

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expository Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 5- Luke 5:36-39** **72- You Cannot Mix the Gospel**

May 16, 2010

Luke 5:36-39

Now the "old garment" that Jesus referred to back in **Luke 5:36** is not the Old Testament, and it is not God's Holy Law which is eternal- and which the Gospel fulfills. No, the "old garment" that Jesus said that God's people must completely abandon is the man-made religion of Judaism.

And what Jesus was saying to these self-righteous Jews was that pieces of the glorious Gospel cannot be stitched onto any other man-made religious system. If you want to get that really clear in definitive terms, read Paul's letter to the **Galatians**. And I wish I had time to go through it- but that's what **Galatians** is all about.

Now what is interesting is that at the end of Chapter 5- the word "new" is used seven times. So we need to know that the Gospel that Jesus brought forth by His Life and His Death, Burial, and Resurrection was brand new. God has never taken on human flesh before, and Jesus Himself was Authoring eternal Salvation right then at the time of **Luke 5**.

So the one true Gospel cannot be patched into the old religious system of the Jews. The Gospel must always stand alone and be separate from everything else and from anything else because it is unique and there can never be any mixture of the Gospel with any other religious system.

And in verses 37&38 of Chapter 5- Jesus gave another illustration when he said:

37 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined.

38 But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.

Now just let me give you a very quick understanding of that. When they made alcoholic wine back then- they went through a process, of fermentation. So when they got the new juice out of the grapes- the grapes were crushed and the juice was yielded out in the vats- they would pour that juice into a literal skin of an animal- typically a goat's skin- and they would sew the goat skin up with the feet together- the front feet and the back feet- and they would sew it up so you had this big sack or a big pouch. And they cut the head off and the neck would be the spout and they would wrap the neck up and tie it with leather thongs. And they would fill this carcass with the grape juice.

Now what happens is that while it is in the skin- the juice ferments and when grape juice ferments- gas is released and it expands. So it was critical to use freshly killed animal skins because they were subtle and soft, and they would expand with that fermentation process without tearing. And as the juice fermented- the impurities or the dregs sank to the bottom and the newly fermented wine was at the top- close to the spout.

After that- the fermented wine would be poured out into another skin and it would still continue some process of fermentation and more dregs would fall out. And the wine went from skin to skin to skin until it was pure and there were no dregs and no sour vinegar left at the bottom.

But particularly the new wine had to be put first into very soft and freshly killed, or "new" skins, to allow for the expansion of the fermentation.

So what Jesus is saying here is, if you take the "new wine" of the Gospel and you try to put it into the old cracked, brittle, stiff wineskins of the Jewish man- religion- the expansion process of the Gospel taking hold on the souls of the individual will burst the old brittle man-made skins and the Gospel will be spilled out onto the ground and wasted.

In other words- Jesus was saying to these Pharisees that you cannot put the glorious Gospel of Salvation by Grace through Faith into the old system of Judaism. And by extension- it is also true that you also can't put the true Gospel into any other religious system or human philosophy either. In other words- you cannot combine the Biblical Gospel with a sacramental Romish system. You can't combine the true

Gospel with any works/righteousness orthodox system. You cannot combine the Gospel with social liberalism. You cannot combine it with neo-orthodoxy. You cannot combine it with a cult. You cannot combine the true Gospel with *anything* else.

The true Biblical Gospel is unique- nothing else is like it- it stands alone; it is an exclusive and any attempt by anybody for any reason to add anything else to the Gospel destroys the Gospel and changes it on a fundamental level. Anything else that you take away from the true Gospel also changes it fundamentally. And once you change or alter the Gospel- you no longer have the Gospel. After you add any man-made portion to the one true Gospel- you have successfully altered the Gospel to the point that it is no longer the Gospel- but is a perverted system that cannot save anyone.

