

Brand New: Part 3- Recycled

I. ME

- A. Experiment- Week 3
 - 1. Church for people who don't normally go to church
 - 2. Church isn't just for religious people
- B. Talking about why many people resist church.
 - 1. Has nothing to do with Jesus or His teachings (Love)
 - 2. Has more to do with the religious stuff that has crept into the church.

II. WE

- A. Religion is powerful
 - 1. That's what makes it dangerous
 - 2. It's dangerous b/c it ends up in the hands of the few who claim to know the secret
 - 3. It's so powerful b/c it's anchored in our consciences.
 - 4. Shape the conscience and you can control the person

B. Our consciences determine religious realities whether they reflect reality or not

- 1. They can be based in truth or error.
- 2. Things you felt guilty about before but now you don't
 - a. *Danny saying BUTT*
- 3. Or things you didn't feel guilty about but you do now
 - a. *Whole 30*
- 4. Even our country has seen this...
 - a. *Store owners that couldn't imagine being open on a Sunday had no problem with having drinking fountains for separate races.*
 - b. Now it's flipped. But God hasn't changed. Truth hasn't changed
- 5. Our consciences determine religious realities whether they reflect reality or not.

- C. If you grew up in the West (Xian or not)... Our consciences have been shaped by a version of Christianity that is a combination of what Jesus actually taught and what, we are calling, the Temple Model.
 - 1. Caused our consciences to be fine-tuned to feel a certain way about God, sin and evil, and each other.
 - 2. And whoever controls your conscience ultimately controls your behavior.
- D. What we are trying to do in this series is separate what the original Jesus movement was truly about and the influences of the Temple Model.

E. Review

1. Temple Model (Almost all religions)

- a. Sacred places
- b. Sacred Texts
- c. Sacred Men (power of heaven or hell)
- d. Sincere/superstitious/sacred followers

- 1. The influence of the Temple Model on the church is why so many people have abandoned or dismissed Jesus.
- 2. But the great news is... when Jesus showed up, He launched something entirely new.
 - a. Not religion 2.0... not a knock off of the Jewish religion
 - b. Something BRAND NEW
- 2. Temple model was always geographically specific.
 - a. Jesus said, "I have come to begin something new that is for everyone everywhere.
- 3. The arrival of Jesus signaled the end of the Temple Model and the beginning of something BRAND NEW

4. Jesus Movement

- a. **New Covenant** (One-Sided)
 - b. **New Command** (Love)
 - 1) What does love look like right now?
 - c. **New ethic** (Be great? SERVE)
 - d. **New Movement** (Ecclesia)
 - 1) Rule following replaced by love
 - 2) Animal sacrifice self-sacrifice
 - e. **New Relationship with God and a New Life now and forever** (Horizontal v. Vertical)
5. Then the Apostle Paul continued Jesus' work
- a. Pharisee, hater of Xians, Met Jesus, became spokesman for Xianity
 - b. He understood more than anyone... that you can't mix the old temple model with the new Jesus movement.
 - c. B/c even a little bit of religious, temple model thinking mixed into the Jesus movement had the potential to ruin the whole thing.
6. He wrote a letter to a group of Xians in Galatia and in this letter (last week) he said something that was almost unthinkable in terms of its implications.
- a. **The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. (Gal 5:6b)**
 - b. Specifically love toward other people
 - c. But all the rules? The only thing!

7. Didn't stop there... wrote something even more extreme to the Xians in **Corinth**.
- a. Everybody used to worshipping at temples
 - 1) Jews pilgrimage to Temple in Jerusalem
 - 2) Gentiles Roman gods' temples
 - b. He had the audacity to write...
 - c. ***Do you not know that your bodies are temples... (1 Cor 6:19)***
 - 1) This is huge! He is saying that they are portable temples
 - 2) "What? NO a temple is a sacred place I go"
 - 3) That's the old way of thinking... this is new
 - 4) You and the person to your left and right are more sacred than any piece of dirt in the entire universe.
 - 5) How's that even possible Paul?
 - d. ***Do you not know that your bodies are temples OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, who is IN you, whom you have received from God? (1 Cor 6:19)***
 - 1) Jews would say... NO. the Spirit of God resides in the Holy of Holies in the Temple.
 - 2) Not anymore. That was the old way. It's played its part
 - 3) Now we have something entirely new
 - 4) When you trust Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes in you and you are more holy than even the holiest spot in all of the world.
 - 5) And the Xian to your left and to your right are more holy than the Temple.
 - 6) The slave to your left, the women to your right, and the child running toward you are sacred in the eyes of God.

8. Mind Blowing! BRAND NEW!

III. GOD

A. Church and Xianity got off to a great start.

1. First few 100 years the Xians got it
2. No new testament... just stories from the life of Jesus passed down by eye-witnesses and occasional letter from Paul or Peter or John that were passed around.
3. Just an extraordinary faith fueled by love.

