

Series: Acts, Part 8- Date: August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Sermon Title: Week 6: Luke, thank you for your honesty- part 2

- **Job 1- The lord gives and takes away, but blessed be your name- in reality of life, the gift of faith to put God on the throne**
- **AT END OF TODAY'S MESSAGE- see profound promise- picture- that God's throne is the THRONE OF GRACE, and God invites us- and has done everything needed to make it possible- for us to APPROACH the throne of Grace with CONFIDENCE to receive help in our time of need.**
- **THIS IS GOOD NEWS, because my friends, THIS LIFE is our time of need.**
- **Last week we dispelled the myth of the perfect Christian- we saw this reality....**

† **The myth dispelled:** given the right circumstances, even the most sincere, mature, and healthiest saint may experience times of conflict, frustration, fear, worry, confusion, depression, and anger.

- **We saw this in the story of Paul and Barnabas, where these two preeminent men of God, who had literally faced death side by side, suffered a conflict that split their friendship. If missed last week....**
- **Today explore God's provision –LIFE HE GIVES- in midst of our inability to make life work on our own. BECAUSE...**

**The good news is that God understands this!**

- **God doesn't expect us to be perfect. GOD UNDERSTANDS that this life is a journey, and there are times when we STRUGGLE. He doesn't just understand this, this is His design.**
  - **Consider scriptures- ask "WHY is God telling us this"**
- Ephesians 4:2** *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*
- **Why.. because GOD KNOWS we hurt each other! GOD KNOWS we NEED to be patient with each other.**

**Colossians 3:12-13** *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. <sup>13</sup> Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

- **Again, why tell us this? Because GOD KNOWS we have grievances with each other. HE KNOWS we need to forgive each other, we need to be KIND to each other, because LIFE IS HARD!**
  - **This isn't God coming to condemn us for being weak, but in our weakness, God providing HIS STRENGTH.**
  - **IMAGINE a surgeon coming to a patient with heart failure... He wouldn't say "your heart is weak- you are bad! Whip that heart into shape. Make that heart recommit. Send that heart to a revival! Here's a stack of books your heart needs to read about being a stronger heart..." NO! The surgeon says... that old hearts GOTTA GO. But we have a NEW HEART, provided by an amazing Donor... His name is JESUS CHRIST- we are going to place HIS LIFE into YOUR LIFE, so that HIS LIFE- HIS WAY will be what sustains you, guides you, gives LIFE to you.**
  - **One more...**
- 1 Peter 4:8** *Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.*

- **Why do we need to love each other deeply? Because in our soul, this jar of clay in which we live, we still struggle with sin, weakness, brokenness! ALL DO.**

**2 Corinthians 4:7-9** *But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all surpassing power is from God and not from us. <sup>8</sup> We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.*

✠ Reality! In the midst of life as it really is, the Spirit of Christ in us is working to transform the *jar of clay* that is our SOUL into the fully righteous new creation we already are in our SPIRIT.

- **KEY TRUTH many believers haven't heard, or don't understand. NOT still sinners 'just' saved by Grace. We DO still struggle with sin and brokenness, and we HAVE BEEN saved by Grace, but WHO WE ARE is a new creation. We are SAINTS. Thus, RIGHT NOW, IC**

**Becoming who we already are: WHY THIS MATTERS...** In Christ, there are things *true of us* we will not *experience* unless we *believe* they are true and *choose* to live in the good of that truth!

- **SCRIPTURE TEACHES US THIS! Go to...**

**Romans 6:6-11** *For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— <sup>7</sup> because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. <sup>10</sup> The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

- **BY FAITH, BELIEVE- live as though- we are dead to sin and alive to God- because In Christ we ALREADY ARE dead to sin, and ALIVE TO GOD. Summed up...**

**Hebrews 10:14** *For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*

- **To grasp, need to understand...**

✠ Three crucial concepts: The soul, the flesh, and the Spirit.

**1 Thessalonians 5:23** *May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

- **Body, of course- temporary physical vessel that contains our soul. Earthsuit! Important, a gift, part of who we are, but not WHO we are. We don't draw our identity from our body, although many try.**

**The soul:** My conscious self- my mind, will, and emotions- my thinker, feeler, and chooser. Our soul is where we live, but there's a big problem if it is our SOURCE from which we live.

- **Body is temporary, but our soul is eternal. EVEN SO, our soul is still not the SOURCE of who we are/life**

**The Spirit:** Who I truly am- my new creation self, made alive and righteous in Christ, where my Spirit is ONE with Christ's Spirit.

**1 Corinthians 6:17** *But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.*

**Ephesians 4:22-24** *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; <sup>23</sup> to be made new in the attitude of your minds; <sup>24</sup> and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

- **Been said- We ARE a Spirit, that possesses a SOUL, that lives in a BODY. That is GOOD. But even as believers, new creations in Christ, we still have a problem, a CONDITION that afflicts our soul. This is what NT calls...**

**The flesh:** Condition (attitude, strategy of living), where my focus is primarily on MYSELF (even if it is 'good looking' or 'well-adjusted' self); where I am living out of my own resources (knowledge wisdom, personality, abilities, finances, etc.); in order to cope with life, solve my problems, and meet my needs.

