

Reading: **Luke 13:1-5**

INTRO. We live in a world today where it's popular to 'believe what you want to believe' & 'do what you want to do' & that this is okay with Jesus! Many people believe that Jesus is tolerant of different views & that one way is as good as another. An example of this is seen in a statement made by Oprah Winfrey, the popular talk-show host, who's been quoted as saying, "One of the biggest mistakes we make is to believe there is only one way. There are many diverse paths leading to God." Oprah's not only one of the richest women in the world, worth a reputed 1 & $\frac{1}{2}$ billion dollars, but through her TV show, she's also one of the most influential people in the world. In fact, she's an American icon! And, sadly, millions of people have bought into her 'theology' that says there are many diverse ways leading to God, there are many different views people can hold to...and that's okay with Jesus! He's tolerant of all those ways, He's accepting of all those views.

But, is that true of Jesus? Is He tolerant of all the different views that people hold to, & does He teach that one way is as good as another, & that as long as one is honest & lives by his convictions, God will save him? If that's what Oprah & millions of other folks want to believe, of course, that's their prerogative. But, I don't believe that for a moment, & I trust that you don't either. And today, I want to examine some of the teachings of Jesus to show He's not the open-minded & tolerant religious leader many have made Him out to be. If anything, Jesus is intolerant in that He teaches that there's only way to God, & one way to live, & that's His way! So, consider with me today some examples of the intolerance of Jesus toward people & their beliefs.

***1st ...Jesus is intolerant of the hypocritical.** We see this in His dealings with the religious leaders of His day. In **John 8**, we read about some scribes & Pharisees who brought to Jesus a woman caught in the act of adultery. And they tested Him, saying, "Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" They hoped He'd go against the law of Moses so they could condemn Him. But, you remember, how Jesus stooped down & wrote something on the ground with His finger, then said, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." And He wrote on the ground again, &*

one by one, those men, beginning with the oldest to the youngest, dropped their stones & walked away. *Why'd they do that?* Because Jesus exposed their hypocrisy! They were sinners as much as she was, & none were better than her! Yet, they were respected as the religious leaders of the day! These were men who'd stand on the street corners & pray long prayers... who'd enlarge the borders on their robes & their phylacteries (leather boxes w/ scripture in them) worn on their foreheads, but they did this not to remind themselves of the Law, but to draw attention to themselves. They chose the best seats in the synagogues, & loved to be greeted in the marketplace & called 'Rabbi, Rabbi' so everybody would notice them! But, Jesus rebuked them for this & pronounced several "woes" against them because of their hypocrisy. In one of those 'woes' He said, "Woe to you, scribes & Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones & all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy & lawlessness," (Matt. 23:27-28).

It may be fashionable today to say one thing & do another, & to put on a façade & appear to be righteous, but Jesus has no tolerance for that. He wants us to be exactly what we claim to be, real Christians. He says, "Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes & Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven," (Matt. 5:20). We can't fool Jesus! He sees us for what we are, & if we only 'talk the talk' without 'walking the walk', He won't tolerate us either.

2nd ...Jesus is intolerant of the unrepentant. Many people believe Jesus will accept them no matter what they do about their sins. Like "Universalists" who believe you don't have to do anything to be saved, & that all men will be saved. *But is that true?* No! Jesus teaches us that if we don't repent, we'll perish! We'll die in our sins! In our reading from Luke 13:1-5, some told Jesus of two examples where people died terrible deaths. In the 1st example, the evil ruler, Pilate, killed some Galileans in the temple as they were offering sacrifices. In the 2nd example, a tower in Siloam fell & accidentally killed 18 people. So, the question they asked Jesus was, "Were those who died in these tragedies worse sinners because they suffered such things?" That was a popular view then. If you suffered some tragedy, it meant you were a worse

sinner. But, Jesus said, in effect, “No, that’s not the case. People die everyday! Some die at the hands of evil men, others die from terrible accidents. That doesn’t mean they’re worse sinners. But, here’s the important lesson, unless you repent of your sins, you’ll perish! You’ll die a worse death than physical death; you’ll die eternally.” Jesus was also saying, “Instead of worrying about the spiritual condition of those who’ve already died, you need to think about your own condition.”

