

We Grieve The Heart Of God
Luke 14:34-35

In an earlier study of these truths given to us here in Luke chapter 14, we said that the real and the true cost of the salvation that we enjoy today is much, much more than what it took to get us to that first moment of receiving the Lord Jesus as our Savior.

And we said that as we live out our days as a Christian, we need always to be on our guard because all the many forms of temptation and sin, the world, our own flesh and the devil are ever and always on the prowl to lure us back into the ways and into the behaviors we enjoyed before our Lord so graciously saved us.

And folks, our flesh and the desires of our own flesh are especially susceptible to all those many temptations. I'm reminded of the warning given to us in the Book of Jeremiah chapter 17 where we are told that we come into this life with a heart that is already deceitful and desperately wicked. And it asked the question, "who can know it", "who is able to comprehend the wickedness of their own heart?"

Oh dear Christian, those words give us a clear warning that thoughts and imaginations can take place within the depths of our hearts that can take us captive. They can confuse us and tempt us into doing things that we would not otherwise even imagine ourselves doing, things and behaviors that we know are wrong. But then we do them anyway.

And oh . . . when we do those things, we "grieve the heart of God", and we "quench the fire of His Holy Spirit who lives within us. And that is when the "Godly saltiness" of our character spoken about in our scripture passage for today begins to wane and lose its precious savor.

Let's read these very simple, but very profound words given to us here in Luke chapter 14. But first, let me remind us that our Lord calls His disciples, you and me, to be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world", two substances that in the same way they are able to transform food and take away the darkness, your and my salt and light are to have that same transforming effect on the people and the circumstances with whom we have to do.

Let's read these words of our passage and then let's talk about them for a few moments, especially about how these truths are so important within the "oneness" we should have with our families and within the relationships we should have with intimate friends. But also, to take great care about whom else we might develop a "oneness" with. Listen! Verse 34,

³⁴ "Salt *is* good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?

³⁵ It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, *but* men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Luke 14:34-35)

Let's begin our study today with some strong words that some might reject as being an indictment. And yes, for some of us, perhaps many of us, these words might very well be an indictment . . . but those words anyway . . . and that is that the expectation that Jesus has for those of us who have truly given our hearts to Him in salvation is often very different from, and often stands in strong contrast to, much of the lifestyle that many of us actually live each day . . . errant lifestyles that can oftentimes lead us into conditions such as these spoken about here in today's passage and can cause us to grieve the heart of God. Listen again,

³⁴ "Salt *is* good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?

³⁵ It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, *but* men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Luke 14:34-35)

Those of us who have truly given our hearts to the Lord Jesus are His disciples, His dearly beloved children. And as His disciples, Jesus wants so much more for us, and also much more from us, more than we are often willing to give.

In John chapter 17, Jesus prayed a very special prayer for us as He prepared to leave us and to go back into heaven. And in His prayer, He expressed those high hopes and earnest expectations that He has for us.

There, beginning in verse 15 Jesus in speaking about His disciples, both those with Him at that time and also you and me now, He said, "Father,

¹⁵ I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

²⁰ "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;

²¹ that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

²² And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:

²³ I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. (John 17:15-23)

These words express so clearly our Lord's earnest desires for you and me as His dearly beloved children, the desire that we would be "one", one with Him and "one" with each other, a "oneness" that would bless us and protect us as we live and walk in amongst a corrupt and depraved world. Oneness is so very important to our Lord. Oneness with Him and oneness with each other is the evidence and the outworking of a Christ-like humble heart.

But sadly, with only a cursory examination of ourselves and of our lifestyles, we can easily see that we are failing to live up to our Lord's plans and to His expectations.

Unfortunately, even though we might have taken all of the necessary steps to receive Christ and are assured of our eternal salvation, there still remains within us a propensity to quickly and easily join right back into the self-centered ways and habits and desires of the world around us. And we can become so "blended" back into their ways that hardly a difference can be seen between us and the rest of the world. And we fall short!

And nowhere is that more evident than within the average Christian family. The heartbreaking reality for our Christian families today is that we lose that "oneness" we should have and we don't get along with each other much better than do the families who do not know Christ at all. And the divorce rate for us is very little different from the divorce rate in the rest of the world.

