

43. Jesus Warned of Family Rejection

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that there will be great blessing for those who are faithful servants of Jesus as they serve Him. We also want to help our children understand the judgment that those who reject Jesus are facing. In our topic today, we will see that Jesus went on to warn His disciples that some of His followers will face rejection from their families because they follow Jesus.

Jesus told His disciples that His message brings division because many reject that message. Luke 12:49-53 says, “I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished! Do *you* suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.” In these verses, we see that Jesus described the division that will come when some family members fail to believe.

Jesus said that He came to send fire on the earth. John used fire to talk about coming judgment as he prepared the way for Jesus. Matthew 3:11-12 says, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” In these verses, we see that fire speaks of the eternal judgment of sinners. This same thought is found in 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8 which says, “Since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” John, Paul and many others used fire to picture the coming judgment and that is the way Jesus used fire here.

Jesus said that He had a baptism to be baptized with and He would be distressed until that baptism was finished. Jesus talked about this baptism when He said to James and John in Matthew 20:23, “So He said to them, ‘You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it is prepared by My Father.’” This baptism was the baptism of suffering and spoke about His coming death. Jesus said He would be distressed until it was finished because He dreaded the separation from the Father as He bore our sins. That is why Jesus cried in Matthew 27:46, “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’” However, that cry was soon followed by a cry of victory as Jesus said in John 19:30, “So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.” Jesus was filled with joy when that period of separation for our sin was finished.

Jesus also warned His followers that they would experience division in their families, because family members would not believe and turn to Jesus. Jesus said that His coming would bring division rather than peace to the earth. The reason for this division would be due to the fact that some family members would follow Him and others would not. Households would be divided. Sometimes, this division would be between fathers and sons. Sometimes, it would be between mothers and daughters. Sometimes, it would be between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Those kinds of divisions are still present and will last until Jesus completes all things. However, 2 Peter 3:13 tells us that we can look beyond the time of these divisions. That verse says, “Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” Then, there will be eternal peace.

Jesus went on to tell the multitude that they could forecast the weather but they could not recognize the time. Luke 12:54-56 says, “Then He also said to the multitudes, ‘Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, “A shower is coming”; and so it is. And when *you see* the south wind blow, you say, “There will be hot weather”; and there is. Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time?’” The Mediterranean Sea lies west of the land of Israel. As a result, Jesus said that as soon as they saw a cloud rising out of the west, the people would say that it was going to rain, and that is exactly what happened. The people were able to also predict the weather when they felt the south wind blowing. The area south of the land of Israel is desert so when the people felt the south wind blow they would say that they were going to soon have hot weather and that also happened exactly as they predicted. Jesus said they could understand the weather but not the time.

In contrast, Jesus said what people really need to understand is the time. The word translated “time” means a limited or fixed period of time. 2 Corinthians 6:1-2 says, “We then, as workers together *with Him* also plead with *you* not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: ‘In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.’ Behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.” People only have a limited or a fixed period of time to receive the message of salvation and come to Christ in repentance for sin.

Hebrews 9:27-28 says, “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.” All people have an appointed time when they will die. Each person only has the fixed time of their physical life here on this earth to place their faith in Christ. We want to help every person understand that once their time of life on this earth is done, there will be no second opportunity to place their faith in Christ, because their particular day of salvation will be past and they will be facing the time of judgment.

Jesus used this warning to the people to discern the time to also warn them of the need to get disagreements settled quickly on this earth. Luke 12:57-59 says, “‘Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right? When you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him, lest he drag you to the judge, the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. I tell you, you shall not depart from there till you have paid the very last mite.’” Christ used the process of judgment on this earth to illustrate

eternal judgment.

The word that is translated “right” is the word that is normally translated “righteous” and speaks of the things that are approved or acceptable to God. Even people who have never heard of the Bible have a sense of what is right and acceptable, because every person has a conscience. Romans 2:14-15 says, “For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them*.” However, many people have seared their conscience. 1 Timothy 4:2 says, “Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.” The word “seared” is used to speak of using a hot iron to put a brand on an animal. The iron is so hot that it burns the skin of the animal so that no hair ever grows on that spot again, so the animal has the shape of that brand for the rest of its life. To sear a conscience means that a person is no longer bothered by their sins.

Jesus went on to tell the people what they should do if they had wronged another person. If no effort is made to settle the problem, the other person may take the person to the judge. As a result, Jesus warned the people to make every effort along the way to do what is right to solve the conflict and be reconciled to the other person. Luke 18:2-5 gives an illustration. Those verses say, “Saying: ‘There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, “Get justice for me from my adversary.” And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, “Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.”’” An adversary had wronged the widow and she finally went to the judge.

Jesus said that once a person is taken to the judge that the person can expect to receive the full judgment for the thing that the person has done wrong. That is why a person should settle the conflict before that person is taken to the judge. Once the judge determined that the person was guilty, the judge would turn the person over to the officer and the officer would throw the person in prison. In that day, they had a debtor’s prison where a person had to work to earn what he had taken from the other person by sin. Jesus said that the person would be in prison until the person had paid the full penalty.

The same is also true for all those who do not repent of their sin of unbelief and come to God by faith in Jesus. Once they are delivered to judgment, they will experience an eternal judgment. That is why we want to equip our physical and spiritual children to explain clearly to each person with whom they talk the choice that each person faces in their life. The penalty for sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life. Each person must choose to repent in this life or that person will face eternal judgment. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to explain to others the choice that they face.