

The Counter-Culture of the Kingdom of Christ: Part 2

Luke 6:37-49

Intro: Post-Christian culture... "The church is full of hypocrites, people who criticize others for doing the same thing they do themselves." – 67% of 20-29 year olds & 75% of people over 30.

The Point: Disciples of Christ are called to live as a distinct counter-culture in the world.

You will remember from last week, that Jesus is preaching this sermon, in order to take our values and turn them upside-down. We have a complete reversal of values. His purpose is to teach his disciples and all people that life in his kingdom means a complete identification with him and a complete realignment of our lives with his rule and will for us. Essentially, Jesus is saying: "I want you to see like I see, and I want you to act like I act." The world says the rich, powerful, and full have the blessed life, but I'm telling you, that spiritual poverty and spiritual hunger is the path to fulfillment. The world tells you to love your friends and hate your enemies, but I am telling you to love your friends and especially your enemies. Why? Because this is what God has done for us. This week we are going to see a few more characteristics of what a counter-cultural lifestyle looks like in the Kingdom of Christ. Number one:

I. The counter-culture of Christ calls us to a life of integrity (6:37-45).

- Look at **verses 37**. The first two words, "judge not" make up some of the most celebrated and misunderstood teaching of Jesus: Do not judge or condemn.
- This is not a direction to forsake exercising discernment. After all, Jesus says in John 7:24, "**Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.**"
- Nor is it a prohibition of declaring right from wrong or maintaining moral standards, which is really what people usually mean when they say, "Don't judge." "Don't judge me, let me do whatever I want. I am my own authority [as long as its convenient]."
- Usually what people mean when they call for no judgment is don't point out my sin. Don't hold me to a standard, & at a deeper level: they are saying, don't be my judge because I am my own judge. I call all the shots in my life. I am my own standard. What I say goes. And really what is going on is what has been going on since Genesis 3. Those in sin want to play the role of God, but they are not alone.
- Those with the judgmental spirit, wishing to condemn people for their wrongs, are also usurping the role of God.
- Judgment belongs to God, which is clear in v. 37 and through out the gospels.
- What Jesus is saying is: don't be judgmental. The judgmental person stands over someone with a posture of arrogance and superiority, like the Pharisees (Luke 18; Look at how righteous I am in comparison to others...")
- Has the church been judgmental at times? Yes! I'm right. You're wrong. We're right. They're wrong. And rather than speaking with you, I'm going to speak at you. Rather than putting my arm around you and walking with you, I'm going to launch grenades of truth in order to change you even though I'm often not really living consistently with what I profess.
- That is exactly what Jesus is denouncing here in Luke 6. I have met people who said, "I left the church because I was being judged." So many people in our city are not anti-Jesus. They are anti-church. I have my faith, but I don't need all of that. "Spread love not rules." (To quote a new friend of mine in Medford Square this past week).
- If someone in church has hurt you with a judgmental spirit, let me apologize on their behalf and tell you that Jesus would not have treated you that way. He would have treated you with love and compassion. He would have extended a listening ear.

What's the cure for being judgmental?

Jesus really helps us get a handle on how to eradicate a spirit of judgmentalism by offering a parable in **vv. 39-42**.

- **Examine your life carefully and recognize your own sin.**
 - Verse 41: "Why do you see the speck..." BUT do not notice the LOG" Here, here, let me help you with that. . .
 - See your own sin before you recognize and point out the sin of others.
 - We are blind to no one's sin but our own. It is so easy to see, "Well, they just need to be more compassionate. They are being so prideful. I'm glad I'm not like them." ☺
 - When Christians fail to see their own sin and be transparent about their flaws, it only serves to perpetuate the "holier than thou" perspective of those outside the church.
 - Jesus is saying: See your own sin before pointing out the flaws of others. Anything less is emphatically denounced as hypocrisy.
 - Speaking of hypocrisy, Michael Wilcock says, "[T]here is no sin about which Jesus spoke more scathingly."
 - So in these verses, Jesus calls us to a life of consistency. The expectation we apply to others must consistently be apply to our lives. The standards we hold others to must also consistently displayed in your life. *Anything less is hypocrisy.* "You hypocrite..."
 - [There also seems to be the presence of criticism and constantly finding fault in others.
 - This may be a word for the ultra-analytical. Some of you get paid for the ability to evaluate, analyze, critique, offer suggestions and improvements. We need that in the world and we need that in the church. However, the warning would be to allow your strengths to remain strengths and not become your weaknesses. My mentor used to tell me that your greatest strengths can often lead to or become your greatest weaknesses.]