4. They out did one another in loving one another... they one anothered one another. LOVE, FORGIVE, CARRY BURDENS...
 - a. Loved those who weren't Xians
 - b. Took care of weak orphans or the poor
 - c. Didn't make sense.
5. **They weren't afraid to die.**
 - a. They believed Jesus rose from the dead and had conquered death.
 - b. So death wasn't something to fear b/c death wasn't the end.
c. When you don't fear death, you don't fear much.
 - d. When you don't fear much, you're free to love even your enemies with abandon.
 - e. You're free to be ridiculously generous
 - 1) No "what if's" to hold you back
6. Jesus followers gained traction culturally and socially b/c they gave up the traditional view that prioritized men over women, over children, over slaves.
 - a. They one anothered one another.
 - b. They love God
 - c. And expressed that love through their love for others.

B. But then something happened that would change the church for the next 1700 years.

1. In 312... Roman Emperor **Constantine**, on his way to do battle against a rival emperor (Maxentius)... claimed to have a vision telling him that if he wanted victory he needed to paint a cross on his soldiers shield... "In this sign conquer."
2. He did and he was victorious... and the world was changed.
3. He began following Xianity
4. Constantine soon became the sole emperor of the Roman Empire and, though the phrase would be coined 1000 years later, the Holy Roman Empire was created.
 - a. It was very ROMAN and very EMPIRE but it was not HOLY.
5. Constantine legalized Xianity
 - a. Poured the empire's wealth on the church and it's bishops (Sacred men)
 - b. He banned crucifixion
 - c. Launched a major church building campaign
 - 1) Any place that any martyr died or did something holy had a church building (sacred space) built on it.
 - d. Almost overnight, Xianity went from being a persecuted minority to an empowered majority.
6. Subtly... a new version of the Temple Model was put in place
 - a. They built new sacred places (Cathedrals... House of the Lord.)
 - b. Established a new class of sacred men
 - c. The sacred text was used and abused and taught only in Latin and chained to the altar so only the sacred men could interpret it.
 - d. In fact one of the biggest controversy in the church at the time was over one word in the text... "begotten."

C. Arian Controversy

1. Arius- theologian. Said that Jesus wasn't eternally God but was given his divinity by God the Father later in his life.
 - a. This caused a huge controversy and Constantine, wanting to have one belief that the entire empire would follow, called together a council...
 - b. And out of this council came a creed.
 - c. And from then on Xians would define themselves, not by how much they loved, but by what they were against... heresy.
2. *And I hereby make a public order, that if someone should be discovered to have hidden a writing composed by Arius, and not to have immediately brought it forward and destroyed it by fire, his penalty shall be DEATH. - Edict by Constantine against the Arians.*
3. **Heresy became a punishable crime**
 - a. Beleiving the wrong thing became a crime
 - b. Belief was more important than behavior.
 - c. Xianity became about whether or not you believed exactly the right way... it became about creeds.

D. Creeds

1. Nicene Creed- Adopted by Constantine's council in 325 revised in 381, Apostles Creed, Chalcedonian Creed 451, Athanasian Creed 500
2. Believe this and you don't go to hell. Believe anything different... sucks to be you.
3. Read Apostle's Creed
4. **There is no mention of LOVE anywhere in the creeds!**
5. No one was arrested, percecuted, or executed for not loving enough... but if they had differing views on the Trinity of God or some other theological issue they were hunted down and killed.

6. **Problem is:** These creeds, beliefs, require nothing of you.
 - a. There's no mention of love or of any behavior at all.
 - b. "As long as you say you believe the right things, you can treat your neighbor like crap and still be in."
 - c. And through the giving of or the refusal to give sacraments (communion/baptism) sacred men could control the people... even kings.
 - d. "For enough money... we can get you into heaven and for a bit more we can get your evil grandpa in too."

- E. Then in 1095 the Pope launched hundreds of years of **crusades**... to recapture the HOLY LAND... saying, "God wills it!"
 1. Promised that anyone who went on the crusade got a free ticket to heaven.
 2. So now you get to go to heaven, if you go to a place that has no sacred significance... to kill people who are sacred in the eyes of God.
 - a. It's fine b/c the POPE said, "God wills it!"
 3. Was successful... for about 100 years
 4. Then Saladin took Jerusalem back... and for hundreds of years the church would send its soldiers to kill and plunder in order to earn a spot in heaven.

