

To help us understand what Jesus is teaching us this morning it is necessary that I set the stage. Things were bad in Israel. The people were under Roman occupation. As such, they are a conquered and oppressed people. Taxes were out of control. People were suffering broadly. There was a strong desire for change, and specifically Israel's liberation from the Romans. So, you can imagine there was a revival in-process, sort of speak, in the land. People were longing for a move of God, even if for selfish reasons. This gave the religious establishment greater influence and authority over the people. And they were exercising that increased influence and authority and were terribly missing the mark. Instead of comforting and leading the people closer to God, they were burdening the people further by their ungodly rules and expectations. And Jesus, an itinerant teacher was going around the land upsetting the apple cart. An abbreviated synopsis of the situation in the land, but nonetheless sets the stage. Now, having set the stage, I want to make three moves with our text. Act 1, Act 2, and Act 3.

Act 1: Where is God? V25-27 ²⁵ At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. ²⁶ Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. ²⁷ All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." When things go south the first person called to account is God. Either we question God's

existence, or we expect God to do something. That something being, make things better. Then the question of the person of God is raised. Who is the true God? Where can he be found? Are we, regardless of the religion, worshipping the same God? Where is God? I get very passionate when dealing with this question, but I do not want to be overcome by my passion, because I want you to hear me clearly. According to holy scripture there isn't but one God and that God can only be found through his Son, Jesus. I know there all those in the Christian community that believe otherwise but make no mistake about it to believe that is to be in stark opposition to what scripture teaches. It was no different in Jesus's day. The trained folk, the wise and prudent as Jesus puts it, thought they knew God. They thought they knew where God was. They thought that they were indeed leading people to God. But when God showed up in the person of Jesus Christ, they, the wise and prudent, rejected him. This is still happening today. Where is God? Where He has always been. In the midst of his people. And all people, though God's creation, are not his people. They can be, but they all are not. To say otherwise is to make the gospel of Jesus Christ a farce.

Matt 15:12-14 ¹²Then the disciples came and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" ¹³He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. ¹⁴Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit."

1 John 2:22-23 ²²Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and

the Son. ²³ No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.”

Act 2: Over here? V28 “²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” I am thoroughly convinced that every human being contemplates the reality of God and as a result a pursuit for God is begun. But that pursuit is pointless in my view because our spiritual compass is broken due to original sin. That is, the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. So, in our pursuit we often revert to creating a god that suits our sensibilities. A god who thinks like us and is ready to yield to our every desire and wish. When I read this text, I get the picture in my mind of Jesus holding a huge sign yelling, “Looking for God? Over here! See my resume”. Walked on water, calmed a raging storm, gave sight to the blind, feed a multitude two times with a few loaves and fish, raised the dead, healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and a command of the scriptures like no other. But then the truth of this text reminds that no one comes to the Father thru faith in the Son by his or her own effort. Signs and wonders or not, it is the work of God’s Holy Spirit.

Romans 1:18-20 “¹⁸ But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. ¹⁹ They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. ²⁰ For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.”

John 6:42-45 (59) “⁴² They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now

say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" ⁴³ Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. ⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me"

Act 3: Get in. V29-30, "²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." There was a very popular bumper sticker and saying back in the day. It went like this, "Jesus is My Co-pilot". Though catchy, it is very problematic. Jesus will not and cannot be our co-pilot. As a matter of fact, we would not want him to. He must be the one navigating the ship because if he is not, we remain in the same state, condition and place that we met him, laboring and heavy laden. The offer here is for each of us to detach ourselves from the ideology of works-righteousness and to attach ourselves to God's grace. You will always be yoked to something in this life. The only question is, "is it Jesus". Are you still laboring, living under the heavy load of trying to be good enough and to do enough good? If so, you are not yoked to Jesus and Jesus says to you this morning, get in!

Gal 3:11-14 (MSG) "¹¹⁻¹² The obvious impossibility of carrying out such a moral program should make it plain that no one can sustain a relationship with God that way. The person who lives in right relationship with God does it by embracing what God arranges for him. Doing things for God is the opposite of entering into what God does for you. Habakkuk had it right: "The person who believes God, is set right by God—and that's the real life."

Rule-keeping does not naturally evolve into living by faith, but only perpetuates itself in more and more rule-keeping, a fact observed in Scripture: “The one who does these things [rule-keeping] continues to live by them.”¹³⁻¹⁴ Christ redeemed us from that self-defeating, cursed life by absorbing it completely into himself. Do you remember the Scripture that says, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”? That is what happened when Jesus was nailed to the cross: He became a curse, and at the same time dissolved the curse. And now, because of that, the air is cleared and we can see that Abraham’s blessing is present and available for non-Jews, too. We are *all* able to receive God’s life, his Spirit, in and with us by believing—just the way Abraham received it.”