

Found Faithful in My Attitudes

Luke 17:1-10

I am going to make a VERY GENERAL STATEMENT that I hope you will take as just that, a very GENERAL TRUTH - It is this: **In the Old Testament God, through the Law, was dealing primarily with our behaviors. In the New Testament God, through Jesus, begins dealing with our attitudes!**

Certainly the OT deals with the ATTITUDES OF CERTAIN PEOPLE from time to time (Like Jonah for example) - But God first had to START WITH BEHAVIOR - if a person NEVER KNEW their behavior was wrong, then the attitude behind the behavior really didn't matter! - Thus, God starts with the LAW OF MOSES - over 600 do's and don'ts to guide our actions towards God and each other!

But in the NT, Jesus CORRECTLY INTERPRETS THAT LAW - and He makes it ALL ABOUT ATTITUDE - The Sermon on the Mount is probably the BEST EXAMPLE of this - **Jesus made it clear that SINFUL ATTITUDES are just as egregious before God as SINFUL BEHAVIORS** - And this was a revolutionary thought for these 1st Century Jews.

I'm sure there are A FEW FOLKS here today who are DEALING WITH BEHAVIORAL ISSUES in their life - You are blatantly breaking God's Law and you know it! - It that is you,

2
please CONFESS IT today - GET SOME PRAYER - Don't leave here today with SECRET SIN in your life.

But, I would be willing to bet that MANY MORE OF US are dealing with SINFUL ATTITUDES! - Through the TRIALS & TRIBULATIONS of these past couple of years, it is easy to ALLOW UNHEALTHY ATTITUDES to slip in and FEASTER in your life.

Right now people are just ANGRY & MEAN to each other - To a large degree Social Media has become the BATTLE GROUND for attacking others - Hidden safely BEHIND A SCREEN, we say awful things we would never say to someone face - This IMPERSONAL PLATFORM has made it much easier TO EXPRESS OUR HURT & PAIN in damaging ways to others!

Sometimes we think we are HIDING our bad Attitudes - But I have found that SOUR ATTITUDES are far more difficult to hide than are SINFUL BEHAVIORS - Sinful attitudes BUBBLE TO THE SURFACE quickly & at the STRANGEST TIMES - and they REVEAL THEMSELVES in some strange ways.

In our passage this morning, Jesus addresses SOME WRONG ATTITUDES that we all can EASILY CREEP into our lives - Let's read our text in Luke 17, beginning in verse 1 and get a HEALTHY WARNING from Jesus about these DANGEROUS ATTITUDES.

17:1 Then He (Jesus) said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come! 17:2 "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

Let me give SOME CONTEXT to Jesus' words - if we go back up a couple of chapters, we find that Jesus had been REACHING OUT to tax collectors and sinners - And the Scribes & the Pharisees QUICKLY JUDGED Jesus' actions towards these "Unclean" people as IMMORAL & UNGODLY.

So, in THEIR HEARING, He teaches a series of parables talking about HIS PURPOSE IN COMING - [He came to seek and save the lost!](#) - so He went to THE LOST - something the RELIGIOUS LEADERS of Israel had NO INTEREST in doing!

So, Jesus ADDRESSED THESE Scribes & Pharisees through some BITING STORIES & PARABLES - Their response was to GET ANGRY & LEAVE.

It appears as we START CHAPTER 17, Jesus is now alone with HIS DISCIPLES and DIRECTS THESE CLOSING COMMENTS just to them - He is certain THEY ARE CONFUSED and so He addresses THEIR MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

Understand, these SCRIBES & PHARISEES had been their SPIRITUAL HEROS growing up - These were they men they

were TAUGHT TO respect and admire⁴! - No doubt the twelve were UNSURE of exactly how to take THESE HARD TEACHINGS of Jesus!

Well, in these first 10 verses of Luke 17, Jesus is going to HELP THEM UNDERSTAND why He is ATTACKING THESE religious leaders - He is going to ADDRESSES THE WRONG ATTITUDES of these Scribes & Pharisees - For He knows how easily these SAME ATTITUDES could creep into THE DISCIPLES LIVES as well - and into OUR LIVES!

