

## Luke 11E

- We jump back into Luke chapter 11 this morning, ready to complete our teaching on the Jews rejection of Jesus
  - For the past two weeks, including Easter Sunday, we examined the significance of the Jewish leaders and crowd doubting the obvious signs that Jesus was the Messiah
  - Secondly, the leaders went a step further and declared Jesus to be operating with the power of Satan
    - Keep in mind this accusation was not merely slander
    - It's not that these men were making up insults – no, they truly believed what they said
    - And in that misdirected belief, they assured themselves and their generation judgment
- But as we begin this morning, Luke inserts an interesting detail in passing – one that he uses to help emphasize the significance of Jesus' teaching in the moment

[Luke 11:27](#) ¶ While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed.”

[Luke 11:28](#) But He said, “On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.”

- Luke tells us that this woman's exclamation came in the moment as Jesus was saying these things
- The woman was essentially offering Jesus a compliment indirectly,
  - By complimenting Jesus mother, saying how special Jesus mother must have been, the woman was inferring how special Jesus was
  - The compliment seems natural enough
    - We sometimes say things like that to people
    - But this woman's comment reflected a deeper line of thought

- This comment reflects a very Jewish way of seeing honor and glory,
- In fact, her thinking – that Jesus’ mother was blessed to have such a good son - gives us added insight into the thinking of the crowd and of the Jewish leaders
- To address this woman’s thinking, I first need to remind you of a couple of well-known teachings that Paul gives in Romans and Galatians

[Rom. 9:6](#) ¶ But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel;

[Rom. 9:7](#) nor are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants, but: “THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED.”

[Rom. 9:8](#) That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

- In these verses from Romans Paul explains that to be counted a child of God – to be blessed in other words - has nothing to do with your human bloodline
  - There is not some special birthright that determines whether you are blessed
  - Rather, those who are the child of the promise who are blessed
  - Paul says it another way in Galatians

[Gal. 3:7](#) Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.

[Gal. 3:8](#) The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, “ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.”

[Gal. 3:9](#) So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

- Paul tells the Galatian church that anyone who shares the faith of Abraham will be a sons of Abraham and inherit the blessings promised to Abraham and his descendents
  - That the promised blessings were always intended for a spiritual birthright, not a physical birthright
  - Those who would believe as Abraham believed would join the family of God and share in Abraham’s blessings
- The reason Paul must spend time teaching these truths is reflected in this woman’s thinking

- Just like this woman, the churches in Rome and Galatia were prone to look upon their Jewish bloodlines as the reason they were blessed by God
  - They had been brought up to believe that the one and only way to be blessed by God and to be saved was to be Jewish
  - Now they had simply added the need to believe in Jesus to that list of must haves
  - Consequently, they were trying to teach Gentile believers that they must become Jews first and be circumcised before they could become Christians
- Paul said no, it was not their bloodline that mattered, not their Jewishness, but only their faith
  - In fact, he told the Roman church that those who call themselves Jew but don't believe in Jesus are actually not Jew at all – at least not in the meaningful sense of the term
- And this was exactly the kind of thinking that led this woman to exclaim this flattering phrase on Jesus
  - She assumes that any Jewish mother who had opportunity to birth someone like Jesus must be truly blessed
  - That family relationship, that blood relationship must mean that God had blessed the mother by giving her a son of such extraordinary talents
    - It was a blessing by association, in other words
  - This woman was simply making the same assumption common to her day, that blessing from God flows as a result of family relationships and bloodlines
    - And what tribe you belong to and whether you were born Jewish and how much honor you gained from all that
- Now, of course, Mary was blessed to have been given the honor to be Jesus mother, but Jesus would not agree to this woman's premise
  - He quickly responds back to the woman in the crowd saying, on the contrary
    - You've got it completely wrong

- You couldn't be more wrong
  - Then He says that the one who is blessed who hears the word of God and observes it or maintains it (*phulasso*) or guards it
    - Now, understand, Jesus is not insulting His mother, of course
    - He's not saying that His mother Mary was not blessed
    - Jesus was simply stating that Mary's blessing had nothing to do with her opportunity to birth and raise Jesus
    - Mary's opportunity to be blessed came in the same way it comes for every man or woman
      - By hearing and doing God's word
- Remember the words of Paul again

[Rom. 10:17](#) So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

- And of James

[James 1:23](#) For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror;

[James 1:24](#) for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

[James 1:25](#) But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

- Those who hear the word of God, believe and then prove their belief by keeping the law of liberty, the law of Christ, these people will be blessed
  - Mary was blessed because she heard the word of the God, believed God and proved her faith by obeying God
  - To say that Mary was blessed on the basis of her role of motherhood would be to say that she was blessed on the basis of her works, which is false teaching
    - I think that's one reason why the Catholic church has falsely elevated Mary to the status an idol, the sinless mother of creation, co-redeemer with Christ the Pope says