F. Then thankfully the Reformation began in 1517.

1. Martin Luther started a movement to REFORM the church.
2. He and his followers PROTESTED what they saw as abuses in the church and Protestantism was born.
 - a. Indulgences
 - b. Pope's view of salvation was wrong
 - c. Pope was not spokesman of God
 - d. Excommunicated... didn't care

3. Reformers believed that Scripture, not the church or Pope, was the ultimate authority for a Xian.
 - a. **Sola fide- "by faith alone"**
 - b. **Sola scriptura- "by Scripture alone"**
 - c. Bible made available in common language
4. Church afraid of losing power
5. Martin Luther said, "A simple layman **ARMED with Scripture is greater than the mightiest pope without it.**"
 - a. W/o meaning to... The Bible became a weapon.
 - b. The Protestants did with the Bible what the church had done with papal authority.
 - c. Used the bible as a way to control people and their consciences and behavior.
 - d. "It says right here, and it says rights here..."
6. The reformers argued with each other over what certain verses meant. And split over it.
 - a. Their followers still do it... Calvinism, Arminianism, Reformed, Evangelical, Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran...
 - b. And Protestants have been beating people up with the Bible ever since.
 - c. **Westboro Baptist- extreme example**
7. And ultimately Temple Model snuck in.
8. Law was put above love and **LOVE LOST.**

G. **Jesus** Could not have been any clearer

- a. **John 13:34-35** "As I have loved you, so you **MUST** love one another. By **THIS** everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

H. **Paul**

- a. **Galatians 5:6 and 14** The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through **LOVE...**
- b. For **THE ENTIRE LAW** is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

I. **Peter** (have you seen the temple built over my tomb?)

- a. **1 Peter 1:22** ...have sincere love for each other, love one another **DEEPLY, from the heart.**

J. **John**

- a. **1 John 4:19-21** We love b/c he **FIRST** loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a **LIAR.** For whoever doesn't love their brother and sister whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this **COMMAND: Anyone who loves God MUST also love their brother and sister.**

IV. YOU

- A. How could this happen?!?!?!
- B. It's so easy to look back on these people and be critical... and say, "How could you be so blind!?"
- C. Truth is if we lived then we would have done the same things...
- D. B/c **there is a little temple model in all of us.**
 1. We all feel there are things we have to do, or not do, to make our version of God like us better.
 2. Our consciences have been shaped by it.
 3. And we continue to hold onto things that hold us back.

E. Temple Model Questions

1. Do you ever wonder how close you can get to a particular sin without actually sinning?...
2. Do you ever feel guiltier about missing mass or church than mistreating someone at work?
3. Do you ever think to yourself... oh the universe is going to get them back for that...
4. Have you ever feared for the eternal destiny of a child based on baptism?
5. When you failed morally, were you more concerned about what God (or the universe or the police) was going to do to you than you were the harm you did to the person you involved in your sin?
6. Do you believe there is a ritual that makes you right with God and removes your responsibility to make restitution to the person you've harmed?
7. Ever thought... I'm a good person. The good I do outweighs the bad things.
8. BIG ONE: Does other people's sins or failings bring out feelings of moral superiority rather than compassion?
9. Do your beliefs or theology get in the way of your love?
10. Temple Model Pollution.
11. Imagine a world without it.

- F. You know what drives and creates most of that thinking?
1. You and I have not fully embraced the Gospel, the message, the good news of Jesus Christ.
 2. We can't earn God's love.
 3. A perfect relationship with Him is a completely free gift.
 4. We can't do anything to take away or balance out the evil we've done
 5. Jesus died to take the punishment we deserved for our evil.
 6. And He offers a New Relationship with God and a New Life now and forever if we just choose to trust that He has forgiven us.
 7. Then out of that new life you are able to love others through God's love.
 8. You and God are good. He died for you.
 - a. If someone will die for you... they are for you.
 - b. There is nothing He can find out about you that He doesn't already know.
 - c. Therefore there is nothing you can do to make God love you more and nothing you can do to make Him love you less.

V. WE

- A. What if the church and Xians weren't known for the things they were against, but for asking in every situation... What does love look like right now?
- B. Let's change history again.
- C. Let's choose to accept that Jesus is for us.
 - 1. Maybe change your history... by choosing to accept that for the first time.
 - 2. Tell God...
- D. Ask Him to help us choose to love others out of His love
- E. Let's not let the Temple Model shape our conscientious anymore.
- F. He loves you so much that He died for you.
 - 1. Accept that and then let His love for you shine out to those around you.
- G. **God's unearned and unconditional love for us and for those around us must inform our consciences and shape our behaviors.**
- H. Don't miss next week
- I. Ladies don't miss week 5
 - a. If you're married have your husbands on the front row
- J. B/c our mission and goal for this series is to strip away temple thinking...
- K. So that we can once again live out this thing that was Brand new.
- L. Have a new relationship with God and a new life now and forever.
- M. Where the only thing that matters is faith expressing itself through love.