FIRST, Jesus addresses is their ATTITUDE TOWARDS THOSE WHO ARE WEAKER - the word Jesus uses is LITTLE ONES in not necessarily a reference to "children" as much as it is a reference to "those who are weaker or those with less power" - those with less INFLUENCE OR RANK.

This makes perfect sense when we REMEMBER THE CONTEXT - Jesus had just told the story of the POOR MAN Lazarus and RICH MAN - The rich man was UNCARING & CALOUS towards the needs of this poor man.

His attitude was TO LOOK DOWN WITH CONTEMPT towards Lazarus because he was LESS FORTUNATE in this life! - He didn't have the POWER, INFLUENCE & SOCIAL STANDING that this rich man was benefiting from - thus he was DISMISSIVE OF Lazarus!

5

This was totally opposite of GOD'S ATTITUDE towards the WEAK of this world - AT THE FOREFRONT of God's heart is the WELL-BEING of the Widows, the Orphans and the poor.

In the Law of Moses God made provision for the FINANCIALLY POOR - Through the Prophets He had WARNED THE PEOPLE against taking advantage of the POOR & VULNERABLE!

Yet, how easy it is for us to have THIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS the poor today - We experience a LITTLE SUCCESSFUL & AFFLUENCE in life and now our attitude suddenly changes towards the LAZARUS' AROUND US.

Like the Pharisees, we begin to HARDEN TOWARDS those who ARE POOR & WEAK - We MISTREAT THEM BY IGNORING THEM - We PUSH THEM ASIDE because they can't help us become MORE SUCCESSFUL.

We find ourselves SHOWING FAVORITISM towards those who have GREATER RESOURCES - those who like us have experienced SUCCESS & PROSPERITY - rather than care for those LESS FORTUNATE, LESS EDUCATION & LACKING OPPORTUNITY, we ignore them - Yet, all the time God is wanting us to CARE ABOUT THEM.

The "Little Ones" just get in the way! - They are the ones who give us the HEADACHES & REQUIRE the most attention! -

they are the ones WHO TAKE more than they give - they are THE NEEDY who “steal” our time and resources, but can give NOTHING IN RETURN!

Has your ATTITUDE SOURED towards the “little ones” in your life - in your neighborhood - at your office - in your school? - Be careful - Jesus has some STRONG WARNINGS for us - THAT MILLSTONE HE SPEAKS OF is heavy and that SEA IS DEEP.

To ignore & to deny help is TO OFFEND - Has this attitude towards THE LITTLE ONES crept into your lives?

The SECOND ATTITUDE Jesus addresses is that of HOLDING GRUDGES AND WITHHOLDING FORGIVENESS!
 - Remember these are the bad attitudes Jesus is identifying in the religious people!

17:3 "Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 17:4 "And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."

I know no one here has ever been attacked or hurt by another person! - None of us have been hurt by the sharp words of a spouse or a friend!

Today, people are always SO KIND & ENCOURAGING with their words.

PEOPLE NEVER misjudge your motives - or falsely accuse you of some HURTFUL DEED - I know no one here has ever had their FEELINGS HURT at church - or been criticized for your actions when all you were trying to do was SERVE GOD in some way.

OR has that happened to you A COUPLE OF TIMES? - How did you RESPOND? - Did a FEW PAINFUL PUNCHES in the gut cause your attitude towards a person TO GROW SOUR? Forgiving them is the LAST THING on your heart - MAYBE you have even hoped they would somehow DISAPPEAR from your life completely!

Often forgiveness NEVER TAKES PLACE simply because we REFUSE to do the VERY FIRST THING Jesus tells us to do when we are HURT BY ANOTHER - [“Take heed to yourself”](#) - in other words, understand that you may be on the RECEIVING END of the pain this time, but you have been on the GIVING END plenty of other times!