And that’s still true! People need to realize that they’re sinners, & in that condition, they’re lost. And no amount of crying, no amount of sorrow alone will change that, for that isn’t repentance! The Bible says **2nd Cor. 7:10**, “For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.” In other words, it’s good to be sorry for your sins, but that in itself isn’t repentance; it only produces repentance. A lot of folks are sorry for their sins because of the trouble it’s caused them, but sorrow alone isn’t repentance. Repentance is a change of heart that leads to a change of life! And Jesus says it’s necessary ~ not only to become a Christian ~ but also to remain a Christian. And He’s not going to tolerate anyone who refuses to repent of their sins!

3^d ...Jesus is intolerant of those who refuse baptism. As you know, we live in a world that downplays the importance of baptism. Some say it’s unnecessary; others who practice it say it’s to show you’ve been saved; & others say it’s “an outward sign of an inward grace”. But is that what Jesus says? No, Jesus made it clear that baptism is essential. And He’s so closed-minded about it, He says we can’t get into heaven without it! To Nicodemus, a Pharisee & ruler of the Jews, Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” **(Jn. 3:3)**. Nicodemus was confused; he thought Jesus was talking about being born again, physically... entering your mother’s womb after you’re old. Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water & the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God,” **(Jn. 3:5)**. This time, Jesus clarified that He was talking about a spiritual birth, where you’re immersed in water, as a result of hearing the word of the Spirit. And it’s like a birth, for when you come out of the water, it’s like emerging from the womb... you have new life! But, w/o

this baptism (or, rebirth) you have no life... you cannot enter the kingdom of God! Of course, this isn't the only time Jesus talked about baptism. In the Great Commission, He said, "He who believes & is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned," (Mk. 16:16). The religious world has balked, & fussed & downplayed the importance of baptism for centuries, but Jesus has no tolerance for those who reject His will. In the NT, He shows us there is no such thing as an un-baptized Christian!

There are several other things Jesus is closed-minded & intolerant about, & we see this if we're honest in reading His word. For example, when it comes to worshipping God, people today think there are many approaches we can take, & that it doesn't really matter what we do as long as we're sincere & earnest. However...

4th...Jesus is intolerant of 'man-ordained' attempts at worship.

Jesus never said there are many ways we can worship God. He said in Jn. 4:24, "God is Spirit, & those who worship Him must worship in spirit & truth." See how intolerant He is about it? He doesn't say, "Anything will do, as long as it draws a crowd!" He doesn't say, "Make it fun & entertaining if that's what the people want!" He doesn't say, "If you want to add something that I didn't think to give you, like a piano or organ, that's okay... OR... if you want to take something out that I included, like the Lord's Supper, that's okay too." No, in fact, He said we're not to "go beyond what is written," (1st Cor. 4:6). And another time, He warned in Rev. 22:18-19, "If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; & if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophesy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, & from the things which are written in this book."

Since this is true, why would we tamper with what Jesus said? Why would we presume that it's okay to add or take out what we want? But, that's what man has done, & in the process, he's made his worship "vain"... by "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," (Matt. 15:9). We have to realize that the NT is our authority for all that we do in worship. It's God's recipe! And, it's like when you're baking a cake, you have to follow the recipe. If it's a red velvet cake with vanilla icing, then you can't add chocolate chips & peanut butter! And, I like chocolate chips & peanut butter! But, it doesn't matter if I like it, that's not what the

recipe calls for! And if I add those ingredients, I'm not going to have a red velvet cake! I'm going to have a mess! In the same way, if we add to, or take from, [GOD'S recipe](#) ~ the NT ~ by adding instruments to our singing, or taking out the Lord's Supper, what have we done? We've ruined worship! We've made a mess of what Jesus told us to do! And He won't tolerate it! To worship in "spirit" means to worship with your heart, with a proper attitude. And that's something you're responsible for, individually. I can't choose your attitude for you, & you can't choose mine for me. We each have to decide to give worship our heartfelt emotion. AND, to worship in "truth" means to worship according to His Word...& to "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus", (Col. 3:17). If we deviate to the 'right' or 'left' of what His Word says, we incur His displeasure. And we don't want to do that!

