

October 23, 2016

THE PROOF OF WISDOM

Matthew 11:16-19

We can always choose our response to the truth. We can choose to refuse ...however we may justify ourselves. The fact of free will is always upon us. We can seek out and work hard to understand God's purposes for our lives, or, we can make up our own. No matter how loudly God commands us, we can always think we know better, even though God knows we don't. The fact of the matter is that God has laid out His purposes for us in plain daylight. It's up to us to accept them or reject them. *"Wisdom is vindicated by her deeds!"* (Matthew 11:19b) The parallel passage in the Gospel of Luke says, *"Wisdom is vindicated by her children!"* (7:35)

Children! Jesus tells a little parable about children in the marketplace. This generation, Jesus says, is *"like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another: 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.'"* (Matthew 11:19a) You didn't want to join us in our fun, so we tried something different, and you still didn't want to join us. We told jokes and you didn't laugh; we told sad stories and you didn't cry. We had traditional worship and you didn't come. We had contemporary worship and you still didn't come. The pastor preached joyful messages and you didn't listen. The pastor preached tearful messages, and you didn't listen. We gave people opportunities to serve, and because they weren't "us," we didn't want them to do the work they could have done; we gave each other ideas for service, and, because they weren't our own ideas, we didn't want to be a part of it.... *"John the Baptist came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon;' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'"* V. 18-19a) Some people aren't going to be pleased no matter what is done. They reject the purposes of God for themselves!

"Nonetheless, wisdom is vindicated by her children" (and by her *deeds*)! Wisdom is vindicated – judged innocent by all her children – by offspring, by what wisdom produces, or not. Are we wise? Are we producing the acceptance of Christ or a rejection of Christ? Are we producing a generation that only wants what they want or will they want what they need? Are we producing a generation of children who "just don't know..."? Or are we producing a generation of children that just can't be pleased no matter what they're offered? What will they have seen and heard? What are they looking for? Can they think for themselves? Are they earthly born, or, are they spiritually reborn? Will we be vindicated by our children? Are the hearts of our children turned toward their parents, as the parents turn their hearts to their children? (Malachi 4:6) Are we creating an attitude that seeks service, or, are we raising a generation that assumes an attitude of entitlement. Are we creating a mindset that is fixed on acquiring more and more, or, are we creating an outlook of delayed gratification and self-denial.

How will the generations that follow us be compared to the generations that follow them?

What deeds are we performing that can vindicate us? What will be our legacy? How will we be remembered? What are we doing for the advancement of the Kingdom? What are we doing for our own spiritual growth? How much of ourselves are we willing to give? How much do we hold back for our own self interests?

Okay, Kingery, you've asked a lot of questions. I couldn't keep up. Of course, this sermon will be posted on the church's website, and you can always re-examine it as well as give it a more critical scrutiny, if you'd like. But the point is, we need to constantly examine ourselves in the light of the purposes of God, the will of God, the Kingdom of God, the Spirit of Christ. Is the Spirit of Christ allowed to work in our midst? Is it at work in each of us as individuals? Is it resisted, or, is it pursued? Do we welcome it? Do we seek it? Will we be vindicated by the spirit of wisdom?

Wisdom is proven by her deeds!