REMEMBERING THIS will help you do what Jesus is about to ASK YOU TO DO - He is asking us TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE back towards the person who just hurt us! - We are to GO TO THEM!

I can HEAR YOU OBJECTING - “Wait a minute, they hurt me!” - They should COME TO ME - They owe ME AN APOLOGY! - You may feel that way, BUT LOOK AT HOW

JESUS says we should respond: **We are to ASSUME THE RESPONSIBILITY for making things right!**

This is SO FOREIGN to what we NATURALLY FEEL - We want the other person TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY - they need to COME TO US! - but Jesus says “NO” - Go to him and “**Rebuke him**”.

REBUKE is a LEGAL TERM - it means TO CHARGE - or to FIND FAULT - It’s like a judge DECLARING THE GUILT of a person in court - We are TO COMMUNICATE to that brother or sister that THEY HAVE HURT US - we have to LET THEM KNOW that you have been hurt by their words or actions.

It is NOT SO MUCH a rebuke in the sense of A COACH DRESSING DOWN a player who has committed a COSTLY PENALTY that caused the team LOSE THE GAME - Did you see Kirby Smart DRESS DOWN his quarterback at the end of the half in the Orange bowl - That is not what Jesus is asking you to do!

Again, it is more a JUDGE INFORMING A PLAINTIFF that they have LOST THE CASE - it is NOT DONE IN ANGER - It is just THE TRUTH SPOKEN IN LOVE!

OUR GOAL IS TO COMMUNICATE to them of what has happen - to LET THEM KNOW that they have HARMED US in some way - OUR RESPONSIBILITY is to put the BALL OF REPENTANCE back in their court.

At first, I find it DIFFICULT THAT GOD PLACED this burden on the PERSON WHO WAS WRONGED - But the more I have CONSIDERED IT, the more SENSE IT MAKES.

First, I have found the PERSON WHO HAS DONE WRONG often is NOT EVEN AWARE of their transgression - or of the pain they have caused.

HOW MANY times have I HURT SOMEONE'S FEELINGS and never known that I did it! - I make an OFF THE CUFF REMARK that someone misinterprets - but I DON'T KNOW they have taken it wrong - Yes, there are times when I KNOW I HURT someone - but this is NOT ALWAYS THE CASE!

A person CAN'T APOLOGIZE for what they are NOT AWARE OF! - Very few people that I know ARE MIND-READERS - Jesus is saying, **"We can't assume they know what they have done!"**

Second, I think Jesus wants US TO BE SURE we really want to make an ISSUE OUT OF EVERY LITTLE THING that hurts us - So he PUTS THE BALL FIRST IN OUR COURT and says, **"Do you really want to make a big deal out of this? Or are you mature enough to let it go and move on"?** - Remember one of the FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT is to be long-suffering!

Let's face it - THERE ARE TIMES when we just need to LET THINGS GO - just GET OVER THEM and move on - We need to be MATURE ENOUGH to realize that EVERYONE IS HUMAN - We must be willing to GIVE EACH OTHER A PASS and accept that we are all human!

We need to have a healthy COMBINATION OF GROWING MATURITY & THICKER SKIN when it comes to living with each other - Remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 5 - **Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy!** - Don't you want more mercy from others? - Then show some!

But, Jesus' Point is that I MUST FORGIVE THEM - I can't HOLD A GRUDGE - I can't make THEM SUFFER - I can't give them THE COLD SHOULDER - I can't go around telling EVERYONE WHO WILL LISTEN what a HORRIBLE PERSON they are - I need to SHUT UP & FORGIVE.

Finally, I CAN'T ALLOW MY HURT to become a ROOT OF BITTERNESS - There is NOTHING WORSE than carrying around A Backpack Full Of BITTERNESS & RESENTMENT.

I must be LIKE JOSEPH - because he RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD that **“though his brothers meant it for evil, God meant it for good”** - God used Joseph's PAINFUL EXPERIENCES to accomplish good in his life - and by extension in the LIFE OF THE NATION - And he will DO THE SAME FOR YOU & I if you will let Him - and by extension it

will be a BLESSING TO THE LIFE of our families and our church as well.

