

Ministers:
the congregation

Kenny Chumbley
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Sunday:
8:00 AM: WGCY
9:00 AM: Worship

Wednesday:
7:00 PM: Bible Study

[gibsoncitychurchof
Christ.com](http://gibsoncitychurchofchrist.com)

This Past Week:
Worship—27
Wednesday—12
Contribution—\$1145

For meditation:
Proverbs 25.8–10
Is suing or threatening to sue
someone the way
to resolve a disagreement? What
light does this
passage shed on
Matthew 18.15ff,
and vice versa?

Radio program:
WGCY FM, 106.3
Sundays at 8 AM

“No condemnation,” part 1

“There is therefore now *no condemnation* to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8.1), doesn’t mean what I was led to believe growing up.

What I was led to believe is that the Christian life is an on-going cycle of being in-and-out of fellowship with God. When one is baptized, they are forgiven *until* their next sin / at which point they are out of fellowship with God / *until* they pray and ask forgiveness / at which point they are back in fellowship *until* their next sin, etc. Because people believed this about Christian justification, you’d hear questions like: “What about the Christian who inadvertently runs a red light, is hit by another car, and dies *before he or she had a chance to ask God’s forgiveness for breaking the law* (by running the red light)?

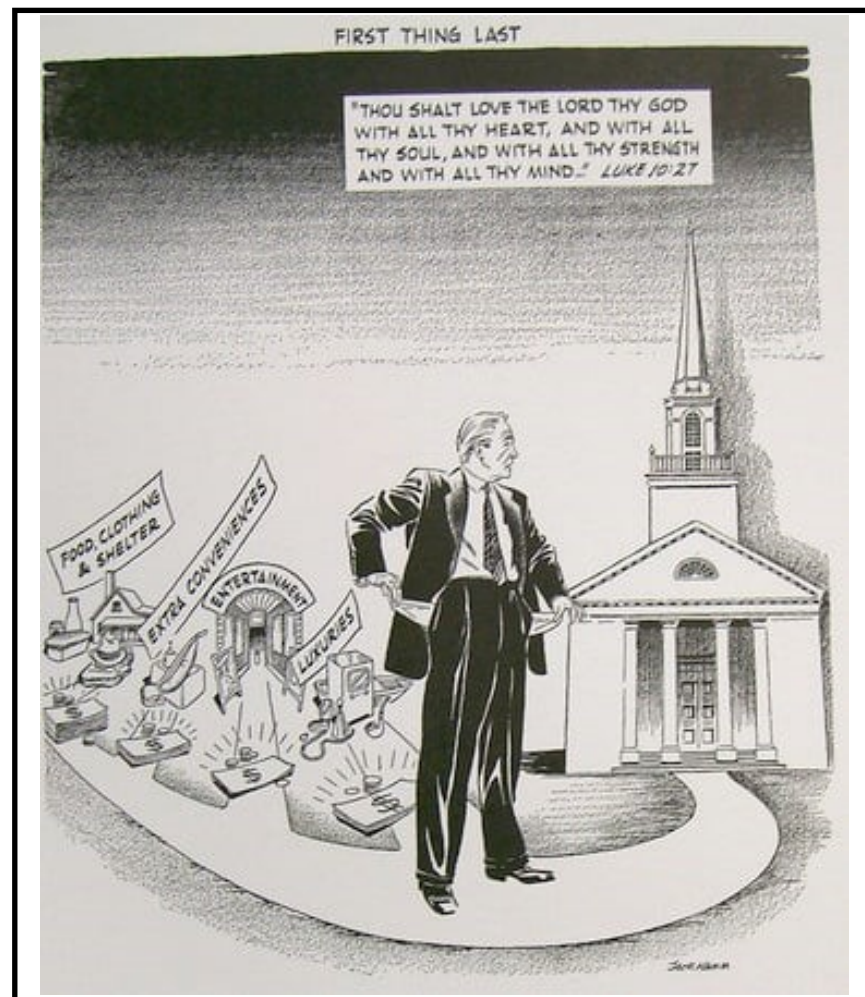
Romans 8.1 says there is *no condemnation* for those in Christ. Being “in Christ” (Paul’s favorite description of a Christian) depends on baptism (Rom. 6.3) and obedience (walking in the Spirit, Rom. 8.4–17)—not our moral/spiritual perfection. What this means on a practical level is that *fellowship with God and sins in our life exist concurrently*. Justification is free by God’s grace (Rom. 3.24); no one is justified by their sinlessness (Gal. 3.11, 1 Jn. 1.7). If we think we are, the Bible says we are deceived and a liar (1 Jn. 1.8).

