



WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

“IRONIC CURTAIN”

John Galbreath
Bible Study Series

Text: Luke 6:46
Date: November 12, 1961

About Westminster's Galbreath Bible Study Series:

This lesson is one taken from a sermon preached by John Galbreath at Westminster Presbyterian Church on November 12, 1961.

To complete the lesson, we suggest that you begin by reading the designated Bible passage (Luke 6:46).

Next, review the outline of the sermon. Reflect on the chosen scripture and how you would “fill in” the remainder of the message from the chosen passage.

Then, review the study questions posed about the lesson — whether by yourself or in your small group.

Finally, share your thoughts on the Galbreath Bible Study blog on the Westminster Intranet.

The bulletin noted that it was Loyalty Sunday. It also noted that Reverend Mr. Swailem Sidhom and his wife, Sameera, first missionaries from Egypt serving in South Sudan would be speaking to a meeting that evening.

I. Why Do You Call Me "Lord, Lord" and Never Do What I Tell You?

A. When, in another millennium, archeologists are scratching around in the rubble, they will have no trouble in discovering that this was a Christian nation.

1. Our coins have inscribed our faith.
2. The unearthing of our state papers will indicate that the great documents of America have assumed the sovereignty of God.
3. As they uncover the mound that was once 2040 Washington Road, they will note that a major landmark of the community was a Christian church.
4. The flag we fly under is Christian.

B. "But do not the things that I tell you."

1. It is to be hoped that the marquee of our drive in theaters will be sufficiently pulverized that they will not know that currently playing is "Nude Upon the Moon" and "Girls in the Woods."
2. Our TV screens will be dead, so they will never guess that in one city, 223 killings were projected in one week into the homes of their good citizens.
3. We may hope that someone will be thoughtful enough to burn the statistics regarding the delinquency rates of Allegheny County.

C. Will they learn that the growth in church membership has been surpassed only by the growth in the rate of juvenile crime?

1. "Why do you call me Lord, Lord, but never do what I tell you?"

II. "The Man Who Hears Me and Does Nothing About It Is Like the Man Who Built His House on Sand...When the Flood Water Swept Down Upon It, It Collapsed, And The Whole House Crashed In Ruins."

A. The parable.

1. The stream beds of Palestine are dry during the summer months.
 - a) *Where the winter torrents left their silt, there are wide stretches of smooth sand.*
 - b) *A stranger in the land might well choose such a spot for a home site.*
 - (1) No clearing necessary, and with the sand came top soil.
 - c) *The first winter rains would reveal his error.*
 - d) *The wise man knew to build on the rocky shore line, where going was difficult, and a good stone foundation was required before building could begin.*

B. The winter torrents are rising about America, and we are called to look to our foundations.

1. "Walk into Prague, and you are immediately struck by the lack of automobiles on the streets. It resembles a scene from a film, "On the Beach" -- nothing moving. Austere is the word. Prague is austere. But why no cars? They have simply been willing to give up automobiles in order to accomplish their mission. You are struck by the lack of style in their dress. Why? Answer: Mission. They have a calling to do something...It was the large and consuming mission of spreading their socialism around the world, bringing the 'good' life as they understand it...From my perspective, their rationality is perverted; their missionary thrust misdirected, and their social structures inhuman. But the sense of mission does something dramatic to the lives of those engaged in it. The man on the street somehow feels he has a role in a great calling."
2. "Paix et liberte"
3. "I am God." A communist asked why he should be expelled from a colony of Africa -- "Because you are godless." "I am not godless; I am God. Your religion talks about feeding the hungry. We feed them. You talk about visiting the prisoners. We share their prison. You talk about clothing the naked. We communists clothe them. You talk about God. We are the new God."

C. Are we sending our young people out with deep convictions -- or only deep prejudices?

1. More seriously, have we great convictions to impart to them?
2. Chas Malik, former President of the United Nations General Assembly: "You Americans have in your traditions certain invaluable beliefs about man and society and history and human destiny and the nature of God -- beliefs that you should feel free to export and to teach others. But many of you have taken life too much for granted. Therefore, the great deposit of belief and conviction and interpretation of life which has come down to you, you simply don't honor enough...The Communist world will force you to articulate yourselves. Asia and Africa are going to ask, 'What do you believe?' My deepest fear -- if you want it put bluntly -- is that you don't know the infinite values that you have at the basis of your own civilization, and you don't believe in them enough to put them strongly to the rest of the world."

D. The winter torrents are rising, and we would do well to look to our foundations.

III. "The Man Who Built His House Upon the Rock, And the Flood Water Swept Down Upon the House, But Could Not Shift It, For It Was Properly Built."

A. Faith is no flood insurance policy.

1. It is no assurance that we will not meet the torrents of winter.
2. It is the assurance that in the midst of storm, we will be able to remain intact.

B. The basic purpose of the parable was not to threaten but to encourage.

1. To ask the question is not necessarily to assume a negative reply.
2. We can say that America is crime-ridden, sex-craved, and money mad and we can document this with a barrel of statistics.

a) But this is only half the picture.

C. We witness our faith.

1. A teenager sends his Christmas money to the Buckhorn Child Welfare Agency.
2. One of the men called to say that the corporation has changed its personnel policy to include negroes in positions of responsibility and he felt his Christian witness had had a part in this.

3. Dave Clark called to say he was thrilled at being able to place 15 orphans in our homes for the holidays.

IV. Conclusion

A. Admiral Nelson was reputed for his courtesy toward those whom he had defeated in battle.

1. One conquered captain came to the quarterdeck, extending his hand.
2. "First your sword, then your hand."

B. This morning, we join in reaffirming our loyalty to Christ -- not just through the gift of money, but the gift of life.

C. Faith in Christ is not just the flag we fly under, but the rudder that guides our course.

Study Questions -- Part I

Bible Reading: Luke 6:46

Luke 6:46 says: ⁴⁶ And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

- What things does God ask you to do that you find easy? Which ones are hard?
- How do you move yourself to do the difficult things God tells you to do?

Study Questions -- Part II

Sermon :

Ironic Curtain

I.A. Do you think it is still true that archeologists would determine we were a Christian nation?

I.A.3. When they dig up 2040 Washington Road, what artifacts of Westminster would you hope they would find?

I.B.2. It is hard to know what this comment means. Perhaps there had been a significant news event at that time or perhaps he was just projecting what it might be like.

I.B.3. What is there about our community today that you would *not* want them to find? What about our country?

II. What can you do to make sure you are not building your spiritual foundation on sand?

II.B. What sacrifices do you think we are making as Christians to live our mission? What can you begin to do to make a difference?

II.B.2. What do you think this note meant?

II.B.3. Remembering that this sermon was preached in 1961, who do you think might be claiming to be God today?

II.C. What can we as a community be doing to help send our young people out with deep convictions? Would they recognize those convictions in you?

II.D. How can you shore up your own faith and works foundation?

III. -- Sections A and B were originally reversed.

III. Think about a time when your faith helped you to withstand the torrents of events. How might things have turned out differently for you without it?

III.C. How do you witness your faith? How can you do a better job of it?

IV.B. What concrete action can you take to reaffirm your loyalty to Christ?