And that is especially sad, because we also know that underlying every divorce is a whole host of wretched and inexcusable sins, sins of arguing, of lying, of cheating, deception, abuse and adultery. Sins that destroy relationships and especially destroy the innocent lives of our children. All of which are a far, far

cry from Jesus' words here in John 17 calling out to us to not be separated by our sins, but to be "one" with each other.

²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us . . . that they may be one even as we are one,

²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one. (Luke 14:21,23)

Think about this folks! From the beginning of time, our Lord has described the marriage relationship as being a husband and wife who are "one" with each other. And here, the Lord Jesus is telling us again about the "goodness" and the "necessity" of that "oneness". And because of that, we have every reason to know that truth so very well and to live within it.

But sadly, instead of our being "one" with Christ and "one" with each other, we make choices we should not make and we slowly but surely lose the "saltiness of the Holy Spirit" and we fall away from all that we know to be right and good. And we become exactly like the rest of the unbelieving world, the world that we are supposed to have come out from.

And that really should not be allowed to take place within us. These scriptures are clear. We really have been given everything that we need for life and godliness, everything we need to not only receive the salvation and the righteousness of Christ, but also everything that we need to keep it and to live it.

Those words in 2 Peter chapter 1 are real and they are true. They tell us that,
³ His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.
⁴ Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

Can these words be any more clear and plain?

If these words are clear and plain, what then is taking place within our souls to bring about the condition where we lose nearly all of the "salt" and the "light" within our souls?

I am convinced folks that it has to do with our response to God's Holy Spirit.

Yes, we really do believe in God and in His Holy Spirit. We believe that God's Spirit brought us to our salvation and we believe that He abides within us daily as we grow in our knowledge and love for Christ.

And we often proclaim those words strongly to other people. We say that God's Spirit is the strength of our salvation, that He is our protector, our guide, our comforter, our strong tower in times of trouble.

But even knowing and professing all of that, when temptation comes to us, it seems that so very often, and without much warning, so also comes a strange "disconnect" with all those things that we know and believe about our God. Our "saltiness begins to wane", and we fall short.

And as we try to regain some semblance of our "Spiritual sanity" we wonder, "What has taken place to bring us into all these conditions and into all these troubles?"

My imagination takes me back to the Garden of Eden and to those first confused moments that might have taken place within Eve's mind as she suddenly found herself thinking thoughts that she had never thought before, and then doing things that she quickly knew that she should not have done.

But that is the nature and the effects of temptation and sin.

Sin really is a predator and it lurks behind every door. It can remain hidden there, as perhaps it did with Eve, for a long, long time. We don't really know how long it took for satan's words to have their effect on Eve. But eventually they did.

And that is very little different from you and me. For a long, long time, that man, that woman in the office was just a friend, but then, in a moment of weakness, when troubles at home get out of hand, suddenly, all of the things we know and count dear change.

In the Book of James, God gives us a glimpse of how that whole process of wrong choices and the "grieving of the Holy Spirit" can take place. There we are told that sin's path begins deep within the hidden recesses of our souls and then slowly works its way up to the surface.

Let me read those words from James chapter 1 beginning in verse 14,

¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. (James 1:14-15)

This is the way that sin ran its course within the souls of Adam and Eve, and this is the way it works its destruction within you and me. Yes, there are other very powerful elements also at work, especially the powerful work of satan, and we must never underestimate him.

As with Eve, satan, the evil "tempter", and his demonic workers are far more clever than we are. And somehow, just at our most vulnerable moments, satan's demonic power reaches into our souls and grabs hold of some remnant of our old sinful nature causing just the right combinations to take place, bringing about our fall. And oftentimes that fall is great and ruinous to our souls, to our marriages, to our children, and on and on.

Think practically about sin for a moment, about how it gains its foothold in us, how it gets its start within our souls?

Sin begins first by simply being all around us, within all the common and ordinary matters of daily life, literally within everything and most everyone we come near.

God describes it so very well for us in 2 Timothy chapter 3, especially the way in these modern days that sin shows itself within the lives and the behaviors of men and women all around us, in our neighborhoods, in our workplaces, on our televisions, on our computers, everywhere. Turn there with me for a moment and let's read about how very corrupt and wrong our modern culture of people are becoming. Listen!

