

Volume 13 Issue 34

September 2, 2018

## UNWILLING

“To what then shall I compare the men of this generation, and what are they like? They are like children who sit in the market place and call to one another, and they say, ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.’ For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon!’ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children,” Luke 7:31-35. As the saying goes, some people just can’t be reached. Here, Jesus describes the proud, stubborn stance many of the Pharisees and experts of the Law of Moses took when God made every possible effort to reach them with His Kingdom

invitation. Jesus makes reference to the night and day contrast in the style differences between His preaching and that of John the Baptist. John came with the stern, matter-of-fact warning of judgment. Jesus proclaimed the patient, gentle mercy of a physician seeking sick souls to heal. And yet, while the sin sick souls of the lost responded in massive droves to the Messiah’s hopeful preaching and declaring forgiveness of sins, many of the same even responded to the warnings of wrath to come as John told of a Holy One whose winnowing fork was in His hand ready to burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. “I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” When all the people and the tax collectors heard this,

they acknowledged God's justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John," Luke 7:28-30. The tax collectors who humbled themselves and confessed their sins being baptized in the Jordan River would also come willingly to the humble Savior's plea to come to Him and let Him give them rest. Demonstrating the tender, humble, wounded conscience of these obedient sinners who would respond to both warning of wrath as well as gently being invited to drink of living water, this is in stark contrast to the proud callous hearts of those who would respond to neither. They were like children who wouldn't budge and "play along" to either extreme game of wedding or funeral and refused to be moved by any attempt to bring them in and join. When it comes to the bread of Life, some become "picky eaters." "The sermon was way too long. That preacher just likes to hear himself talk!" "That sermon was pretty short. The preacher must not have spent much time putting a decent lesson together!" "The lesson this morning felt like the molten

lava of hell-fire-and brimstone! The preacher must be in a pretty bad mood!" "That lesson this evening was so sappy you'd think he would never have the courage to say 'Boo!' to the Devil!" No matter what the approach, despite how much truth from God's Divine Word is presented, those who stubbornly refuse to remain unchanged by it will find a reason not to listen and apply it. The unchanged Pharisees who heard both the preaching of John the Baptist and Jesus found unwarranted criticism of the messengers rather than pay homage to the message and humbly obey. "For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon!' The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children," Luke 7:33-35. Rather than pleading, urging or begging, they must be left alone. "Then the disciples came and said to Him, 'Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?' But He answered and said, 'Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted. Let

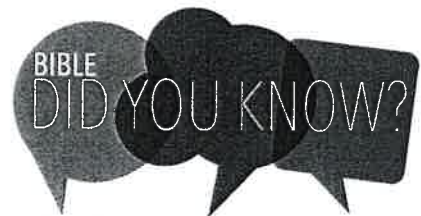
them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit,”

Matthew 15:12-14. Unchanged, unreasonable and unwilling to listen they become dangerous. They will destroy themselves and anyone else who puts confidence enough in them to follow. If given too much time spent around them seeking to pry their selfish pride away, they will hurt and damage you in the process. “Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces,” Matthew 7:6. If given the opportunity, they will take their stand as leaders and poison the minds of any who follow to unwelcome those true, humble genuine servants of the truth of the gospel of the Kingdom. “I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire to do so and puts them out of the church,” 3 John 1:9-10. Let us follow the

example of those humble, convicted tax collectors and sinners who responded both to John the Baptist and Jesus.

When the truth of God’s word seeks to lead us to His Feet, let us obediently follow in trust and faith. “Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him; and you, seeing this, did not even feel remorse afterward so as to believe him,” Matthew 21:31-32.

– Daniel Ruegg



***The lion, rooster, goat and king are stately when they walk. “There are three things which are stately in their march, even four which are stately when they walk: The lion which is mighty among beasts and does not retreat before any, the strutting rooster, the male goat also, and a king when his army is with him.” Prov. 30:29-31***



# MONTHLY CHALLENGE

**DIRECTIONS:** Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.

## 1) Bring Others To Jesus Challenge

**Jn. 1:41-42** *"He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which translated means Christ). He brought him to Jesus."* Our Gospel Meeting with Johnie Edwards begins next Sunday and runs through Friday. That gives us 6 opportunities next week to bring family members, friends and neighbors to come here about Jesus. The challenge for this month is for each of us to invite at least 1 other to come with us to the meeting in an effort to bring others to meet Jesus. I know sometimes it can seem a little intimidating or even scary to invite someone to come to worship with us, but consider the fact that some you may never even think have a hidden curiosity to hear about Him. A rich tax collector climbed into a sycamore tree just to get a glimpse of Jesus passing through town in Luke 19. A notoriously sinful woman gladly heard Jesus speak in Luke 7. You just may be surprised who would love to come!

## 2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

### *Mark 10:42-52*

"Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, 'You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.' Then they came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road. When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' And Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him here.' So they called the blind man, saying to him, 'Take courage, stand up! He is calling for you.' Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus. And answering him, Jesus said, 'What do you want Me to do for you?' And the blind man said to him, 'Rabboni, I want to regain my sight!' And Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has made you well.' Immediately he regained his sight and began following Him on the road."