Please listen to me. Nobody gets saved by good intentions. Nobody gets saved through sincerity. Salvation can only be obtained in the one single way that God has Authored it, and the Gospel is the key to that one true Salvation. So, by changing the Gospel- even for sincere reasons- that will not do anything productive but doom people to hell.

So, Jesus is telling these religious hypocrites that the Gospel is the new wine. And this new wine cannot be mixed with anything old, and it cannot be contained by anything old.

So any combination of the true Gospel with any works/righteousness system simply makes the Gospel to be void. At that point- when you mix the true Gospel with anything else- it becomes an old skin and it will crack, and the gospel will be lost and men will die in their sins.

Now this is how serious this issue really is. Please turn with me over to **Galatians 5:4**. In that verse the great Apostle taught that when you combine the true Gospel with anything else- especially those who believe that Salvation comes by way of obeying the Law of God- that the only thing that you get from that combination is a removal of God's Grace- which is the only thing that can truly save us. Read with me:

You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Please listen to me, dear friends, because this is crucial to your understanding of Jesus Christ. The Grace of God is not compatible with

anything else. And, therefore, anything else that is added to Grace destroys it and souls are lost. So it is not noble or good or admirable for people to devote their entire lives to a system of religious behavior that dilutes the Gospel by adding anything or taking anything away from God's merciful Grace.

So the Gospel of forgiveness by Grace through Faith alone in the finished Work of Christ alone cannot be put into an old and dry and brittle skin of works/righteousness systems- including Judaism.

So, my dear friend, please don't think you can add Jesus to your own personal religion because you can't. God is not going to make an exception for you. You come to God on His terms and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is your Lord and your Master, and you are his humble and obedient slave, and you believe in your heart that God physically and literally raised Jesus from the dead or you don't come at all.

God doesn't want your attendance on Sunday Morning for a few hours. God doesn't want you to tip the Lord a few bucks on Sunday and feel good about that. God wants unconditional surrender. God wants total capitulation. God wants your life and your dreams and your ambitions and your body and your mind and your heart and all that you are and everything that you possess. God wants you and me to live our lives in total submission to the Will of God as recorded in the Word of God, and He wants us to do so joyfully and do so gratefully and do so consistently, or else we can keep it all and we can burn.

So if you believe the Gospel, if you accept the Gospel, if you receive the Gospel- then the one true Gospel completely replaces your religion. The Pharisees and the scribes were the old skins; they were the old garment that couldn't contain the Gospel.

And then Jesus gave a third and final illustration- and it's really very sad. Look at **Luke 5:39** with me:

And no one, after drinking old *wine* wishes for new; for he says, 'The old is good enough.'

You take somebody who has been drinking the same kind of wine for years and years and years and you come along and say, "*Hey! I've got a brand new kind of wine here for you.*"

And that man will say, "*Nah, no thanks- I think I'll stick with my old favorite.*" And you get earnest with him and you say, "*But this new*

wine has got a new flavor and it's really great!" But he says, "No, no, I'm very happy with what I've already got."

Jesus looked at those self-righteous Pharisees and He said, *"You've been drinking that old wine of Judaism so long- you have absolutely no interest in the Gospel."* And that is so true.

People who have been in a false religion for a long, long time are very comfortable with what they have. They've learned the rituals and they have the ceremonies down pat and they can pray the prayers from memory and their religion has become something that doesn't require any change in them and it doesn't inconvenience them at all; False religions don't make any demands from them and it doesn't trouble them at all. Their man-made false religion offers them great comfort and security while they continue to remain lost and headed for hell which is why false religion is worse than outright sin.

So the people who are deceived by false religion cultivate a taste for human tradition and they cultivate a taste for human experience. And Judaism had become mellowed and settled by centuries of that kind of human experience and ever growing human tradition until by the time Jesus walked the earth- Judaism was so much a part of the fabric of their lives that they couldn't even see themselves in any other way. They were Pharisees and scribes to the death. And they had become self-satisfied. They had grown comfortable with their heresy, and like old men who have been drinking a certain wine all their life- they were not at all interested in a new one- no matter what it may have promised by way of delight and pleasure.

