

Children in the Marketplace | Luke 7:31–35

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[0 : 00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we are encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ! I'm Pastor Patrick Daly, and each week I share sermons that balance the grace and love of Jesus Christ with the truth of the Word of God.

Together, we'll explore Scripture using observation, interpretation, and application. This helps us discover practical ways to live out our faith every single day.

Let's dive in together into God's Word. All right, well, good morning, everyone. Sorry that took a second to set all of that up. How many of you have heard the parable of the children in the marketplace before?

Show of hands. It's an uncommon parable. I did some research as I was preparing for the sermon, and it's a very unusual, a very rare parable that's often overlooked.

And when you read it, you're like, okay, these children are sitting. What does it mean? Very similarly, as we find not only with this parable, but with other parables, there's a lot of meaning that is much deeper.

[1 : 15] It's just like that saying that there is more than meets the eye. We find that there is much depth, much that we can learn.

As we are to read the Word of God, we are to look at what it says, learn from it, grow from it, and respond. I found that in a lot of sermon databases, some of the most common parables that you find are the Good Samaritan, the four soils, but not a lot of the children in the marketplace.

And I just found that to be very interesting. Out of the thousands of sermons on example of the Good Samaritan, there was less than 300 that I could find in active sermon databases.

I found that to be very interesting. But like any part of the Word of God, it is important for us to read. Amen. It's important for us to study. It's important for us to learn and for us to grow.

And it's only four verses long. For those of you that might have been raised more with a lectionary, I found it interesting that this verse only appears once in a three-year lectionary in year A, in the proper nine.

[2 : 32] Which I found to be also not a common reading in here. But what we find is this scene where we have children that are sitting there.

There are instruments that are being played. There's times of joy and times of sorrow. But yet there is no response. And what I'd like to do, I have actually a video that I'd like for you guys to watch. Kind of as a representation. Just a short few seconds here.

Children are just sitting there. Not really a care in the world. There's these instruments that are playing and no response. And even when you look at, well, this was what the text said.

We played the flute for you and you did not dance. We sang a dirge and you did not weep. So you have this older woman representing the, you know, a time of sorrow, a time of weeping and no response.

[3 : 56] And I can't help but think for a moment here when I'm reading this. You want to have children participate in activities, right? Like birthdays, anniversaries, celebrations.

In the same way that you want children to participate in times of mourning and times of sadness. And what a horrible scenario you can think of when children are not responding at all.

Now, don't raise your hand. I hope none of you have ever done this before or none of your children have done this either. But to me, it seems like these children are just, well, shall we say spoiled, unappreciative.

They're not present in the moment. And we can think that there's situations where that happens to children. But it also can happen even to us. And so when we look at this, we see this very interesting situation.

And I want to go back to the text real quick. You know, you had these verses that Kathy was reading that was leading up to this parable.

[5 : 01] Where it had to do with John the Baptist, right? Behold, I send my messenger before your face who will prepare your way before you. In verse 28, I tell you, among these born of women, none is greater than John.

I used to struggle with that verse a great deal. But keep going when it says the one who is least in the kingdom is greater than he. Which is talking about the importance that we need to be a part of the kingdom.

Amen? That if you are the least or the smallest, right? You just made it in. Well, you made it in. That's what matters is you make it to heaven. That you're a part of the kingdom.

That's what's so important. It's like, okay, okay, that makes a lot more sense. But it goes on in verse 29. When all the people heard this, the tax collectors too, they declared God just.

Having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose for themselves. Not having been baptized by him. And this is where Christ is saying to what then shall I compare people of this generation?

[6 : 03] And what are they like? Well, it's almost like Christ is saying they're like spoiled children. As it were. They're like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another.

Maybe just talking amongst themselves and not a care in the world. And that language where it's saying we played the flute for you and you did not dance. We sang a dirge and you did not weep. And so Jesus is addressing people who are not only rejecting John the Baptist, but they're rejecting Christ. And he is using the image of children passively sitting, refusing to participate in any sort of life.