- Anyone who lacks the ability to see their own sin and be self-critical before launching grenades of criticism and truth at others is like the rich of verse 24, not the poor of verse 20. It takes spiritual poverty to examine your life, recognize your own sin, and then move toward . . .
- **Practice a lifestyle of repentance.**
 - These first two encouragements describe someone who lives with integrity. First, they see their own imperfections and then actually move to do something about them. **Verse 42.**
 - Look at **39-40** again. How can we truly teach others if we're not practicing repentance? On the one hand, we will not be displaying maturity and the character of Christ, which is the goal of following him. Additionally, we would be just like a blind guide leading the blind. It's a shocking and somewhat humorous picture, but one that hammers the point. Without dealing with your sin, you are walking down the path of destruction.
- **Humbly extend counsel through a forgiving spirit**
 - In this passage, there is an understanding here that we should not simply be non-judgmental, but that we also have a responsibility to seek the spiritual good of those around us. That means there will be times where we need to our brother in humility with a self-judging spirit and seek to help them see a better way to live.
 - **"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:1-2)**
 - Did you the instruction? God says, go help those on the wayward path by seeking to restore them, but do so with a spirit of gentleness and self-examination, knowing that you are not above the very same sin.
 - So what is the antidote to having a judgmental and condemning spirit? He told us back in v. 37.
 - Forgive and give. Remember Jesus is building on what he just said in verse 36. "Be merciful even as your Father is merciful."
 - Be quick to forgive when you are wronged. Have a forgiving spirit to those who are not walking according to God's standard, and even do more than that, be generous to them.
 - And let me show you how this works... Again, please note that the gospels are filled with ginormous motivations! Verse 38. "Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."
 - "To the generous, God is generous." – Bock
 - C. S. Lewis in his sermon, *The Weight of Glory*, said: **"If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong but too weak."**
 - Really go after this reward. Have strong desires for God and his blessing and let that motivate you to be generous, love your enemies, and to embrace persecution if it comes your way.
 - God will reward us generously as we extend his mercy to those in need.

Trans: So, live a life of integrity, quick to see your own faults before helping someone with their own spiritual struggles. #2.

II. The counter-culture of Christ calls us to a life of internal transformation (6:43-45).

- **Verses 43-45.** "For..." the argument continues. The only way to love your enemies and not be judgmental is to have a life that is changed from the inside-out. Godly behavior begins in the heart. If the heart has not been changed and is not continually being changed, then we should not expect to see these counter-cultural characteristics flowing from a person's life.
- Explain 43-45. It is really a matter of the heart.
- **Principle of Inescapable Influence:** "Whatever rules the heart will exercise inescapable influence over the person's life and behavior." – Paul Tripp...
- A Tree & Its Fruit
 - Scenario One:
 - Scenario Two:
 - What's the difference?

I want to give you a way to understand and seek **"Biblical Change:"** All you need to do is remember these four words (and apply them to your life).

- **Heat: Our daily situations in life.**
- **Thorns: Our ungodly response to the situation.**
- **Cross: God's redemptive power to bring change.**
- **Fruit: Our godly response to the situation.**

This is completely comprehensive... Any situation. Heat, Thorns, Cross, Fruit.

- Let me ask you: Are you living a fruitful life? A fruitful life is an attractive life. A fruitful life is a life worth following. A fruitful life is the one blessed by God.

- “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.” (Jeremiah 17:7-8)
- “Thus says the LORD: “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD. He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land.” (Jeremiah 17:5-6)

Pic: Planting shrubs. The majesty of a shrub?? Not a redwood, not a beautiful, _____, ...

There are two paths set before us... We have a choice & this is exactly what Jesus calls us to do in the last four verses of this sermon. Finally,

III. The counter-culture of Christ calls us to a life of obedience (6:46-49).

- **Verse 46-49.** This is not simply about doing the right thing. This is doing the right thing “whoever hears these words” because the one who told me to do it is always right. & It’s not just doing the right thing because the one who said is always right, but doing so because he is worthy of us honoring and worshiping him in that way “it’s whoever hears my words.”
- Christianity is not just an ethical system. It is a ethic that flows out of worship. This is about obedience to Christ. And oh by the way, hear is another implicit claim to the deity of Christ. You say how? Well you remember a few weeks ago when we saw in Luke 5, who has the authority to forgive sin? God. Who has the right to lay a claim on our obedience? God.
- Jesus is setting forth two pictures. One is a life of wisdom. (I hear your Word. I’ll keep it.) The other is a life of foolishness. (I hear your Word. I’ll do my own thing.) The wise life: Right foundation, properly built, with unshakable strength. The foolish life has the wrong foundation, improperly built, and is ready to Fall with great ruin Notice that verse 48-49 tell us that the only difference between wisdom and folly is practicing what you hear from Jesus.

Application:

- Now, if a wise life is built on hearing and keeping the words of God, then we need to know the Word. We want to see God produce a culture in our church where people love the Word, know the Word, live the Word, and share the Word. It’s what we see in Deut 6. This is a particularly direct and strong word to fathers and mothers, but the implications are for all of us know matter what stage of life we may find ourselves.
- **“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deut 6:4-9)**
 - A Deuteronomy 6 home is a home where you can’t get away from the Word. It is utterly pervasive.
 - This is an environment where it is impossible to get away from the Word.
 - See *Gospel-Centered Parenting*...

Singles, Students, Young Professionals, Old Timers.... Haha...

- What dominates the content and the tone of your conversation? Politics? Entertainment? Work? Sports?
- There is a time and place for all of that, but how “Spiritual” are our conversations? Deuteronomy 6 is talking about . . . Wherever you are, whatever is going on, whoever you are with, the Word is on your mind and often being introduced into the conversation.

Conclusion

- As we close, I want you to think about v. 46. You know what this is saying? Many in the church will one day stand before Christ and they will have a conversation just like this. “Lord, Lord, here I am. Welcome me into your family? I have been waiting for the pearly gates for so long.” To which Jesus replies: “Who are you?”
- It is not enough to play a religious part on Sunday, and even do so for your whole life. There are many people in hell today who appeared to be very religious, but never experienced the transforming grace of God.
- Is your life built on the rock of Christ?
- We all will stand before God one day. We will all face his judgment. Those who loved to say, “You can’t judge me.” And those who loved to stand over others in judgment. Here’s the message of the Bible on judgment: No one escapes judgment. The question is: will the judgment for your sin fall on you, or will the judgment for your sin fall on Jesus?”
- Picture of Sandy. . .