And I say to you that what Jesus was saying is that those who have deeply cultivated a love for their traditional man-made religion have no interest at all in the true Gospel. Haven't you found that to be true in the people that you talk to? It is so hard to reach those people. I would much rather deal with a poor destitute pagan any time than to try to deal with a settled, comfortable religionist.

The Judaism of Jesus' time was the very satisfying "old wine", and the followers of Judaism wanted nothing to do with the "new". And they rejected it so thoroughly that they eventually saw to it that the One who brought forth this New Wine was executed.

But that's where sinners are today as well. There's no mixing of the old and the new. But we need to know that for those today who are not willing to completely abandon their false religions and fully

embrace the true Gospel of Jesus Christ- there is absolutely no hope.

No one ever gets saved without hearing and believing the Gospel. God made Salvation to be just that way. In order for anyone to be saved- they must hear and believe the Gospel.

And those who don't- they aren't about to sell everything they have to buy the treasure in the field. And they aren't about to sell everything they have to buy the pearl of great price. They certainly aren't going to take the cup of **Luke 22:20**- the cup of the New Covenant, and drink that when they're content with their demonic system of false religion.

So what do we do with people like this? Do we tell them that their okay simply because they're sincere and try to put the Gospel in as a patch? Do we tell them that they're okay because they have prayed a prayer or gotten wet in the waters of baptism when their lives don't meet up to the standard of Scripture, and then dump some of the Gospel in their old wineskin? No. We can't do that. Because to do that is to doom them to hell. It is true that they may not repent even if we don't compromise with the Gospel- but they have absolutely no hope if we do. Beloved, we have to preach the Gospel and preach it alone.

Now from that uncomfortable confrontation at the end of Chapter 5- we move right into another one at the beginning of Chapter 6. Now this is my 72nd message in our journey through **Luke** and we are only beginning the sixth Chapter. And even though I had 17 messages in Chapter 5- Chapter 6 is the longest Chapter in **Luke** at least in terms of words.

And we have 24 Chapters in **Luke**- so we have a ways to go yet. But as I told you when I started this- my goal is not simply get through this Book, but to see the Majesty and the Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ as we journey together.

But even though we have only covered 5 Chapters- you can already see the bitterness and the hostility and the resentment and the animosity and the hatred that the Jewish leaders had against Jesus of Jesus is escalating severely.

Now you will remember that we began the Gospel of Luke with so much joy. Angelic announcements and angelic hosts praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest," for the birth of the Messiah. Shepherds, Joseph and Mary, Elizabeth, Zacharias, Simeon, Anna, the

old folks in the temple who were part of the Jewish remnant waiting and waiting for the long-expected Jesus who finally came.

So the Gospel of Luke began with such hope as do the other Gospels. But it didn't take long for the realization to set in that there would be a severe conflict and that Jesus would generate deadly hostility.

Now admittedly, the response to His ministry at first was very positive. Back in **Luke 4:15** we read,

And He *began* teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all.

... and down in verse 42 of that same fourth Chapter it says:

When day came, Jesus left and went to a secluded place; and the crowds were searching for Him, and came to Him and tried to keep Him from going away from them.

So at that time- Jesus was in tremendous demand. They had never heard anybody like Him. They had never seen anybody like Him. No one had ever done the miracles that He had done of healing, the casting out of demons, and no one had ever spoken the way that Jesus spoke. And the crowds wanted Him all the time.

Even as late as **Luke 5:26** it says,

They were all struck with astonishment and *began* glorifying God; and they were filled with fear, saying, “We have seen remarkable things today.”

So there was a tremendous explosion of popularity on the part of Jesus at first. Even the religious leaders- who had a lot at stake because they were in power- religious power and political power and influence- even those guys were curious at first.

Back in **Luke 5:17**- Jesus was teaching and there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. So, at this point- Jesus was starting to attract- not only the crowds of common people- but also the religious leaders- who came to hear His Message and to see the Wonders that He did- the miraculous healings and the casting out of demons.