5th...Jesus is intolerant of those who slight their marriage vows.

He's not as liberal-minded about marriage, divorce & remarriage as many think. We live in a world where 75% of all Americans say that marital faithfulness is essential to a strong marriage, yet statistics show that we often say one thing & do another! The most current statistics show that **43%** of all first-time marriages are likely to end in divorce. And when 2nd, 3rd, & 4th marriages are added to that, the figure goes up to over **50%**. Every year, since **1979**, over one million have ended in divorce. But from the beginning of time, God has had only one plan for marriage, & that's one man for one woman for life.

That's not to say Jesus hasn't allowed for divorce to occur, for He has. But here's what He said about it, in [Matt. 19:9](#), "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, & marries another, commits adultery; & whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery." "Sexual immorality" (fornication) is a generic word that includes all sexual sin. It's where your partner is unfaithful to you. So, Jesus was saying, "I won't tolerate any cause for divorce ~ incompatibility, unkindness, drunkenness, etc. ~ I'll only tolerate one cause, & that's if your spouse has sex with someone other than you." Jesus knew there'd be some wouldn't be content to keep their marriage vow. So, in that case, He made an exception ~ sexual immorality! And with that one exception, He said, you can divorce & marry & not go against My will!

I know how that must sound to our generation. In a time when over a million divorces occur every year, you can be sure there are millions of people in our country who'd say that's too restrictive! But, folks we need to pay attention to what the Lord says, & quit listening to the world. The world say, "If you're not totally happy in your marriage, get a divorce!" But the Lord says, "No, you made a covenant promise to Me & your spouse, & I expect you to be true to it."

The Bible says God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16), because of the pain it causes. But He doesn't hate divorced people! He loves them, & that's what He expects us to do too. Love them & care for them. But, since He hates divorce, I believe He wants us to hate it too!

6th ... Jesus is intolerant of those who teach many ways to God.
Oprah Winfrey has a right to believe whatever she wants, & you do too! But, anybody who says there are many diverse paths to God & it's a mistake to believe there's only one way either hasn't read their Bible carefully, or else, just don't believe it. But, again, we need to stop listening to the world, & start listening to our Lord. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, & the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." That's not hard to understand, is it? He's saying there's only ONE way to God, & that's through Him. Not Hinduism, not Islam, not Buddhism, not Judaism, or Sikhism...but through Jesus. If Jesus & His apostles had preached the doctrine of Pluralism or Universalism of today - the idea that there are many paths to God, & that all of them are basically the same - do you honestly think they would have been killed for their preaching? Do you think the Jews & the Romans would have persecuted the early church if they'd gone around saying, "Jesus is one Savior, but He's not the only savior? There are many paths to God, & you can choose the one that suits you. In the end God will save us anyhow!" Of course, not! They would've embraced them, or ignored them! But, they wouldn't persecuted them & killed them!

But, in the end, that's what they did...killed them by the 1,000's because they wouldn't preach a false gospel. They told people the truth, that Jesus is the Son of God, who died for their sins, was buried & rose from the dead... & He's the ONLY one who can save! And this what we continue to preach today because it's the only power that can save. And, today, if you desire salvation, I must tell

you that Jesus is the only way, & He's intolerant of all other ways for they are false! If you desire salvation, come to Jesus! Turn from your sins in repentance, confess faith in Him, & obey Him in baptism for remission of your sins. If you need the prayers of the church for sin in your life, as a Christian, come now...as together we stand & sing!