

## Confused Commitments

A question as we begin our study of these precious words of scripture this morning . . . "What are the thoughts that pass through your mind and what is the response that takes place within you as you listen to the words being spoken by a person, especially if that person is regarded as being of high renown, of importance, and especially if that person is a highly regarded religious leader?"

That is the circumstance that we'll study about here in our scripture passage for today. This is the Lord Jesus, and He had just finished talking to the people about how demons can invade the lives of ordinary people, causing them to do things and to behave in corrupt and evil ways, when from the back of the crowd, a woman who was listening began shouting to Him. Listen to these words given to us in Luke chapter 11, beginning in verse 27.

<sup>27</sup>And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!" <sup>28</sup>But He said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (Luke 11:27-28)

I confess to you that as I first read these words, and as I began to consider the message that God would intend for us to receive about them, I was at a loss to understand. These few words, given here in just two verses, seem to have very little to do with the context of the matters taking place at the time. On the one hand, Jesus was casting a demon out of a man and in the process was being accused of being in league with the devil. And on the other hand, the Jewish leaders were demanding a sign from Him as to who He really was.

And again, these next few words from this woman in the crowd just don't seem to fit.

Whatever God's purpose was in presenting this circumstance to us in this way, Jesus did what Jesus always does. He engaged each of the circumstances and each matter with the best and right response. With the man who had a demon, He cast the demon out. And then He turned and answered the criticisms of the Jewish leaders, and then He gave words of wisdom to anyone who would listen about the evil activity of the demonic world as they cross over into our human realm, invading our lives, corrupting us, and making us miserable.

And then here, in amongst all the other clamor taking place, a woman shouted from the crowd,

“Blessed is the womb that bore You, and *the* breasts which nursed You!”  
(Luke 11:27)

And then Jesus responded to her saying,

<sup>28</sup> . . . “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” (Luke 11:28)

As I read these words and imagined the circumstance taking place, I could clearly see and hear a very “motherly” kind of reaction, a very proud “motherly” kind of response.

As this dear woman witnessed all the wonderful things that Jesus was doing and saying, it seems that she might have just gotten so caught up in her admiration of Him, that she just had to shout some words of praise and admiration.

And folks, as unrelated and perhaps even as inappropriate as this woman's words might seem to be, this is a clear example of what takes place moment by moment in some of our own meager human minds.

We think thoughts and we have affections that come out from our earthly and human perspective. And because our minds are often too small and too fleshly focused, to be able to recognize when a deeply Spiritual occurrence has taken place, in our excitement, we simply blurt out the first thing that comes to our mind.

I'm reminded of a similar circumstance involving the Apostle Peter and the Lord Jesus when Jesus was explaining to Peter about how He would need to be crucified. We're told that,

<sup>22</sup> Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said.  
“This shall never happen to you!” (Matthew 16:22)

There in those words, Peter, being a loving friend, and also having his own ideas and hopes about what the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, was supposed to do, blurted out the first thing that came to his mind. And Jesus rebuked him, saying to Peter,

<sup>23</sup> . . . You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.” (Matthew 16:23)

And unfortunately, that is what so often takes place with most of us. Here, Peter was using fleshly thinking, his human rationale and so was this woman in this crowd. And human rationale just cannot reach high enough to grasp and to understand the lofty things of God.

And while you and I can't know exactly what this woman in the crowd was thinking as she spoke, we need always to remember that Jesus did know her thoughts. We are told in several places in these gospels that Jesus always knew all of the thoughts of all of the people in every crowd.

Jesus knew that this woman's thoughts and her rationale were fixed on earthly things and not on the things of God. As she looked at Jesus, she was able to only see a "man", a very special "man", yes, but still only a "man" and not the very God of Glory, the One who had been sent to save her lost soul. And so, her mind turned from Him and gave credit to His mother as she shouted,

"Blessed is the womb that bore You, and *the* breasts which nursed You!"  
(Luke 11:27)

And again folks, too often this same kind of confused thinking takes place within each of us. This earth, and its affections are all that we know. And our minds rush to the rationale of this earth and the culture of this earth, and we respond with our secular thinking. But God tells us not to do that. In words like these in Colossians chapter 3, God tells us to,

<sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

<sup>3</sup> For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:2-3)

This particular scripture reminds me of an unkind criticism that I have sometimes heard said, that a person is "so heavenly minded that they are of no earthly good."

But folks, if I understand this verse here in Colossians correctly, such criticism is most likely a very wrong thing to say about a person. It seems, from these words that God really would be pleased for us to always be "heavenly minded". That we would always see Jesus, not just as a man, not just as a "good teacher" or a "good example for us to follow", but as the Holy God of Glory, our Savior and Lord.

And again, the opposite was probably true for this woman in the crowd and also for the Apostle Peter as they responded to Jesus. Their thoughts and their responses were from an earthly perspective.

As I've studied these words, I found a curious correlation between these words that this woman shouted and some other words that are given to us in these scriptures, a correlation that also bespeaks the confusion and the confused commitments that can take place when we have set our minds too much on thoughts and responses that are from an earthly perspective that we fail to know what God would have us to know and to believe about Him and His truth.

These words spoken by this woman are very similar to a doctrine and some confused commitments that have become very important to our friends within the Catholic Church.