So we can see that Jesus' Ministry began with great anticipation and hope and a whole lot of enthusiasm.

But it didn't take very long to turn, did it? In fact, by the time we come into Chapter 6- the hostility has reached a very severe level. And by this time- the Jewish leaders- the Pharisees and the scribes who were really the architects of Judaism- who were viewed as the leaders, who were the reigning theologians- they viewed Jesus as the most dangerous person alive and the single most severe threat to their religion and their religious position and power.

And frankly, they were exactly right about that because Jesus was the most powerful Teacher the world ever saw or will ever see. And He was attacking them to their face. And what is interesting is that Jesus was attacking their religion- what they believed, and the very pride of their religion- their rituals, and their ceremonies and the pretense of holiness and piety that these people made through their prayers and their washings.

And at the same time that Jesus was attacking everything about these religionists- He was *not* attacking the prostitutes and He was not attacking the tax collectors and He was not attacking the riff-raff of society. In fact, just the opposite. Jesus seemed to be drawn to those people while he ruthlessly attacked the religious nobility.

Now that is not because Jesus approved of adultery, or because it didn't matter that these people were prostitutes or tax collectors, because it did matter. It mattered a lot. God hates sin. But Jesus received these terrible dirty sinners only because these people had been chosen to believe and God had given them the capacity to repent and God had granted them with the gift of saving faith while the Pharisees were trying to earn their Salvation through their self-righteous efforts.

And so Jesus not only attacked them- but He attacked them at the foundation of their entire religious system- at the level of their own false spirituality. And His attack was relentless.

Now there is a very important message for all of us in this because we live in a day when the reigning view of most people is this thing called "tolerance". And this tolerance is a strange animal and it says that Christians must never condemn or criticize *anything* that *anybody* ever does or says- no matter how evil or how wrong or how unbiblical or how ungodly it is.

And this tolerance bears absolutely no resemblance to Biblical Christianity, and yet the prevailing sentiment of the modern world, and sadly, the modern Church is that if you're a real Christian- then you must manifest this tolerance to everyone about anything that they do.

In fact, this tolerance has gotten so out of hand that today it has gone out of style in the modern Church to preach against sin and to call men to repentance and to denounce wicked living and sinful behavior.

And today when we hear the word "ecumenical", or "ecumenism," which is a word that simply means "getting everybody together," and this ecumenism began in the Roman Catholic Church as the Great Whore of the Book of The Revelation is now flirting with silly and lazy and undiscerning Protestants, and the mood of this "getting everybody together" is this tolerance, and the prevailing attitude is "let's forget about what we all believe and teach, and let's drop Biblical Truth and what the Bible actually says, and let's set aside Scriptural Doctrines, and let's all come together and find out what we all have in common, and we'll all just get together for the sake of the social issues of our day and we will all be one.

But I beg you to take notice that Jesus took the very opposite approach. Jesus didn't attack the immorality of His society, in particular. Now obviously Jesus was very concerned about sin and He called sinners to repentance. But Jesus attacked the religious establishment because they were the ones who supposedly had the answers to all the social evils of that day, and yet these self-righteous Pharisees were the ones who were deceiving the people because they offered people false solutions and deceptive lies, and the ultimate delusion that God is pleased with you when He's not and that frail, fallen, and sinful human beings can earn their way into Heaven based on what they do to improve their own personal righteousness and not be saved by Grace through Faith.

And so Jesus attacked that false religious system. And every time there was a point of conflict between Himself and these false teachers- Jesus highlighted that tension. It was almost as if every time He made a wound with these people- He poured salt in it.