I don't know about you. I don't want to be called a spoiled child by the Lord. Do you? Say no, please. Right? You don't want to be called a spoiled child. Or you're unappreciative. But their minds were not open. Their eyes were not open. Their ears were not ready as it were. And we find this just like we have found in many patterns within scripture.

[7 : 10] The parable of the sower, for example. Where we have the seeds and the soil being ready to receive. Just as one example. You know what's so interesting is when we think of John the Baptist.

So Bible question for you. Who is the last prophet? Some of you may say Malachi, right? Maybe. No. Okay. That's all right. It's very interesting when we think of John the Baptist. That he being the last prophet before Christ.

A lot of us, if you're asked the question, who's the last prophet? You would say Malachi. But when you think of the Old Testament, it's Malachi. When you're looking at the text of John the Baptist who's saying, repent, right?

Prepare the way of the Lord. That's very prophetic language. And I just find it very interesting when we go. If we can go back to the text here. When Christ is saying, John messengers had gone out.

[8 : 17] What did you see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, more than a prophet. This is of whom it is written. I'm sending a messenger before your face who will prepare your way before you.

But I think sometimes we just forget that John the Baptist is, well, he's a prophet. But he's more than a prophet as the text is saying. So what's happening here then is these people, this generation, the Pharisees, the lawyers, are rejecting both of them.

When you find in scripture any sort of rejection of two, that's very bad. If you remember the parable of the persistent widow and the wicked judge.

Well, that wicked judge, he neither feared God nor respected man. Now, that's a horrible person. I don't know about you, right? Not fearing God.

He doesn't believe in the Lord. And he doesn't respect people as well. And here you're having a rejection of the prophet, John the Baptist, and Christ. And so we have these.

[9 : 25] I want to go to the symbolism slide, if that's all right. The marketplace here is a representation of just everyday life. When you think of back in Jewish times and Jewish culture, the marketplace is where everything was happening.

So you have that. You have the children representing this generation or people. And sitting is refusing to respond. And what's interesting when you saw that little clip was the playing of an instrument, the flute.

There's the dancing and the clapping, a time of celebration. And it's actually a representation of what Christ is doing by providing grace. And dirge, then, is representing mourning and repentance, just as with John the Baptist.

Here's what I mean. Go to verse 33, then. In your Bibles, John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine.

And you say, what do they say? He has a demon. Now, wait a minute. What did John the Baptist eat? Do you guys remember? There you go. Right? Okay.

[10:37] We got some Bible trivia here. Okay? So he's not eating and drinking. He's very restrictive, as it were, with his diet. I mean, I don't know about you.

I don't want to eat locusts. But imagine having a steady diet of that. But he has this more restrictive type of diet. And yet, in all of that, these people are saying, he's demonic.

He's got a demon. Get him out of here. They're rejecting that. So then you see, in verse 34, the Son of Man has come eating and drinking.

And what do they say, church? Look at him. A glutton. A drunkard. A friend of tax collectors. And sinners.

This is one of the only times in Scripture where you see Jesus being quoted as a friend of sinners. But we know he is, Jesus is a friend of sinners. But I just find it very interesting when it's showing in there.

[11:37] So you have the most restrictive of people, respectfully so. And then you have Christ who is, well, eating and drinking.

And yet they still reject him. So you have, I guess, both extremes, as it were. And there's still that rejection. Talk about foolish.

Talk about spoiled children, as it were. And we have to think, are there people like that today? Certainly, we find in the text that there were people like that back then.

Who rejected even the most rigid of believers to those that were providing grace. So you have actually the symbolism of law or truth.

And then grace and love. Both being rejected. I cannot help but think of how there are people like that even today. Who reject Christ.

[12:40] Who reject the word. Who reject the words of the prophets. Who reject the Old Testament even. Who reject the New Testament. How many of you have heard, for example, people that say, I like the God of the New Testament.

And say, I don't like the God of the Old Testament. It's too harsh of language. And certainly, it's much more challenging, for sure. But it's showing that all of Scripture is all together for us.

There's a lot of parts to who God is. Much like there's parts of who we are. I know for a lot of us, we try to put our best foot forward when we're at school or at work.