In the Book of Matthew chapter 1, as the Angel Gabriel spoke to Mary, the mother of Jesus, about the divine calling that was being given to her to be the mother of the coming Messiah, Gabriel said to Mary,

<sup>28</sup> . . . Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. (Matthew 1:28)

And then later in Mary's prayerful song given to us in Luke chapter 1, verse 48, Mary said,

<sup>48</sup> For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant, for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. (Luke 1:48)

And that was what was taking place with this woman in this crowd. She was fulfilling this prophecy spoken by Mary. The woman in the crowd said,

"Blessed is the womb that bore You, and *the* breasts which nursed You!" (Luke 11:27)

Unfortunately, over these intervening years, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church has adopted a very similar mindset as this woman in this crowd, that of regarding Mary as not only being highly honored and favored, but sadly, they have taken the reverence far beyond that level of honor.

They have elevated Mary to a very high position within God's kingdom, such a high official position that she is prayed to, with the expectation that she can actually grant answers to prayers. And their common daily rosary prayer is,

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

Again, note the similarity within these words carefully. In the rosary,  
Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

And note the words of this woman in the crowd. She said,  
"Blessed is the womb that bore You, and *the* breasts which nursed You!"  
(Luke 11:27)

And note again in the scripture passage that we're studying today, that Jesus was swift to correct the thoughts and the words of this dear woman in the crowd. Here, Jesus quickly corrected her misguided exaltation of Mary by saying,

<sup>28</sup> . . . "More than that, blessed *are* those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (Luke 11:28)

In these words, Jesus was saying that "more, much, much more than anything or any other person in existence, that "blessed *are* those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

And folks, Mary fully agreed with these words of the Lord Jesus. She said so in her prayer, there in Luke chapter 1. She said,

<sup>46</sup> . . . "My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.  
(Luke 1:46-47)

Mary, the mother of Jesus was truly a wonderful person. But as wonderful as she was, and as blessed as she was, she was still simply a human being, just as you and me. And Mary does not have the ability to save anyone's soul. She is not God! And from these words, we can know that Mary knew well that she herself needed someone to save her own soul, the Lord Jesus! Mary said,

<sup>46</sup> . . . "My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.  
(Luke 1:46-47)

May I take a moment and remind us of the simple truth that Jesus is speaking about here, and about what it really takes for you and me to be saved. Here, as this woman said,

"Blessed is the womb that bore You, and *the* breasts which nursed You!"  
(Luke 11:27)

Jesus quickly said,

<sup>28</sup> . . . "More than that, blessed *are* those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (Luke 11:28)

As we're told in Acts 4:12, Jesus Himself is the only means and the only pathway to eternal salvation. There we're told that,

<sup>12</sup> Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

And in 1 John 5 we are told,

<sup>11</sup> And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup> He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.(1 John 5:11-12)

These are the words of God that Jesus was speaking about when He said,

<sup>28</sup> . . . "More than that, blessed *are* those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (Luke 11:28)

The word of God is the "gospel", the "gospel".

In Mark chapter 1, Jesus said,

<sup>15</sup> . . . "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:15)

And also in Romans 1, we read,

<sup>16</sup>For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. (Romans 1:16)

Folks, we are saved through "Grace alone", through "Faith alone", in "Christ alone," for the "Glory of God alone", as given in these "Scriptures alone", and in no other way.

Yes, Mary, the mother of Jesus, truly was so very, very important, so blessed and so highly to be honored. But it really matters not who our birthparents are, or through what heritage we are born. That was made so very clear as Jesus warned the Jewish people of His day that they must not depend on their having

been born within the bloodline of Abraham, that simple heritage, who your parents are, will not save a person.

Not through Abraham and not through Mary the mother of Jesus. It is through Christ and Christ alone that we can be saved.

May I say this again! It is only through a "second birth", being "born again" from above, that we can be saved. And it is only through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus that we can have eternal life.

<sup>11</sup> And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup> He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. (1 John 5:11-12)

Again, this dear woman just seems to have gotten caught up in a moment of innocent emotion, and instead of saying, "Praise be to the God of Glory who has come to save us from our sins", she said "Blessed *is* the womb that bore You, and *the* breasts which nursed You!"

Now, before we close for today, I want us to examine ourselves about such occasions as this that take place within our own lives. Because I know that for myself, too often, these same kinds of confused commitments can take place within me.

God, is often doing marvelous things in our presence, making provision, turning bad situations into good ones, showing grace and mercy to us when we deserve none. But we fail to recognize that it is God's intervening hand that is at work. And we mistakenly ascribe praise to some person or to something else.

Instead of immediately giving God the glory for the great things He has done, we let our emotions take us awry and we start praising some other person.

And while yes, some person may have been very involved in a blessing that we are receiving. We must remember that "all good and perfect gifts come down from God". He just allows those good and perfect gifts to flow through some other person. And we must always remember to give the glory to God and to Him alone.

And as for Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus, the good and perfect gift of the Lord Jesus, came from God the Father. He simply allowed His good and perfect

gift of the Lord Jesus to flow through the body and through the womb of Mary, His mother. Listen as we close,

<sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

<sup>3</sup> For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:2-3)

Let's pray.