

10/12/11

THE GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 22:15-22

*(Jesus gives God's answer to a question of men.)*

15 Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. 16 They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are. 17 Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" 18 But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? 19 Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, 20 and he asked them, "Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?" 21 "Caesar's," they replied. Then he said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." 22 When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

THE SERMON

"Trusting God's Wisdom for My Life"

Matthew 22

INTRO - The other day I watched my grandson exert his will. His preschool teacher asked everyone to get into the circle and sit with their legs crossed. It took a while for most kids to get there. Even with his grandfather present, Jacob was the last to come. Then he laid down. The teacher helped him sit up, and as soon as she left, he laid down again. He was going to do it his way.

Maybe we can laugh at this *doing what I want to do*, but we all know it can cause trouble too. I have watched children who are told they can't have a cookie because they are too hot wait till mom goes, and then burn their mouth on the cookies just out of the oven. What happens when children are told to not to speed when driving, but they want to do it? What happens when children are told that alcohol or drugs can hurt them, but they want to try it?

Parents usually really do know best, and want what is best for the children they love. Because parents have been through life they have understanding. They have wisdom. Will the children listen?

I. We are children of God. But often we act like our own children.

A. God has given us commandments.

1. These commandments aren't to keep us from doing what we want to do, but rather wisdom from God about what is the healthiest way to live in this life, and for our eternal welfare.
2. But, do we want to do what we are told, or do what we feel like at this moment?
3. Do we trust the wisdom of God, or think only we know what is best for us at this moment?

B. The truth is that just like a child who takes a car for a joy ride is in danger of hurting his life and others, when we ignore the loving direction God gives us we are in danger of hurting ourselves, we are in danger of hurting others, we are in danger of hurting our relationship with the one who not only gives us life in this world, but the one who gives eternal life.

II. Now look at the wisdom of God. Our lesson for today is a lesson in the foolishness of people and the wisdom and love of God.

A. First, realize what the leaders had done, they thought they had created a foolproof trap. They asked Jesus a question with no good answer. "Should we give taxes to Caesar or not?" If he said yes the leaders thought the people would leave him. If he said "No" he would be in danger with the authorities. "We've got you, Jesus. Who do you want to be in trouble with?" Jesus simply asked for a coin. "Whose picture is this on the coin?" "Caesar" they said. "So give Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and give God the things that are God's." Jesus turned the foolproof trap around on these religious leaders and showed their foolishness. He could do that not because he was the smartest man ever, but because He was and is God himself in human form. The wisdom of God is beyond us.

B. But consider the love of God involved here. Why was Jesus, the Son of God himself, even here? Jesus was here because he knew the dark hearts of these men, and of everyone, even us. He knew their rebellion, their pride, their willingness even to kill. Jesus was here because these people were hopeless and lost and they needed help. So the wise and all powerful creator submitted himself to the foolishness of these dummies, and came so He could take their sin on himself in a horrible experience of suffering and dying on the cross.

1. Consider what Paul says in 1 Corinthians. 22 Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

2. Jesus may be the wisdom of God, and the cross his tool, but even more he is the love of God for people who want to do it their way.

III. So, I told you last week about my truck that had some mechanical problems. Who do we want to go to when we have a problem? Do we want to talk to someone who is a friend but knows nothing about vehicles. You might hear something like, "It's still driving, isn't it?" Why spend money to fix it when you don't need to? Or, do we want to talk to someone who knows vehicles, how they work, and how to fix them? Seems pretty obvious, doesn't it?

A. Did you see the wisdom of God in the answer of Jesus? When you are making decisions for your life, don't you want to trust this one who is wise?

B. Do you see the love of God in the cross? When making decisions for your life, don't you want to trust this one who loves you enough to die for you???

C. Jesus say, "Give unto God the things that are God's." He wants our love because He loved us. He wants our obedience because His laws are given in wisdom and love. He wants us to love others, even when they don't deserve it, because He loved us.

CONCLUSION - Tonight this God of love reached down with simple water and his word and made KC his child. He has forgiven her, given her His Holy Spirit. He has called her as His own. This is a great and mysterious act of love. But, God has not just done this for KC. There are few if any for whom God didn't reach down into our lives and love us this way. Don't we want trust the wisdom and love of God for our lives?