But there's other sides to us, right? Say yes, please. I hope there's more sides to you. Right? There's many parts of what make who we are as people.

So why would God be any different than that? God being the God of love, grace, mercy, peace, but justice, truth, and even wrath.

[13:42] Somehow that all works together. And it's hard to wrap your mind around. For sure. It definitely is. And I pray that anyone here, please don't be like those, well, if you're a lawyer here, you can still love the Lord, okay?

If you're a Pharisee or one that studies the law, I pray that you don't have a hardened heart. Or you're not being a spoiled child, as it were.

And so we see in here, what is the interpretation? What are the lessons then we can learn from this short parable? Let's go to that next slide then.

Is number one, don't be a sitting child. Do I mean you can't sit down? No. But don't just be sitting there and letting life pass by.

God gives you an opportunity to come to him in salvation and responding to the message of the gospel. Don't just idly sit by. Much like how God calls each and every one of us to grow and to be transformed by him.

[14:55] Don't sit idly by. So you can think of that image. I like to think for a second here. How many of you, we were all children once, right?

How many of you have had those moments? You just want to sit? You ain't going to budge. Don't be like that when it comes to the Lord. You don't want to sit.

I know. I was throwing a tantrum right there. Okay. But. Right. We all have our moments, don't we? And so these children that are sitting, it's revealing this passivity.

This indifference. This indifferent attitude towards God. And so the ramification then of being passive is, well, it could be a hardened heart.

It could be ignorance to God. Let that not be the case for you. May you have an open mind and open heart to the Lord and that invitation.

[15:58] Because time is flying by, amen? How quickly. We're already in June now. What? I remember the end of the year last year.

Some of you may even remember like, wait, it was a couple years ago. And here I am. So don't let life pass you by. Okay. The second thing is that some will reject law and grace.

John represented discipline, seriousness of the law. When he's saying to repent and prepare the way from the Lord.

Isn't there an importance for us to change our minds and to prepare for the Lord? We think of his first coming, but what about his second coming?

Living a life that is in preparation for the Lord. We can think of that as John's approach and then Christ representing grace, joy, and openness.

[17:03] Now, for a lot of us, we may gravitate towards one or the other. I get that. But they're both important here. And there are some people that will reject any sort of openness to the Lord.

And it's very unfortunate. And if you know someone that is rejecting or sitting passively like a spoiled child, pray for them.

And have that door open for conversation. You never know when someone will contact you, call you, email you, text you.

And they just want to talk. And sometimes we don't even know what to say. But what we can do is be present with every single person. Exhibiting the light, love, and truth of Christ to others.

And so, pray that their eyes may be opened. Their hearts may be softened. And their ears, maybe you got a little earwax, right? Maybe they need a little cleaning.

[18:10] Just as scripture says, he who has ears, let him hear. Well, their ears have got to be ready. Pray for their ears to be ready. And the third thing is that wisdom is shown by fruitfulness, right?

It's scripture says, you shall know them by their fruit. And wisdom is shown by this sense of transformation. Don't be that idle child, but be like that tree that is bearing fruit.

And very often we see that Christ is wisdom, as it were. And we can think of the importance of exhibiting fruit.

May you be rooted in the Lord. May you continue to grow and bear fruit. And when we think of this then, we go then into the application is, what can I do about this?

And how can I live out this parable? Well, number one is to check your heart. Are you someone who is just sitting in the marketplace?

[19:25] I don't literally mean sitting in Walmart. Okay? So if you didn't get that up until now, don't sit passively and let life pass by.

How is your heart towards the Lord? Just like we have time to examine our hearts before the Lord in communion, we should be thinking of, is our faith active or is it passive?

And it's a call for us to embrace the seriousness of the gospel, but also the joy that comes from it. It's that great balance that I talk about when we think of the truth of God's word and the love of Christ.

It's very important. So you're going to hear it from me again. Don't sit passively. May your heart be softened and may you respond.

That actually goes to the second one. Check your heart and respond to God's invitation. Can you imagine? We go back to this idea of the children that are sitting there.

[20:33] I'd like to think in this parable that maybe some people might come by and say, Hey kids, what are you doing? Sitting here.

