

Part 5 of the current series

Today's message:

## **What to do to understand the true heart of God**

**Text: Luke 9:51-56**

**Introduction:** Everywhere Jesus went, He was accepted. Multitudes often pleaded with Him to have Him stay with them. Interestingly however, there were three places where Jesus was rejected: in His hometown, at the land of the Gadarenes (Lk.8:37) and here in Samaria. Here's how James and John responded:

**V.54:** *“Lord do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them just as Elijah did?”*

James and John, also known as ‘*the sons of thunder*’ had a fiery temper and thought that it was right to retaliate with great vengeance against the indifferent Samaritans, by calling down fire from heaven. They even added scripture to this by saying that Elijah had done it! (2 Kings 1:9-16).

Is that how God responds to sinners? Does He cause calamities like volcano eruptions, earthquakes and tsunamis to wipe them out? I find interesting something that Bill Johnson wrote,

*“God is usually blamed for the evils that exist in the world because he is God, He can remove any problem because He is quite big and powerful. But to rid the world of sin and its consequences would require something extremely dramatic – removing all sinners. Apart from being born again, how many of us would be left? (...) He can fix it all in a moment. But when he does, time stops, eternity begins, and the final line has been drawn in the sand. His answer would be quite painful. His patience, which we see in full operation right now, is so that we can gather as many as possible to the family.”* (pages 151-152 “God is good” by Bill Johnson, Destiny Image publishers)

Here's how Jesus responded:

**V. 55:** *“But He turned and rebuked them and said: “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of.”*

In other words, “You don't know what you are about”. What are we about then? What manner of spirit should we be then? What does this passage say about the true heart of Jesus?

**V.56:** *“The Son of Man did not come to destroy man's lives but to save them”*

### **1. This is the true heart of Jesus**

He came to seek and save that which was lost – not to destroy men's lives!

a) What about Elijah then?

**Firstly**, to justify fire upon the Samaritans based on 2 Kings 1:9-16 is actually using a scripture out of context. The circumstances of Elijah and King Ahaziah were completely different.

**Secondly**, it does look like that there were things God permitted in the Old Testament but that were never the best God had, or His perfect will.

Yes, He permitted Elijah to call fire from heaven, but Jesus revealed that ultimately that is not what God is about. He is about saving people and rescuing them. That is why He sent Jesus.

- b) It does look like there were things God permitted in the O.T. but they were never God's original intent or will. He only permitted them.

**Matthew 19:3-8** - ...<sup>7</sup>They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" <sup>8</sup>He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

As we saw 2 weeks ago, "the beginning" marks God's perfect will, God's plan and God's best. What came afterwards was not His best. It was permitted because of the hardness of their hearts, Jesus said. God permits because He also permitted us to make decisions and choices. It would be a contradiction for God to create us with the ability to decide and then interfere with that ability or its consequences.

## **2. Jesus came to reveal the true heart of God**

Looking at Jesus is the best way to understand the true heart of God. Jesus is God in the flesh, He is perfect theology and the exact representation of God.

- a) In **John 1** Jesus is the Word that was there at the beginning.
- b) To see Jesus is to see the Father - **John 14:8-9** – Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?
- c) **Colossians 1:15** – "He is the image of the invisible God" ...
- d) **Hebrews 1:3** – "Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person..."

If you have ever wondered what God looks like, He looks like Jesus.

Every step of the ministry of Jesus, every teaching, every miracle, reveals the will of God – perfect and complete as He intended it before Genesis 3 (before Satan came in and the fall of man). Jesus is the perfect will of God in motion.

## **3. What did Jesus do with the rejection of the Samaritans?**

If you read **Acts 8:5-8**, you will see that Jesus did not give up on them. He sent someone to preach to them:

*5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. 6 And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralysed, and lame were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city.*

#### **4. Jesus had another fire for the Samaritans**

The fire of the Holy Spirit – **Acts 8:14-17:**

*14 Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, 15 who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.*

**This is the fire we are to ask to come down from heaven upon cities and individuals!**

Peter and John were sent to Samaria (John who was one of the ‘sons of thunder’, the one who had the idea of calling fire from heaven). This is the fire that we need to call down: an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

This is not a fire that destroys but a fire that edifies, purifies and strengthens us! It is power from on high”.

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#### **Recommended reading:**

“God is good” by Bill Johnson, Destiny Image Publishers

“Holy Spirit - Are we flammable or fireproof?” – Reinhard Bonnke