

Luke 17:1-10

Introduction: Jesus gives us 4 principles concerning growing disciples.

- 1) Jesus warns us about false teaching and false teachers—17:1-3a
 - a) False teaching is inevitable—17:1b *“It is impossible for no stumbling blocks to come,*
 - i) In the context it refers to the things being said and done by the Pharisees: rejecting the repentant, setting aside God’s Word, loving and living for money, etc. It certainly includes more than these specifics.
 - ii) Paul reminds us of this (cf. Phil. 3:18-19; 2nd Tim. 3:1-9), as does Peter (cf. 2nd Peter 2:1), and John (cf. 1st John 4:4-6).
 - b) Woe to unbelievers who entice others with false teaching—17:1c-2
 - i) *but woe to the one through whom they come.*
 - ii) ² *It would be advantageous for him if (1st class condition) a mill stone were placed around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble.*
 - (1) The “little ones” are probably the new believers from among the tax collectors and sinners (cf. 15:1); and seemingly insignificant believers, such as Lazarus (cf. 16:19-31).
 - (2) It is better to die a horrible death than to spread false teaching among Jesus’ disciples.
 - c) Believers are responsible to stay alert for false teaching—17:3a ³ *Pay attention to yourselves!*
 - i) From the outside and from the inside (cf. Acts 20:28-29)
- 2) Jesus teaches us about forgiving other believers—17:3b-4
 - a) Privately rebuke the sinning believer—17:3b *Now ...if (3rd class) your brother sins against you, rebuke [ἐπιτιμάω] him;*
 - i) Just like the Law required of Israel (cf. Lev. 19:17)
 - ii) We are not to pursue righteousness in isolation from one another. We share in each other’s commitment to pursue righteousness. (Bock)
 - b) Forgive the repentant believer—17:3c *and if (3rd class) he repents, forgive him.*
 - i) Unlike how the Pharisees treated others (cf. 15:2; 17:1)
 - c) Forgive again, and again—17:4 ⁴ *And if (3rd class) he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day he returns, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”*
 - i) The sinning believer takes the initiative in admitting his sin and requesting forgiveness. (Bock)
 - ii) Forgiveness is to be readily granted upon repentance and not withheld.

- 3) Jesus exhorts us to exercise faith—17:5-6
- a) ⁵ *And the apostles (not just the disciples from 17:1) said to the Lord, “Increase (the depth of) our faith.”*
 - i) But remember, if you are genuine Christian, you already have faith (cf. 2nd Pet. 1:1)
 - ii) Faith’s presence is more crucial than its quantity. (Bock)
 - b) ⁶ *So the Lord said, “If (1st class condition) you^{pl} have faith as a mustard seed, you^{pl} could say to this mulberry tree (about 20’ tall with a major root system, not to be planted within 37’ of a cistern, living up to 600 years), ‘Be uprooted and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.”*
 - i) The issue is not the **amount** of faith; it is having the right **kind** of faith.
 - ii) Magill reminds us: It is not the quantity of our faith that accomplishes great things, but God (the Object of our faith). With a tiny bit of faith in Him (the infinite One), God can do great things through us. Jesus is telling the apostles that they already have enough to do far more than they realize. They just need to utilize it.
- 4) Jesus reminds us to have a humble, servant attitude—17:7-10
- a) Illustration from everyday life—17:7-9
 - i) Expecting a negative answer—17:7 ⁷ *“But which of you^{pl} having a bondservant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come immediately and sit down to eat?’*
 - ii) Expecting a positive answer—17:8 ⁸ *But will he not say to him, “Prepare something for me to eat, and having made yourself ready serve me until I have eaten and drunk; and afterward **you** (emphatic) will eat and drink”?*
 - (1) The slave is expected to do his job. The Master’s desires and needs always come first.
 - iii) Expecting a negative answer—17:9 ⁹ *Does he thank that bondservant because he did what was commanded? I don’t think so.*
 - b) The application to everyday life—17:10 ¹⁰ *So you^{pl} too, when you^{pl} do all the things you^{pl} were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy/useless (an expression of modesty or humility of function, not inherent worth) bondslaves, because we have done only what we ought to have done.”*
 - i) Our service for God does not obligate God to us; rather service is part of what God requires of us who are His servants. (Bock)
 - ii) Some Christians have attempted to obey God only if they think there will be some blessing on the other side of the situation. Don’t barter with God.
 - iii) See Paul’s similar attitude in 1st Cor. 9:16.
- 5) Thoughts for us to remember
- a) We must remember the potential dangers of sin.
 - b) We must remember the graciousness of forgiveness.
 - c) We must remember the power and goodness of God.
 - d) We must remember the honor of serving God.