


TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

2020.12.17&20



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- How do each of the following passages describe fallen mankind's attitude toward God?
Colossians 1:21; 2:8, 18 _____
2 Corinthians 3:14; 4:4 _____
1 Timothy 6:5 _____
2 Timothy 2:25-26 _____
Ephesians 4:17-18 _____
Titus 1:15 _____
Romans 1:21, 28; 3:11; 6:21; 8:6-8, 13 _____

Which of those attitudes have you ever seen in yourself? What resulted? How did you change?

- Review insights on **Committed Christians**, **Skeptics**, and the **Lukewarm** (see **Sermon Summary**).
Without naming names, describe someone in each category who you know personally.
What advice would you give to each, based on your own personal experience with Christ?
- Read Romans 6:20-23. Jesus' lordship in our lives is described as "enslavement to God".
How does that strike you—**and why**?

What results from living under Jesus' lordship?
How have you seen that in your life?



Application-Challenge

Sense the darkness in your own heart—and don't imagine you can be good enough to earn God's acceptance. Understand that the Bible really is all about Jesus—then let him save you by his grace.

When you find your heart pushing back against Jesus' lordship, remember what he did for you. Then, let your light shine in this dark world. Point people to the God who loves them so much that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life!

Sermon Summary Key Text: Matthew 2:13-23

Most all the stories about the birth of Jesus we see in Luke and Matthew are filled with glad tidings of great joy. But this week we have a dark episode—and Christmas doesn't end the darkness in our world. In fact, Christmas became the occasion of what often is called "the slaughter of the innocents" (v. 16-18). This passage teaches us **three important lessons**.

[1] Jesus' entrance into the world evoked opposition (v.16). Murdering even one child is too many, but scholars estimate that perhaps 20-30 babies died in Bethlehem that day. Herod the Great was a suspicious and cruel man. And while it's tempting to self-righteously single-out Herod, Romans 8:7 tells us that that same opposition to Jesus is also in our hearts. God challenges our desire to be our own boss, and so our default response to him is enmity. It's a dog eat dog world—and there's a bit of Herod in us all! We don't want others telling us how to live our lives, and then along comes Jesus, who demands our full allegiance. He condemns our sin and selfishness, and we don't like that.

Consider how this plays out in **three different groups of people**. **Committed Christians** recognize that there still is residual opposition towards God's authority in their hearts. When God puts his finger on areas of our lives which are inconsistent with his Word, we are convicted and want to change. Yet there are things we wished were not in our Bibles (Romans 7:15). Sometimes even the Christian's response to God's authority is one of opposition. **Skeptics** find it hard to believe Christianity—but it's very important to admit that you are not objective about this matter. As an atheist philosophy professor at NYU once admitted, "The problem is, I **want** atheism to be true...I don't want there to be a God." You see, if Jesus Christ is who he claimed to be, then you lose control. You can't live just any old way you want, at least, not without consequences. If you're skeptical of Christianity, just realize, you're not objective either! You're not! Then there are the **lukewarm** people in the middle. You kind of believe in God, maybe even in Christianity. You come to church sometimes, but you're "moderate" toward Jesus. Fact is, if you were **angrier** at God you'd be closer to knowing who Jesus **really** is. You don't read the Bible much, it's hard to be moderate towards the **real** Jesus!

[2] God works in unexpected ways. Nazareth, where Jesus was raised, was Nowheresville (John 1:45–46)! And right here, in the very beginning of Jesus' life, God acts counter-intuitively. God choose Nazareth, not Rome, or Athens, or Jerusalem. God often chooses the unloved, the infertile, the socially shamed to accomplish his purposes. And it's not just that God likes underdogs. No—God's way of saving is very different from how the world thinks it should be done. Probably ninety percent of people say God will accept us if we live a good life, go to church, or obey the Ten Commandments. No—Jesus came in weakness and only saves those who know that they are weak. God works in unexpected ways.

[3] The whole Bible is really about Jesus. Verse 15 makes this point in an interesting way. It is a quote of Hosea 11:1—which is not a prophecy about Jesus, at least not in the classic sense. In the Old Testament, God often called the nation of Israel "my son." God told Israel that if they would obey him, they'd experience his blessing. But Israel was consistently a disobedient son. And Israel's story is **our** story! Is there any hope? Yes there is! God sent his Son, and immediately he faced difficulties. But unlike everyone else, Jesus perfectly obeyed his Father—but instead of receiving a blessing, he became a curse for us. No crown of gold—only one of thorns. Why? He got the curse **we** deserve, and the good news of the gospel is that if we believe in him, we get the blessing **he** deserved. Matthew looked at Hosea 11:1 and read it as if it is about Jesus—because all of the Bible really is about him! The only way to remove our hearts' opposition to God is to see the darkness in our own hearts and trust in what Jesus did for us on the cross. If you find your heart pushing back against Jesus' lordship, remember who he is and what he did for you.

Talking To Others About This Week's Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asks you, "*What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?*", how would you summarize the most important elements of this week's sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? Can you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) is a simple way to study any passage. We can use it to learn how to reject the world and to respond properly to God...

Monday—Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-20. What does the world think about Christ? What does God think about the world?

Tuesday—Read 1 Corinthians 1:21. As they say, "*The proof is in the pudding!*" Relate that concept to this passage.

Wednesday—Read 1 Corinthians 1:22-25. Why do we refuse to get entangled in unprofitable controversies?

Thursday—Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. What does this passage say about our credentials? (How's your self-esteem?)

Friday—Circle the word "call/called/calling" in v. 1, 24, 26 and "chosen" in v. 27 (2x) and 28. What do you learn?

Saturday—***In preparation for worshipping your risen Lord with your church family, study Matthew 1:18-25.***

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?




What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]

Men—

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Mornings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mondays• 7-8:30am• begins January 11 (ends early April)• zoom only	Evenings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mondays• 7-8:30pm• begins January 11 (ends early April)• zoom or face-to-face option (at <u>TCC</u>)
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