The point of this passage is that I SHOULD NEVER WITHHOLD FORGIVENESS - No matter HOW MANY TIMES I am offended by a person, I must MAINTAIN A FORGIVING ATTITUDE in my heart.

17:5 And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."
 17:6 So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."

The Disciples had HEARD ENOUGH - with just THESE TWO ISSUES that Jesus has addressed, they are OVERWHELMED - All they can say is, "Lord, we need more faith!" - To which Jesus replies, "Boys, faith is not the issue!"

He tells them just a LITTLE FAITH is a powerful thing - Faith is NOT THE ISSUE - The issue is OUR WILLINGNESS to be obedient in doing the difficult things that we just DON'T LIKE TO DO!

In other words, MY BAD ATTITUDES are not tied to my faith - But, they are VERY CLOSELY CONNECTED TO MY PRIDE - how I THINK ABOUT MYSELF! - Paul warned us "not to think to highly of ourselves" - Jesus is about to EXPLAIN TO US WHY!

17:7 "And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? 17:8 "But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'?"

17:9 "Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.

Here Jesus uses AN EXAMPLE that every person, whether SERVANT OR MASTER, can relate to - Everyone who has ever WORK A JOB (EMPLOYEE OR EMPLOYER) can understand the point He is making - For AT SOME POINT in our lives, all of us have either been in the ROLE OF SERVANT OR MASTER - **Boss or Employee - Private or Sergeant!**

HERE Jesus is speaking here OF TWO DIFFERENT MINDSETS we can have - He is going TO CONTRAST the mindset of the MASTER with the mindset of the SERVANT.

Remember, He has been ATTACKING THE ATTITUDES of the Scribes and Pharisees - WHY? - Because they had the mindset of A Master - And this is what Jesus CONSTANTLY BATTLED in dealing with his disciples!

They were always arguing about WHO WAS THE GREATEST - that's what they all wanted to be! - They wanted

to be THE BOSS - They all wanted to be VP, right there BEHIND JESUS!

Remember, their ROLE MODELS were these Pharisees! - These were the RELIGIOUS EXAMPLES that everyone thought was thing to be when your GREW UP SPIRITUALLY speaking!

And what did that ATTITUDE OR MINDSET look like? - In Matthew 23, Jesus RAILS AGAINST the thinking of the Pharisees - Here are the things He identifies:

1. They Preached Good works - but they did very little of them!
2. The Good works they did, they did to be SEEN BY OTHERS!
3. They wanted the BEST SEATS at the Feast - it was all about BEING SEEN as important!
4. They wanted to be CALLED RABBI - they wanted the Prestige of the Name! - Not the responsibility the name carried with it!
5. They focussed on the unimportant requirements of the Law, and ignored those WEIGHTIER MATTERS of love and Justice!
6. They focussed on OUTWARD APPEARANCES and neglected the attitudes of their hearts! - Outwardly they LOOKED RIGHTEOUS, but inwardly they were full of HYPOCRISY & LAWLESSNESS!

This was the disciples' MODEL OF GODLINESS - and these are all the ATTITUDES OF THE MASTER! - It is all about ENTITLEMENT & PRIVILEGE!

It was all about SETTING YOURSELF ABOVE the others around you - It was a never ending FIGHT TO THE TOP! - AND You can approach life thinking AS A MASTER - Or you can approach life THINKING AS A SERVANT - And remember, [We are called to be servants!](#)

In verse 11 of Matthew 23, in the middle of attacking these Pharisees, He says to his disciples: But he who is greatest among YOU shall be your servant!

Back here in Luke, Jesus speaks of a servant who has been WORKING HARD ALL DAY - maybe his job was PLOWING THE FIELD BEHIND a stinking oxen or mule - or maybe he SPENT HIS DAY with a herd of head-strong sheep - Either way, it's the END OF THE DAY and he is HOT, SWEATY & TIRED.