Now I want you to keep in mind that while Jesus was absolutely brutal against these false teachers- Jesus was also merciful and patient and kind to the worst people in the community. Jesus would spend all day long with prostitutes and pimps and tax collectors and drunks and

men who had physical problems and the outcasts of society. And the reason that Jesus spent time with these people was certainly not because He agreed with what they were doing- because He didn't- Jesus always, and in all cases, called these sinful people to repentance- But Jesus knew that regardless of how bad these people might look on the outside, and regardless of how wicked they had been, and regardless of how sinful their lives had been- Jesus knew that these people were chosen by God from before the foundation of the world for Salvation, and Jesus knew that Father God had chosen to give these people Mercy and not Justice, and that Jesus knew full well that they certainly didn't deserve that Mercy, and Jesus knew that God had chosen to grace these wicked sinners with the gift of Faith, and that God had chosen to granted these evil sinners with eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart to believe. And that is why Jesus worked with them and spent time with them and was patient with them, and that is why He forgave them and saved them.

And Jesus also knew that regardless of how clean the Pharisees looked on the outside and regardless of how often they prayed and regardless of how faithful they were to perform their man-made rituals and regardless of how many times they washed themselves with water and regardless of how much time the Pharisees spent in the OT Scriptures- Jesus knew that God had not chosen them for Salvation, and because of that- their hearts were hard, and Jesus knew that these men were puffed up with the brilliance of their own self-righteousness, and Jesus knew that God had certainly *not* made or forced these people to be sinful but that God had chosen to simply leave these Pharisees in their own self-deception and not rescue them, and Jesus knew that God had chosen to not deal with the Pharisees, and Jesus knew that God had chosen to allow the Pharisees to do everything that was already in their hearts to do and to do it without conviction and to do it without remorse, and Jesus knew that God had chosen *not* to interfere in their lives and chosen not to interrupt their lives, and that God had chosen to give these wicked self-righteous sinners Justice and not Mercy, and that their eyes were blind and their ears were deaf and their heart was as cold and as dead as stone.

And it started from the very beginning to be so. The Message that Luke recorded in Chapter 4 that Jesus gave in His own hometown of Nazareth, in His own synagogue, where He had grown up as a boy that

was still attended by family and friends- the Message there was that the whole entire man-made system of Judaism was out of touch with the Purposes of God, and that it could never bring anyone to Salvation because Jesus said, *"I came to fulfill Isaiah 61. I came to the poor, to the prisoners, to the blind, and to the oppressed."* Jesus didn't come to the spiritual elite- those who said they could already see without Grace and those who said they were already righteous without Faith. He didn't come to the self-righteous and the spiritually proud, and the people who are trying to merit righteousness with God and accomplish Salvation through their own works. Jesus said, *"I didn't come for those people. I came for the poor, prisoners, blind and oppressed, the downcast, the outcast, the people who know they're spiritually bankrupt and those who have been gifted by God to know that they need Grace and Mercy and Forgiveness and Salvation."*

And in saying this- Jesus infuriated the self-righteous people sitting in that synagogue that day who actually thought that God owed them Salvation because they were such holy people, and Jesus so infuriated them that even in the synagogue in His own hometown, before the day was over- these religious people tried to kill the spotless Lamb of God by throwing Him off a cliff.

So Jesus brutally and relentlessly assaulted that false religious system of works/righteousness precisely because that system *needed* to be assaulted. And we will see that it's going to get much worse as time goes on.

And by the way- this very same pattern that Jesus established here by spending time with wicked sinners who were chosen while brutally and relentlessly rejecting and attacking the man-made religion of the false teachers was followed by every single one of the Apostles.

Paul and Peter and James and John and the rest of the men that God chosen to write down the body of Teaching that set forth and explained the Divine Revelation that is the Rock that the Christian Church is founded on, namely that Jesus Christ alone is the Son of the Living God, those men, those Apostles were the kindest and the most gentle men on planet earth. They were loving and sweet and patient and longsuffering to anyone who was trying to love and serve God- regardless of how sinful they had been and regardless of how wicked their lives had been.