- **KEY! 'Flesh' is not just morally negative thoughts, emotions, and actions. Those are just symptoms. The FLESH can look really good, it can be highly moral- or think itself highly moral, and very religious. The FLESH is where we seek to find our identity, meaning, source of life, in OURSELF, our own wisdom and resources, rather than God.**
- **THIS SETS UP battle we face. NOT A BATTLE BETWEEN TWO NATURES, but daily choice as to what will be our SOURCE OF LIFE. Choice to whom we will grant power and authority over our soul.**

**Romans 8:1,5-9,13** Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus **BUT we have a choice...**<sup>5</sup> Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. <sup>6</sup> The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. <sup>8</sup> Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. <sup>9</sup> You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.

<sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

- **HOW do we move through our struggles- how do we experience healing, growth, and strengthening of our mind, wills, emotions? How do we experience transformation? BY THE SPIRIT.**
- **You see, religion says our daily choice is the choice NOT TO SIN. New covenant teaches our daily choice is WHO WILL BE OUR SOURCE OF LIFE.**

† **Our problem:** The condition of our flesh exists in our soul, and yet we try to achieve a successful life from the *resources* of our soul rather than the *source* of our Spirit.

OUR SOUL	OUR SPIRIT
SEEN	UNSEEN (2 Cor 4:16-18)
Sees SEPARATION	ONE with Christ
STRUGGLES with old self	DEAD to old self
INCOMPLETE, becoming	COMPLETE, holy, righteous
STRUGGLES with sin	FREE from power of sin
Known by SENSES	Known by REVELATION
NOISY! Always moving	QUIET, unmoving

† **Reality! God's expectation is not perfection in our soul.**

- **This side of heaven, our soul will NOT be made perfect. SO, when strength fails, don't let the enemy place you under condemnation, guilt or shame!**
- **GOD KNOWS we will fail. He allows us to fail so we will increasingly look to HIM.**
- **So we will CAST DOWN the BURDEN of trying to achieve our own identity, rightness, and rest in the arms of the savior.**
- **THEN, from THAT PLACE of love, acceptance, and WHOLENESS, take the next step in your journey.**

- **We are on the journey of transformation, but it will remain a journey until Christ calls us home. Paul himself confessed this.**

**Philippians 3:12** *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.*

- **We are free from the bondage of performance, the expectation of perfection. But God DOES CALL TO US WITH AN INVITATION.**

God's invitation is for us to increasingly experience **REST**, restoration, health, and the fruit of the Spirit *in our soul*, by choosing to receive Life from the *source of our Spirit* rather than the resources of our soul.

- **Hebrews 4-** Here the writer describes how the children of Israel, having been delivered from slavery in Egypt, never entered the rest of the promised land because they lacked faith in God. God gave them the Sabbath as a rest from the work of each week, but his greater desire- the true Sabbath- was the rest of the promised land, a place where he would provide.
- **NOW, the true Sabbath rest of the promised land still stands- and the promised land is the arms of Christ and the presence of God which we know by FAITH.**
- **SO- IN CHRIST we can rest from the burden of trying to achieve life out of our own strength and wisdom, and rather RECEIVE LIFE, even with all of our weaknesses, from God himself.**

**Hebrews 4:9-16** *There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; <sup>10</sup> for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. <sup>11</sup> Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.*

- **SO POWERFUL! Do you see this? Religion says "make every effort not to sin"... GOD SAYS, make every effort to enter my rest! To turn to me! To trust me, receive from me, believe what I SAY is true about who you are.**

<sup>12</sup> *For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. <sup>13</sup> Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

- **Think of that statement! EVERYTHING about us is known by God, laid bare before Him, to whom we must, and will, give an account. JUST THAT, what would be my posture before God? TERROR. GROVELING. Guilt, shame, DESPAIR.**
- **BUT HAVING SAID THIS, the truth continues...**

<sup>14</sup> *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

- **Oh my friend, that is GOOD NEWS. For NOW is our time of need. NOW is when we need the gift of REST. So may we make EVERY EFFORT to turn to the God who invites us to rest in Him.**

- ***HERE's the miracle- it is when we are fully RESTING IN CHRIST- no longer carrying the burden of achieving acceptance, earn love, generate our own sense of meaning- AT PEACE-***
- ***THIS is when we are ready to ENGAGE life –equipped with the presence, provision, and power of God, as we expressing his love and goodness to this world that needs to know him.***
- ***AND WHEN WE FAIL- when the weakness of our soul is laid bare to be seen- we tell the enemy to shut up, and turn one again to the grace and arms of our father who is RIGHT THERE, ready to take us by the hand***