the day when Jesus comes again. Christ said, "I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." we look forward to that day.

Larry Walker - prayer for the cup

Pass out the cup Take a few moments now in prayer looking forward to the day when we can share in the cup with our lord.

In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. TAKE AND DRINK

Pray



LUKE 9:37-45 Innocence vs Evil

INTRODUCTION Returning from the mountain where the disciples witness the transfiguration, they are confronted with the continued needs of people suffering from the effects of sin in a broken world. Jesus foretells his death, a stark and grim contrast to their recent, heartening experience of witnessing God the Father affirm Jesus on the mountain.

DISCUSSION

- What can we learn from Mark 9:23-24 when the father of the boy asks Jesus to help His unbelief?

EXPLANATION

- Why is Jesus frustrated with His disciples?
- Why is this moment so significant compared to the transfiguration that had just occurred?
- What were the people marveling at?
- Why didn't they understand what Jesus was telling them about the Son of Man?

APPLICATION

- What are some things that we place our hope in personally that we should not?
- How are we like the young boy? (Captive, Hopeless, In Danger)
- What does life after being set free look like for the Christian?

THE 5 W's (broken up into gendered groups)

- Word (How have you gotten into the word this week?)
- Wife/Husband/Family (How are you doing with your spouse/family?)
- Wellness (What are you doing to take care of yourself?)
- Work (How are you handling the work God has given you?)
- Witness (Who have you witnessed to, or prayed for this week?)