

Sermon Outline - June 8, 2014

I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. – Lu. 13:5

The 'red letter' Bible was developed by man named Louis Klopsche in 1899 – he was then the American editor of the Christian Herald Magazine (a UK 'Christian' publication that had an American edition). The 'red letter' Bible shows the words that Christ uttered during His ministry on earth as red text (plus words attributed to Him in Acts and the Revelation – Christophanies are excluded). It is a very popular feature of some Bibles, especially in versions, such as the King James, where quotation marks are not used. I find it particularly useful, although there is a sense in which, when reading John 1:1 and matching it up to John 1:14, you could say that all of the Bible's text should be colored red in such editions – Christ being 'The Word' – God actually giving Himself that name. So many people use 'red letter' Bibles, and it often strikes me: 'How can someone who is focusing MORE CLOSELY on the words of Christ have such a lack of understanding about what Christ said or meant?' Here's the answer, at least in part:

I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not. – Isa. 66:4

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received

not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. – 2Thes. 2:1-12

That's what's got to happen - and in fact is happening right before our eyes. We live in an age, beloved, when we have so much information at our fingertips – instantaneously, and can separate out the New Testament words of Christ by using a different colored font, and yet there is such a paucity of understanding of any of Christ's words – all the while some vague notion of 'Christianity' still has a presence on the social landscape, Satan constantly seeking to pervert the truth. That vague, erroneous, useless yet particularly pernicious notion of Christianity is what some of us call 'hippie' Jesus. So, by way of setting the table for the topic of today's sermon, please let us take a few moments to put on our W.D.J.D? bracelets (What DID Jesus Do?) and open up our Bible to 'red letter' sections to remind ourselves of a few things that Jesus did and said:

And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves. - Luke 19:45-46.

The Greek for 'cast' there is *ekballo* – the main senses of this word are:

- to cast out, drive out, to send out, with notion of violence
- to cast out of the world, i.e. be deprived of the power and influence he exercises in the world
- to drive out a thing: excrement from the belly into the sink
- to expel a person from a society: to banish from a family
- to draw out with force, tear out
- to cast out with implication of force overcoming opposite force
- to reject with contempt, to cast off or away

In the John account of this same happenstance, there is more information:

And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; - John 2:15

The Greek for scourge here is *fragellion* – or, a whip

The Lord Jesus Christ drove them out of the temple both with a whip and by tossing them out on their ears – and he overthrew the tables and the cash register. Imagine seeing THAT on a Youtube video.

But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. – Remember beloved – a millstone was a device used to grind wheat, and could weigh hundreds of pounds. This was a better state of affairs for a person, according to the Lord Jesus Christ, than to ‘offend’ one of God’s sheep. And what does it mean to ‘offend’ one of these little ones? - Mt 18:6

This ‘offend’ doesn’t mean just to call one of us fat or ugly on Twitter. The world’s supply of millstones would suddenly take quite a hit, as many times as that has happened. The Greek here for offend is *skandalidzo* (which has the same root as ‘scandal’) – it means:

- to put a stumbling block or impediment in the way, upon which another may trip and fall, metaph. to offend
- to entice to sin
- to cause a person to begin to distrust and desert one whom he ought to trust and obey
- to cause to fall away
- to cause one to judge unfavorably or unjustly of another

So one sense of this is the ‘smoky pie finger’ of enticing someone to sin, another is as a sophist or gainsayer, and yet another is as an accuser of the brethren. All VERY serious offenses.

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go

and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. - Matt. 13:24-31

Gather ye first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them. Tares are people, people. The Lord Jesus Christ is saying that people are going to be utterly destroyed. Bind them in bundles to burn them. Those people are going to hell. Listen up, world! Anyone who reads the parable of the wheat and the tares with any sincerity cannot then construe John 3:16 as meaning that 'God loves everybody.' It simply isn't possible.

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. – Matt. 5:29-30

Cut off your hand. Pluck out your eye, if it causes you to sin (and therefore displease God). How might your eye or your hand offend you? It's better to go to heaven blind or crippled, then to GO TO HELL. Hippie Jesus said that.

Now - from the time that Christ began to preach, the Bible is clear on what Christ's central message was:

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, REPENT: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. – Matt. 4:17

And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: REPENT ye, and believe the gospel. – Mark 1:15

When Christ commanded his disciples to go out and preach, the specific message was - REPENT:

And they went out, and preached that men should REPENT. – Mark 6:12

Christ made clear to people not only TO repent, but WHY repentance was in their best interests, to put it mildly:

There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. – Luke 13:1-5

‘Perish,’ there, can’t mean just ‘die’ – everyone dies (save Elijah and Enoch, that we know of): the phrase is ‘likewise perish’ – which means, not to die *as* they did, or in the *same manner* as they did, but in the same spiritual condition as they did. So ‘likewise perish’ means to die in your sins – and the implication of that is clear – YOU GO TO HELL.