I mean, that's how I feel when I'm reading this text. I don't want to be like children in the marketplace that are just sitting there. I would say, come on, kids get up. Let's join in the dancing. Or there's this time of mourning. Participate in it. And that feeling that you have, that thought of they need to act. It's so important.

Not only for literally our own children, but also for us. When we consider our brothers and sisters in Christ. Encouraging them to grow, right?

To know the Lord, to continue to grow. Are we not all learning and growing? Are we not all works in progress? Are we not all being molded by the Lord?

[21 : 29] We certainly should be. And so recognize that there's an importance of repentance. And the seriousness of sin.

The seriousness of responding to the gospel. But also the grace and love of Christ. And so may you receive and respond to God's full invitation.

And then finally, it is show wisdom through your new life in Christ. Let your words and let your deeds.

Let them demonstrate wisdom. It's just like how scripture says that we are to put on the new self. That we are to be not conformed to the patterns of this world.

But to be transformed by the renewal of your mind. We are to be transformed. And we are to continue on this trajectory in this new life.

[22 : 32] Be saved. Respond. But begin on your journey in Christ. Think of the words that you say.

And the actions that you do. Now, we're not going to be perfect. But God is going to mold us to be more like him. And let your life mirror the light of Christ.

Let your life exhibit the love of Christ. I've said it before and I'll say it again. It's just like that song. They'll know that we are Christians by our love.

They'll know we are Christians by the words that we speak and the actions that we do. Which should be an invitation in of itself. That there's something different about you.

And if you're an unbeliever and you meet a Christian for the first time. It's saying, wow, there's really something different about John or whoever.

[23 : 35] If I start throwing names, I might name somebody. I apologize if I do. There's something different about you. I want to know more. How can you be calm when there's so much chaos?

How can you be filled with joy despite the fact that bad things are happening in your own life? There's strength in the Lord. There's wisdom.

There's healing. There's transformation. That is a testimony. And to know that you are being transformed by the Lord is a call for you to share in the gospel for other people.

For other people to see. Because there are a lot of people that are still in darkness. There are children in the marketplace.

May we not be like those children. And may we celebrate. In times of celebration. May we. We think of Ecclesiastes.

[24 : 36] That there's a season for everything. We think of how we need to bear one another's up. Being present for our brothers and sisters. Let us continue to do that.

And pray that lives will be transformed. Being available for those children that may eventually see why sitting passively is not good.

So don't remain spiritually sitting. Respond in repentance. The changing of the mind. Receiving salvation. And living and loving like Christ.

And let your life be a testimony to God. Your life can speak to other people. In ways that the person next to you might not be able to.

And that's okay. We all have our own unique story. May we share it with other people. So may we respond to God's full invitation.

[25 : 37] Not being like this generation. Not being like that generation. May we not sit idly. But may we respond to Christ's call.

Let's pray together. And Father we thank you for this time. And this opportunity for us to go through the text. And we realize that there were these people who were rejecting John the Baptist.

And rejecting Christ. And we just pray that we are not like that. We pray for those who are like that. Whether they have a hardened heart.

Or they're ignorant. Or whatever it is. We pray that there will be transformation. Divine intervention as it were. And may we as Christians be ready to be able to speak truth and deal in love.

With those who we may encounter. Father we don't know everybody's story. And that's alright. You sure do. May you give us wisdom, strength and comfort. To be able to speak to those who enter into our lives.

[26 : 42] We thank you so much for your son Jesus Christ. May we learn this lesson. To not be like children who are sitting in the marketplace.

Instead. May we partake in the joy of salvation. May we repent. And see the seriousness. Of why we are to believe.

And may we fully respond. To your salvation. And the plan that you have for us. And may we be moved. To live and love like Jesus. It is in the name of Jesus Christ.

That we pray. And we all say together. Amen. Amen. Thank you for listening for this week's message from Ontario Community Church. I pray that you are encouraged and strengthened in your walk with Christ.

For more sermons and resources. Visit OntarioCommunityChurch.org May God bless you as you live out his grace and truth every single day. May God bless you as you live out my life.

[27 : 44] Thank you.