¹ But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

Are you listening folks? This is the culture that we live within and is taking place all around us every day. And there's more! He continues, verse 3,

³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,

⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of

God,

⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

⁶ For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts,

⁷ always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.
(2 Timothy 3:1-7)

Wow! Don't these words paint a bleak picture for you and for me and for our families as we live daily in amongst our modern day culture.

Recalling those words that I read for us a moment ago in James chapter 1, how as we watch all of these temptations taking place all around us corrupting our thoughts and slowly drawing us towards and into one or even many of these sins . . . a subtle process, one step at a time.

I would suggest that it was much the same for Eve as she walked by that tree each day there in the Garden, first perhaps just noticing it, but then gradually being tempted and drawn towards it.

And we, like Eve, for most of the times that we walk by those sinful opportunities around us each day, we at first only notice them. And we know better than to touch or taste of those fruits.

But eventually, if we are not very, very careful, we will subtly, even unknowingly, become lulled into those temptations and lifestyles. And as we do, we then slowly begin to lose that precious saltiness that Christ has put into us, and we begin to develop a form of godliness that denies its power. And if left to continue, as our "salt loses its savor", we will find ourselves slowly turning aside and getting involved within those temptations and those sins, grieving the Holy Spirit with each step we take.

Again may I say that there are many, many people who sit in church pews every Sunday, sincerely wanting to be the Christians that God wants them to be, claiming the name of Christian, but are struggling to, or unwilling to, take that necessary step of fleeing from those sins and then moving on forward with Christ.

And here in these words from the Lord He is saying to us that we must be warned, that before we ourselves get caught up with those people and with their behaviors, "we must turn away from them, flee from them!"

But, we think, how can we turn away from them? Some of them are our dearest of friends.

But folks, God is telling us that we really must turn away from them! As long as we remain "joined-together" with them in their activities and in their behaviors, as long as we choose to be "one" with them, we cannot be "one" with our Lord. We instead become like the ones we are joined together with, "having a form of godliness but denying its power."

Yes, if we have Christ as our Savior, we are still saved, and we will never lose our eternal salvation. But folks, look around you. There are a lot of Christians that don't look very much like Christians. And please do pause for a moment and take a careful look in the mirror of God's word! We, you and I, really may look a lot like them. Verse 2, "unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, proud, and on and on."

And again, considering the divorce rate among believing Christians that I spoke about a moment ago, we can easily find ourselves caught up in behaviors like these spoken about in verse 6 of 2 Timothy 3.

⁶ For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts,
(2 Timothy 3:6)

Right now, we think, "Oh, but no! This could never happen with me. But folks, it can and it does. Temptation and sin are that crafty and that powerful.

These words of the Lord Jesus here in Luke chapter 14, are given to you and to me as a warning. And we must understand that. Else we might drift into the condition that our Lord speaks about here of losing the "saltiness" of His presence within us.

³⁴ "Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?

³⁵ It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, *but* men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Luke 14:34-35)

Folks, just as with dear innocent Eve, that tree of knowledge of good and evil is right here in front of you and me every moment of every day. And we are walking by it and we are continually feeling its draw into its tempting ways.

And our protection from its power must not rest within our own strength. Our protection lies solely within the strength and power of God's Holy Spirit. It is by His strength and His strength alone that we can walk that path right on past that temptation and we dare not "grieve Him" with some errant behavior.

Whether we are able to fully comprehend it or not, in our salvation, God really has given us everything that we need for life and godliness. And He has especially given us His Holy Spirit, who has said that He will live in us and be a guide and a comfort to us in our times of trouble. And He will warn us every time we are tempted.

But we must also do our part, and that is, as He gives us warning, we must obey His leading immediately, without question and without excuse. We must flee from those temptations. If we do not, we will grieve Him and we will quench His fire in us. And we dare not do that.

Dear Christian, God's Holy Spirit lives within us with power, great power. And He is fully able to protect us from the schemes of satan and to keep us from sin. Our part is simply to surrender to the power of God's Spirit within us and to flee from the temptations that are drawing us in. And we really can do that folks. We really can!

I'll close with these words from 2 Peter chapter 1,

³ His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

⁴ Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

Let's pray.