But, does he have the OPTION OF SITTING RIGHT DOWN for a nice prepared meal? - Absolutely NOT! - First, his master has ONE MORE JOB for him to do - Dinner has to be prepared for the BOSS FIRST!

Not until AFTER THE MASTER has eaten & relaxed can the servant ENJOY SOME FOOD & REST - As a matter of fact, the servant doesn't even GET A "THANK YOU" from the

Master - WHY? - Because in the Master's mindset the servant is simply DOING WHAT HE IS HIRED to do! - Wow, not even a THANK YOU!

In our modern, WESTERN PERSPECTIVE, this is hard for us to SWALLOW! - We live in the age of COLLECTIVE BARGAINING & EMPLOYEE RIGHTS - We live in a time when everyone must be APPRECIATED or they will quit!

But in first century AD, workers (many of them slaves) had NO RIGHTS - They were just thankful to HAVE A JOB and to be able to eat!

What is the POINT JESUS' is making? - Hey, disciples, you are all servants, NOT Masters. Stop thinking like a master!

So, what does this MINDSET of a Servant look like - Well, let think back quickly to our MODEL JESUS - and by the way, who could have GREATER CLAIM to being the Master than Jesus - but He LAID THAT RIGHT aside to come as a Servant! - Unlike the Pharisees, He was going to MODEL FOR MANKIND what God's Kingdom is really about!

In John 13, Jesus EXAMPLES FOR US the mindset of a Servant - Let me read the opening 5 verses: Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. 2 And supper being ended, the devil having

already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, 4 rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. 5 After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

First, I want you to notice the CONFIDENCE OF JESUS - He wasn't about to wash the Disciples feet because HE FELT HELPLESS OR UNWORTHY - He wasn't having a INFERIORITY COMPLEX at this moment!

He knew God had GIVEN ALL THINGS into His Hands - He knew He was going BACK TO THE FATHER very soon - No, these actions were not the actions of a HELPLESS MAN, who had NO CHOICE - these are the actions of a SELFLESS MAN who chose to become a servant to the others in the room!

Here is the Mindset of the Christian Servant:

1. **It is a choice to serve made from a place of CONFIDENCE** - We chose to serve others because we know OUR PLACE before Our Father in Heaven - He has CHOSEN US - He has SAVED US - He has ACCEPTED US - We chose to serve others because our SAVIOR ASKED US to serve!

2. **It is a willingness to do the Most MENIAL OF JOBS** - Washing feet was one of the most humiliating jobs of the servant - We have almost turned it in to some kind of **BADGE OF HONOR** - “Look at me while I wash someone feet!”

When Jesus washed the disciples’ feet, it was a humiliating experience for both Jesus and the Disciples - This is why Peter was going to let it happen - He knew the implications!

Jesus was doing the **ACTIONS OF THE LOWEST** in society - This was no moment of **RESPECTABLE HUMILITY** - No, this was Jesus doing something that was truly **DEGRADING TO THEM!**

If you get from this story that Jesus wants us to wash each other’s feet every few months at a Home Fellowship, you have missed the point! - The point is Jesus’ willingness to do the **MOST MENIAL** of jobs to serve those He loves!

3. **It is a willingness to do the HUMBLEST OF JOBS with a GOOD ATTITUDE!** - Jesus didn’t wash their feet and then **MOCK THEM** for having had to **SHOW THEM WHAT TO DO!**

NO, Jesus did all this OUT OF LOVE - His heartfelt desire was to SERVE THESE MEN - He wanted to show them that THE GREATEST really can be THE SERVANT OF ALL!

What is your MINDSET as a Christian? - Have you been serving God with the Model of a Pharisee? - Or are you confident in your PLACE BEFORE the Father - and can you gird a towel around you waste and do the JOBS OF A SERVANT with the heart of Love?

Look at verse 10, "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.' "

At the end of the day we are all UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS of a GRACIOUS & GLORIOUS GOD - and out of HIS MERCY He has called us to this WONDERFUL WORK of serving others!

Let's Pray