The Greek for ‘perish’ there is *apollumi*:

- to destroy
- to put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end to ruin
- render useless
- to kill
- to declare that one must be put to death
- metaph. to devote or give over to eternal misery in hell
- to perish, to be lost, ruined, destroyed

The Greek for ‘repent’ there is *metanoia*:

- a change of mind, as it appears to one who repents, of a purpose he has formed or of something he has done
- to change one’s mind, i.e. to repent
- to change one’s mind for better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one’s past sins

This change of mind or heart is certainly an operation of Grace – we know that God controls the hearts and minds of men, and so a man cannot just decide, of his own volition, to change his mind or heart. We also know that it is not merely a

generic change. It is a specific change – it is a change of heart that is attended by a deep sorrow for one’s sins – a sorrow that is seated in the knowledge of God’s sovereignty, His knowledge of our sin, and the fallout from our sin if left unchecked (or unrepented of). This is specifically where “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of understanding” comes in – see how these two descriptions of people are juxtaposed against that singular characteristic:

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever. - Ps 111:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. - Pr 1:7

Going back to the Luke 13: 1-5 – A free translation might be: ***“Do you think that these people were worse sinners than everyone else who was around? No! But unless you repent of your sins (as directives coming from ME – being guided in wisdom by the ‘fear of the Lord’ – and KEEP YOURSELVES away from doing those things, having the outlook of the publican who beat his breast and begged the Lord for mercy upon his sinful self), you shall all die like these others did – you will die in your sins. And the consequence of dying in your sins is that you will GO TO HELL”.*** You can’t whitewash it. It’s cruel to do that. It’s not loving.

So ‘Repent or Perish’ is the sign we hold, and it is the central message of Christ. We just wanna make sure that we know what we’re saying when we hold it or say it. So the practical application of holding the sign, is this: If you are holding a God Hates Adultery sign, it can and should be followed up like this: God Hates Adultery – so Repent of your adultery, or you will die in that sin – and the repercussion of you dying in that sin is that you will GO TO HELL. ‘God Hates Adultery’, so ‘Repent or Perish’. ‘Same-Sex Marriage Dooms Nations’, so ‘Repent or Perish’. ‘Abortion is Bloody Murder,’ so ‘Repent or Perish’, etc. So adding a ‘Repent or Perish’ sign to nearly any of our signs makes a nice, tightly-wound, ‘start to finish’ theological message.

On the subject of repentance itself - Is repentance a thing that you do once? Or is repentance a thing that you do more than once? Do you bring forth fruit meet for repentance once? Or more than once? Is it a constant in your life?

And if only once, then why the constant call to attend to those actions necessary to war against the flesh, or to show forth fruit meet for repentance?

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: - Col. 3:15

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. – Rom. 8:13-14

Being sorrowful for one's sins, as disobedience to God, and therefore regretting them to the nth degree, as someone who is grateful to God for one's existence, and as one who lives their life in stark recognition of God's plain pronouncements of and warnings about His judgments for sin, might be a thing that the Lord gives us in an instant in our lives, but it is also a thing that is attended by day to day, minute to minute effort and conscience on our part. And here is the reason for this, at least in part:

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. – Gal. 5:13-18

The flesh and the spirit are at war against one another. WAR. When you have two nations at war against one another, it is serious business. Your job in war is to completely overwhelm and subdue your enemy, kill, horrify and awe them, taking all of the wind out of their sails, and making it so that they both eventually

seriously contemplate capitulating to your will, and ultimately do just that. That's what's happening in us, beloved. Every day.

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; - 1Pet 2:11

Fleshly lusts war against the soul. And fleshly lusts are not just sexual lusts – pride, resentment, impatience, lack of forbearing in love, etc. are all manifestations of lusts that war against the soul.

Repentance is something that we are called to do, and we are called to tell others to do. Though the Lord gives us a heart to recognize a fear of Him and therefore be grieved for our sins, and he gives us a heart to know Him, we must be mindful of the admonition at Gal. 5, lest we erroneously use the plain doctrines of Grace as a means of 'numbing' our senses as to our daily walk and tender regard for each other - ***For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.*** We must also be mindful that the Lord, in speaking to and commanding the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, used the same word for repent – the Greek being *metanoia*, to sharply rebuke 5 of the 7 churches:

The Church at Ephesus:

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

The Church at Pergamos:

Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

The Church at Thyatira:

And I gave her (that woman Jezebel) space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

The Church at Sardis:

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.

The Church at Laodicea:

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

The topic of the sins of those 5 churches are the subject matter of at least 5 separate sermons, but the point is clear – the Lord is rebuking His churches for their wrongdoing, well after each being formed as a church (and indeed being emblematic of the Lord’s church throughout time), and therefore well after each individual (who are authentic sheep) within those churches received their individual calls and were baptized unto repentance. He calls for those churches, and the individuals which comprise them, to repent – the Greek there again being *metanoia*:

- a change of mind, as it appears to one who repents, of a purpose he has formed or of something he has done
- to change one’s mind for better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one’s past sins

Clearly the main focus of Christ’s ministry was to call people to repentance, as the implied fallout of not repenting ends in the unbearable, yet necessarily borne, sentence of eternity in HELL which again, brings the notion of the ‘fear of the Lord’ being the beginning of wisdom sharply into focus. To ‘likewise perish’ means to die in one’s sins, and therefore GO TO HELL.

And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. – Luke 13:2-5

I love you all. Amen.