But if anyone for any reason tried to get up in the Church and teach false doctrine, if anyone for any reason tried to alter or change or add to or take away from what the Holy Spirit had given to them in the 27 Books of the NT, if anyone tried to teach "another gospel" or tried to alter what Grace was, or tried to deny either the full Humanity or the full Deity of Jesus Christ, or if anyone tried to add to or take away from the Character and Nature of God the Father- - these same men were absolutely brutal and they were ruthless, and they became the false teachers' worst nightmare, and they went on the attack and they attacked and they attacked day and night without hesitation and without pity until either the false teachers repented and recanted and were saved or else the false teachers were removed from the Church.

And this very same pattern continued on in the Christian Church after the Age of the Apostles was over and after the Canon of Scripture was finished, and after the time of miracles and signs and wonders ceased, and after the revelation gifts ceased, and this very same pattern of godly and Biblically qualified men teaching and preaching and explaining Biblical Truth according to Scripture in the Church to the saved very carefully and very precisely, and of defending that Truth against all false teachers relentlessly and faithfully and without hesitation went on through Justin Martyr and Ignatius and Polycarp and Clement of Rome and Irenaeus and John Chrysostom and on down through the centuries.

And every time the Church became lax and dropped its guard, and every time the leaders of the Church fell asleep on the job and did not guard the sheep, and every time tares came in and false teaching began to be taught again- God was faithful to raise up men like Augustine and Athanasius and John Hus and John Wycliffe and Martin Luther and John Calvin and John Knox and the Puritans and Jonathan Edwards and Charles Spurgeon and J Gresham Meacham and Donald Grey Barnhouse and James Montgomery Boice and Martin Lloyd Jones and ten thousand others to cry out against the false teachings and to cry out against the false teachers and to call the Church to repentance and to call the Church to return to Scripture and to call the Church to return to expositional preaching, and to relentlessly and faithfully attack the false teachers and the heretics and the wayward teachings until the men who teach it repent or are driven out.

And this is the very same pattern that we are to follow today. We are commanded by the Gospel to work with whoever the Lord sends our way, and it doesn't matter how bad they have been and it doesn't matter what sins they have committed and it doesn't matter how evil their lives have been. If God has chosen them for Salvation and if God has drawn them to Jesus and if Jesus died for their souls and if Jesus forgave them- then God wants us to get out of our prim and proper self-imposed exile and get our hands dirty with these people, and begin to rub shoulders with the dirty sheep and to work with them, and to love them and to be kind and merciful to them and to feed them and shepherd them and to present them as a chaste virgin to Jesus- the Lord of the Church.

And we who lead in the Church in the 21st Century are to teach and proclaim and preach and prophesy the very same Holy Scriptures in their full glory without apology and without hesitation and without being ashamed of the Gospel and the strong, godly, and biblically qualified male leadership of the visible Church of Jesus today is to be alert, and we are not to slumber and we are not to grow weary of well doing, and we are to study to show ourselves approved, and the leadership of the Church of the Firstborn is to watch and pray to the point where we see false teaching and heresy coming a mile off when a heresy or a false teaching rears its ugly head- we are to define that false teaching by Scripture and we are to carefully explain why that teaching is wrong and we are to reject that heresy and we are to cry out against it with the very same force and vigor as did our fathers, as did the Apostles before them, and as did our Lord Jesus before them, and we are to protect and defend the Truth against all attacks, and we are to faithfully and fearlessly and relentlessly attack that false teaching until the heretics who teach it repent or are driven out of the Church.

And if you don't have the stomach of this kind of fight, if the burden of feeding and caring for the sheep is too much for you, if knowing and studying and learning the Bible has sapped your joy, if the love of the world has gripped your heart, if secret sins have dulled the edge of the sword, if you see no Truth worthy of defending with your very life, if the love of money or the cares of this life or the lust of other things has entered in and choked the Word, if your eyes are blind so that you cannot see afar off, if your ears are dull of hearing so that you cannot hear what the Spirit is speaking to the Church, if you're not

strong enough to rule your own house well, if you're not qualified to hold your place in God- then for the sake of the Gospel and for the sake of the souls of the people you are supposed to shepherd- step aside and allow others who are ready and who are willing and who are qualified to stand in your place.