“A sinner who is in fellowship with God” may not sound right to you, but it is right. It’s a paradox, just like God’s sovereignty and man’s free will are a paradox, and God’s paradoxes are to be believed, not explained. If God allows, I’ll say more about on Biblical justification in next week’s bulletin (and maybe the one after that).

kenny

Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL



Sermon: Romans 8.4–17

Be of sin the double cure

26 March 2023

The soils

I start with two general observations about the four types of soil in Christ's parable of the sower. The first is that the soils can be divided into two groups: those that bore fruit and those that didn't. Second, although the second group has three different types of soil, the similarity between them is greater than the differences that distinguish them; namely, *they all have some sort of barrier that prevents the proper growth of the seed*. With the wayside soil, there's a crust on the surface; with the stony soil, there's a crust just below the surface; with the thorny soil, the crust is dirt thick with the matted roots of thorns/weeds.

A successful harvest depends on more than just a sower and seed; it also depends on the condition of the soil—the *heart* of those who hear the word when it is preached. Christ mentions three different types of hearts as comprising the unfruitful group.

WAYSIDE

There are men for whom the gospel remains outside them, not entering their mind, conscience, or heart. Their soul is like a dirt sidewalk, packed hard by thoughts of business, sport, art, science, pleasure, etc., to where the word of God finds no opening. When the seed is sown, some aspect of worldliness rushes in to snatch it away before it can sink in. Wayside men include those who said John the Baptist, “has a demon” (Lk. 7.33); those who dismissed Christ because He was “a friend of tax collectors and sinners” (Matt. 11.19); the Athenians who wondered about Paul, “What does this babbler want to say?” and then mocked him when he said it (Acts 17.18,32); and Festus who heard Paul speak and thought him insane (Acts 26.24).

STONY

There is ground where a thin layer of soil covers a ledge of rock, and there are people who superficially look good but lack spiritual depth. A part of them is responsive to Christ's message, but the responsive part involves their *emotions*/feelings rather than their *volition*/will. When they come in contact with the truth they have an impulsive, emotional reaction to it: they “immediately receive the word with gladness” (Mk. 4.16). But they “have no root in themselves”; not far below their emotional surface is a stubborn will. In their emotions, they respond to Christ's *saving* power, but in their will, they resist His *sovereign* power. They are not of a mind to follow Christ if it means plucking out an eye

or cutting off a hand (Matt. 5.29–30). When discipleship involves tribulation or persecution (Mk. 4.17), they fall away. Christ may have sensed shallowness in the man who said, “Lord, I will follow you wherever You go” (Lk. 9.57); the multitudes displayed it when they wanted to make Christ a king one day, only to abandon Him the next (Jn. 6.15,66); and on the day of the crucifixion, where were those who shouted “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord” (Lk. 19.38) just a few days before?

THORNY

At this time of the year in the Midwest, the soil looks rich and fertile. The farmer tilled it in the fall, and it now sits, void of vegetation, waiting to be planted.

But left untended, before long the field will be covered with weeds; what looks like clean soil is a riot of roots that will soon sprout. Spiritual weeds can choke out our faith. Some weeds are susceptible to external pressure (4.17), others to internal decays (4.19). The thorny value the love of God, but they also enjoy the friendship of the world; there is some sin, pleasure, or pursuit they're unwilling to give up. Some day they hope they'll be able to lay aside their besetting sin (Heb. 12.1); they hope the good in their life will eventually choke out the bad; they hope for a more convenient time to repent. The rich, young ruler had done many honorable things (Lk. 18.21), but he loved money more than doing the most honorable thing of all (Lk. 18.23). Herod “feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things and heard him gladly” (Mk. 6.20), but there was a Herodias he clung to who was his ruin (6.17). And what about Judas Iscariot? The Lord would not have called him if he hadn't the makings of a great saint, but covetousness not only choked out his holiness, it led him to the greatest crime ever recorded.

Christ taught them all, but few there were who truly received His word. Man has the terrible power to be unfruitful.

kenny

News about us

- Mike and Lisa continue their recovery from surgery and accident. Larry and Debbie have been sick of late. Leroy is doing a little better as a result of the treatment for the compression fractures in his spine.