- It's because they have elevated her works above the fact of her faith
- Yet scriptures tells us that it is by grace through faith alone that men are justified, so that no one may boast
  - That no one includes Mary
  - Mary cannot boast before God that she was blessed and saved for anything she did – only by faith was she saved
- So Jesus has just begun to explain to the crowd the penalty for rejecting Christ's word, for rejecting the Messiah
  - And He responds to this woman's comment because it offers Him a perfect opportunity to make the point
  - If you want to be blessed, believe in my word
- And now He uses the exchange with the woman as a springboard for

[Luke 11:29](#) ¶ As the crowds were increasing, He began to say, "This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and *yet* no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah.

[Luke 11:30](#) "For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation.

[Luke 11:31](#) "The Queen of the South will rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

[Luke 11:32](#) "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

- The crowds are still increasing
  - And as verse 29 explains, the crowds are continuing to ask for signs
  - So not only have they not believed the signs Jesus as sent them, they continue to ask for more
    - The text leaves us with the sense that the crowd has almost turned to mocking Jesus now
    - It's turning into a circus atmosphere

- They keep egging Jesus on to do more miracles and give more signs
  - This reminds me of the description of His time in Nazareth, where He couldn't perform miracles because the people wanted Him to prove Himself by performing miracles the way He did Capernaum
- Instead, Jesus declares that this generation is wicked and it's wicked because it demands signs
  - It's wicked in demanding signs because the signs it has already received were more than sufficient to prove the point that Jesus was the Messiah
    - So as they continue to ask for signs, they are proving their unbelief
  - I hope we appreciate the seriousness of this practice in our own lives
    - There are times in our lives when we ask God to give us direction, guidance, a sign for how to respond in following Him
      - It might be concerning something big like a job decision, a serious family matter, a financial decision
      - Maybe it involves stepping out in ministry, or selecting a spouse, or selecting the right church
    - And God delights to answer those prayers, prayers seeking His will

[1Chr. 28:9](#) ¶ “As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you **seek** Him, He **will** let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.

- Like Gideon in Judges 6 who desires to know if God is with him before a battle, and he asks twice for God to give him a sign
  - Both times God responds
- But the habit of asking for sign after sign from God can be evidence of lack of faith in God's word to us
  - It's one thing to misunderstand a sign or to miss it
    - Or in the case of Gideon to have second thoughts and ask for confirmation

- But it's another thing entirely when we see a sign after sign and you recognize their meaning clearly, and yet we still fail to accept them and act upon them
  - And we go on demanding more signs
- What can be evidence of faith (as was the case for Gideon) can also become proof of no faith, of doubting God's word rather than believing it
- To the crowd, Jesus says no sign will be given
  - What He means of course is no more sign will be given, because they had already received many signs
  - But in declaring Jesus to be the devil, they had crossed a line and they would no longer receive the signs they desired
    - And it's because even if Jesus had given them what they wanted, it wouldn't have changed a thing
    - Their hearts were hard and their ears were closed
- Then Jesus emphasizes the point with two illustrations from their the history
  - Jesus reminds them of how the prophet Jonah had brought the Ninevites to repentance
  - And how the Queen of Sheeba had traveled a long distance to listen to hear the wisdom of Solomon
    - In the case of Jonah, the reluctant prophet...

[Jonah 2:10](#) ¶ Then the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land.

[Jonah 3:1](#) ¶ Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, [Jonah 3:2](#) "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you."

[Jonah 3:3](#) So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three days' walk.

[Jonah 3:4](#) Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown."

[Jonah 3:5](#) ¶ Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them.

- The people of Ninevah saw a miraculous sign

- They saw Jonah having come out of a fish, partially digested, white, hairless
- And based on this one sign, the entire city repents and believes in God
  - A city so big it was three days walk to cross it, that's bigger than San Antonio
  - And the people of this city will be their on judgment day to condemn the people of Jesus day for having neglected so great a sign as the Messiah in person
- And then there is the case of Queen Sheba, let's read the story

[1Kings 10:1](#) ¶ Now when the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with difficult questions.

[1Kings 10:2](#) So she came to Jerusalem with a very large retinue, with camels carrying spices and very much gold and precious stones. When she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart.

[1Kings 10:3](#) Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was hidden from the king which he did not explain to her.

[1Kings 10:4](#) When the queen of Sheba perceived all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built,

[1Kings 10:5](#) the food of his table, the seating of his servants, the attendance of his waiters and their attire, his cupbearers, and his stairway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her.

[1Kings 10:6](#) Then she said to the king, "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom.

[1Kings 10:7](#) "Nevertheless I did not believe the reports, until I came and my eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. You exceed *in* wisdom and prosperity the report which I heard.