When Jesus confronted these heretics with their false teaching- He didn't speak in vague generalities about what was wrong with the system. No, when Jesus had an occasion to meet with the Pharisees or the scribes- who were the leaders of that system- He confronted them face to face.

And in their mind- it was just flat out rude for Jesus to attack their beloved man-made system that they had worked so hard to manufacture, and it was even more rude for Him to attack them personally. But according to the record that we have right here from Dr. Luke- that is exactly what Jesus did because these men were the purveyors of that evil and false system, and they were the snake oil salesmen who were peddling their homemade liniment.

So why did Jesus do that? Please listen to what I say here. Jesus did this precisely because Divine Truth was more important than anything else. Did you hear that? That may be the most profound thing I've ever said. Divine Truth is more important than anything else. And you know why Jesus always escalated the conflict? Because He *always* spoke the Truth.

If I ever do end up on Larry King or some other program like that, and somebody asks me, *"Will people who actually believe Mormon Doctrine go to Heaven?"* I pray that I will be faithful to say, *"Absolutely not"*. If they ask me, *"Will people who sincerely follow Judaism or the Doctrine of the Jehovah's Witnesses or Roman Catholicism or any other perversion of Scriptural Truth go to Heaven? Can people who earnestly reject the Deity of Jesus as do those who follow the teachings of Islam and the teachings of Buddha or the teachings of the Baga Va dita - can they go to Heaven?"* I pray that I will be faithful to say, *"Absolutely not"*.

Now why would I say that? Do I want to start a fight? No, I don't. Do I want to come off looking like some maniac? Of course not. Do I just enjoy controversy? Do I want to be resented? No- I want to be loved and accepted and wanted and thought well of just like everybody else.

But do I love the Truth? Yes. And that's the issue. If what Jesus said and what Jesus did is the Truth- then that eliminates everything else that everybody else said, and that makes whatever anybody else taught a lie. And if we truly love people- we will not tell them a lie- especially about their eternal soul. Telling people a lie or causing them to trust in something that is not true or allowing people to take comfort in a myth is not love, dear friends- it is hate.

Now Jesus didn't escalate the conflict by being insensitive and He didn't escalate the conflict by being ungracious. No, the conflict escalated all by itself simply because Jesus spoke the Truth- and that's the real issue.

And so every time there was conflict- instead of trying to relieve the tension, and instead of trying to lower the hostility or ease the conflict- Jesus escalated it, He advanced it, He agitated it, He increased it by always being absolutely truthful.

And as I said in our last study- the Gospel is completely incompatible with error in any form. And so when the Pharisees come to Jesus and say, *"Why are You doing this? This is not according to our law."* He could have said, *"Oh, My bad. I'm sorry about that. I would never want to upset you or hurt your feelings, or bring even the slightest bit of disparagement against your man-made religion. Maybe we could create an organization called the National Conference on the Gospel and Judaism, and we could meet and we could try to find common ground between us. Or maybe I could sign the Manhattan Declaration or go to a mosque and pray, and maybe I could stand in New York with the leaders of other false religions to show our solidarity, or maybe I could join hands with other real nice heretics and sway back and forth and sing, "Kum-ba-ya".*

But Jesus didn't do any of that, did He? Jesus never tried to find common ground with people who were teaching false doctrine because there wasn't any common ground to find. Jesus had the Truth and they didn't. And their only constructive course of action should have been repentance when Jesus confronted them- but instead they refused to repent and they tried to kill Him.

