

The Key to Transformational Teaching

Luke 11:45-54

Self-righteousness is the belief that you are made right with God by your works. Self-righteousness can be seen through our comparison to and condemnation of other people. Jesus had warned the Pharisees of self-righteousness (Luke 11:37-44). In our text today, we find “a lawyer” who says to Jesus, “Teacher, when you say this, you insult us too!” (v. 45). One must understand that “a lawyer” in Jesus day is not like a lawyer today. This lawyer was “*an interpreter of the Scriptures,*” who taught people how to be right with God and with other people. Jesus says to this lawyer, “*You have taken away **the key of knowledge**; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering*” (v. 52). You should be experts in the Scriptures but you have no understanding of them, and you are hindering those who wish to know them.

Some think that Jesus is alluding to the custom of delivering a key to the one who was set aside as a “lawyer” or “Scribe” in the Jewish religion. As was written of the Rabbi R. Samuel, an ancient lawyer, that “when he died they put “his key” and his writing book in his coffin, because he was not worthy of a son.” To “take away the key of knowledge” is simply a way of saying, “You have no ability to teach the truth.” Others, and I fall into this group, believe the “key of knowledge” is a reference to Christ and His Kingdom. Jesus said to Peter, “I will give you *the keys of the kingdom* of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19).

I. Those with *the key of knowledge* make the Messiah their message.

Jesus “opened the Scriptures” and showed the two men “*all things concerning Himself*” (Luke 24:27). But the Pharisees missed Christ. Instead of seeing the grace of God in Jesus, they saw only themselves. “For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). Paul also said, “When I came I did not have superiority of speech or the wisdom of man” (1 Cor. 2:1). The best teachers are those who point others to Christ as “the Author and Finisher of our faith.” “To show chastity, the Pharisees would with their eyes shut that they might not look upon women. To show faithfulness, they would beat their heads against the wall to bleed (because they were keeping their eyes shut. There were thousands of “burdens hard to bear” that the Pharisees imposed” (Gill).

II. Those with *the key of knowledge* first experience what they express

You can’t bleed out without blood in; you can’t squeeze lemon juice from a turnip. You can’t take others where you yourself have not gone. The lawyers were only concerned with binding and loosing others. One’s prayer, worship, praise and the teaching of the truth leads others to Christ when it’s real within. When God pours “*new wine*” into an old skin (you and me) we spill out what bursts forth (Luke 5:36). “The lawyers pronounce things or persons defiled, and lawyers pronounce things or persons clean by saying - “these **bind**, and these **loose**”; these *reject as profane* or these *declare as right*.” (Dr. Lightfoot)

III. Those with *the key of knowledge* desire the gospel and not the glory.

Because the Jewish nation, particularly the Pharisees and lawyers who taught the people, missed the Good News of the Messiah, they “killed the prophets” (v. 46) and then acted as if they honored them. God purposed to bring an end to the Jewish nation (e.g. “this generation” in verse 51) because of the continual rejection of the truth and the hindering of others in seeing the truth. After Jesus said all these things, “the scribes and the Pharisees” began to be very hostile toward Him to “trap Him in what

He might say” (v. 54). Those who build traps for you are usually the ones who see you as a threat to

their system of control. "You shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free" (John 8:32).