[1Kings 10:8](#) "How blessed are your men, how blessed are these your servants who stand before you continually *and* hear your wisdom.

[1Kings 10:9](#) "Blessed be the LORD your God who delighted in you to set you on the throne of Israel; because the LORD loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness."

[1Kings 10:10](#) She gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and a very great *amount* of spices and precious stones. Never again did such abundance of spices come in as that which the queen of Sheba gave King Solomon.

- When the Queen appeared in Solomon's court, she was anything but convinced that Solomon was who he claimed to be
  - In verse 7 she says, she didn't believe the reports of Solomon

- She had heard miraculous things, things that testified to God's work through Solomon
- But yet she didn't believe those reports
- Yet she had enough curiosity to come for a closer look
- And when she sits in Solomon's court, and she presented him with difficult questions, as a test of whether he was truly who he claimed to be – a man who speaks with the wisdom of God
  - And we're told in verse 3 that nothing was hidden from Solomon, meaning God gave him all the right answers
    - And when the queen hears the wisdom of God and sees the splendor of the kingdom that God had bestowed upon Solomon and the nation of Israel
    - She has a change of heart
    - In verse 6 she admits what she's heard is true
    - And in verse 9 she acknowledges that God is the source of that blessing and blesses the name of the Lord
- Sadly, she likewise will judge the generation that rejected Christ
  - Because unlike the Queen, when they came in disbelief and curiosity and heard the wisdom of God spoken through His only Son, they remained in their unbelief
  - They refused to turn their hearts toward the truth
- And most stinging of all, both these examples are of Gentile people who received God's blessing of faith
  - And God says they will arise on the judgment day and condemn the Jewish people who were given the unequalled privilege of receiving the Messiah in the flesh
  - And so with these examples, Jesus pronounces the judgment that will fall upon this generation – judgment and condemnation
    - Not for everyone person alive in that generation, obviously
    - But for the unbelievers in that generation, there is no second chance –

- they will receive judgment for rejecting the most superior revelation
- while others that come before them and after them will know the truth on the basis of lesser revelation

[John 20:29](#) Jesus \*said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed *are* they who did not see, and *yet* believed.”

- Jesus concludes His discourse with a familiar comparison, one He uses from time to time in His teaching to make a number of related points

[Luke 11:33](#) ¶ “No one, after lighting a lamp, puts it away in a cellar nor under a basket, but on the lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light.

[Luke 11:34](#) “The eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness.

[Luke 11:35](#) “Then watch out that the light in you is not darkness.

[Luke 11:36](#) “If therefore your whole body is full of light, with no dark part in it, it will be wholly illumined, as when the lamp illumines you with its rays.”

- We’ve seen Jesus use this example of a lamp before
  - In connection with the parable of the four seeds
    - He taught that those who have been enlightened with the truth should seek to reflect that changed life to the world
    - To produce seed, like the Condition 4 Christians
  - This time He uses it in a similar way, but applies it differently
    - In the first time he used it in Chap 8, the focus was on the one producing the light, the new believer
    - Here’s the focus is on the ones who see our light, or in this case, who see the Light of the World, Jesus
- Jesus begins to speak of the eyes of those who might happen to see this light of the truth
  - If the eye is clear – meaning unobstructed, open to the truth, able to receive the light –
    - That person will be filled by the light, by the truth

- But when the eyes of the unbeliever are bad, meaning not open to seeing the truth, not willing to accept what they are seeing
  - That person's body is full of darkness
  - Take note that there is no mixing here
  - They are either filled by the light of the truth or they are consumed by darkness and ignorance
  - One replaces the other
- Jesus warns them to consider whether the light in them is not in fact darkness
  - He is saying that for those – particularly the Pharisees – who think they already know the truth, what they think is truth is in fact false
    - Thinking they are filled with light, their hearts are actually dark
  - Jesus ends by saying that if they were to reject the darkness completely, leaving none of it, they could be filled by the light of the truth and become a light for others
- Isn't it remarkable how consistent the message of scripture is on the issue of salvation
  - From Genesis to Revelation the storyline never varies
    - Either we serve the enemy or we serve God
    - Either we are children of disobedience or we are children of God
    - And it all depends on where we place our trust and faith
    - For those who trust in themselves or other false Gods, their hearts are darkened and they will not receive the truth
    - For those who trust in God – and God alone – there is mercy and grace everlasting
- Next week we conclude Chapter 11 and enter Chapter 12, as Jesus accepts another invitation to eat in the house of one of these unbelieving Pharisees
- Let's leave today resolved as a church family to everything God calls us to do in spreading the truth to others
  - To being that witness to the world

- To being used by God to hopefully keeping as few as possible of our generation from making the same mistake that those of Jesus generation made