It isn't that you want to pick a fight for the sake of a fight. It isn't that you want to be ungracious for the sake of being ungracious. It isn't that you're some kind of self-styled Messiah who wants somehow to become a martyr. It's not that at all, it's that Divine Truth matters

more than anything else, and if you always quote Scripture in every situation- the Truth will have the effect of exposing everything else as error, and people who are in that error won't be happy about that. And that's the bottom line. So we see then that Jesus was compelled by His great Love of the Truth, and when conflict occurred- He always went immediately to the Scriptures, and He always took it to another level so that there was this continual escalation of their hostility. But, He never ever compromised with the Truth. Never. And neither should we.

Jesus never hesitated, He never obfuscated, He never clouded the issue, He never tried to crawlfish His way out of a tight fix, He always spoke the Truth and He let the chips fall where they may. And that is the Divine Pattern that we are to follow today.

We are to be kind and gentle and patient and merciful and longsuffering with all men- especially those with whom we disagree. But as to Truth, as to Scripture, as to the Word of God, as to what God said, as to the Divine Oracles- we are to be unhesitant and bold and confident and sure and unwavering and uncompromising and unyielding and unbending and relentless and strong and faithful to exactly what Scripture declares to be true, and we are to do so proudly without any sense of shame or sorrow or sadness- but we are to proclaim the Word of God without being ashamed of it and without trying to change it or hide it or make it more appealing or make it less offensive- regardless of what that may do to us, and regardless of the personal cost that may inflict on us, and regardless of how many people like or hate us, or how popular or unpopular that makes us, and regardless of how much or how little we have to suffer as a result of speaking the Truth.

Everything is not worthy fighting over, and every issue does not deserve our lives. I am not going to fight and die over politics or issues of taxation or things that are not eternal. I certainly have an opinion about those things, and I will speak my mind, if asked. But there are hills that are not only worthy of us fighting on them- but they are worthy of our very lives. And those things include the inspiration of Scripture and the nature of Grace, and how a wicked sinner is saved, and the full Humanity and Deity of Jesus Christ, and the Character and Nature of God the Father- those are the hills that I will gladly fight on, and, if necessary, those are hills that I gladly will die on- but if God gives me strength I will never ever compromise on them.

Jesus knew that the Gospel was utterly incompatible with any other form of religion. And He knew that Divine Truth was utterly incompatible with all error. And so Jesus continued to elevate the Truth, and, therefore, escalated the conflict with error.

And I think the Pharisees and scribes were probably insulted by Jesus because obviously Jesus had Divine Power. There was no way to deny His miracles. I mean, they wanted to- but they just couldn't deny them. During these days- Jesus literally banished all disease from Palestine. He healed the paralyzed man who came down through the roof- as we saw in Chapter 5.

There's no way to deny those miracles. They were all over the place- happening at a massive level. There was no way to deny that Jesus was casting out demons. There was no way to deny that He was the most profound Speaker of Truth that had ever been heard by anybody. There was no way to deny that He had Divine Power. So His claims to be the Messiah, the Son of God, etc., might have been believable, but there was a problem that I am sure irritated the socks off the Pharisees- if they wore socks. Maybe I should say He irritated the sandals off the Pharisees. And it was that when Jesus, this Messiah, this Man of God chose His official authoritative representatives- we call them the disciples or the Apostles- He didn't choose a Pharisee and He didn't choose a scribe. In fact, He chose a bunch of no-name nobodies from up in Galilee- who weren't even educated. They were fishermen and of all abominations and a tax collector, and a lot of other common people.

Jesus didn't say, *"You know, I'm coming into Israel to hold some evangelistic crusades and I need to form a committee of folks. And I'm going to take some Pharisees and some Sadducees and some scribes, we're going to involve them."* That was not going to happen. And I really don't think these religionists liked that too well.

But there was no possibility of Jesus ever forming an alliance with these people. Absolutely impossible. What fellowship has light with darkness? What concord has Christ with Satan? And that is the pattern that we are to follow today.

And as we enter into Chapter 6- we will find that Jesus is going to ratchet this thing up a higher notch because now we are going to find out that in addition to everything else He is- that Jesus is also Lord of the Sabbath.

Let's come and pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.