

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

### “KINGDOM CHECKUP”

For individual study or group discussion

DATE: March 6, 2022

SPEAKER: Wil/Brian

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 6:43-49

You may be familiar with the expression “carnal Christian.” The terminology is largely associated with the *Lordship Controversy* where proponents claim that it is possible to trust Christ as your Savior without necessarily confessing Christ as your Lord (i.e. living a life in obedience to his Word). In other words, you can have “profession without practice.”

As we consider Luke 6:43-49, we see Jesus resist this mindset as he makes abundantly clear the nature of a true, saving faith. In verse 45, the Great Physician is inviting his listeners to enter his examination room for a heart checkup. How will they be able to diagnose authentic faith? Christ summarizes, “by their fruit you will recognize them” (Luke 6:44a; Matthew 7:16).

The dichotomous disparity illustrated in Luke’s text of a good tree v. bad tree, or good fruit v. bad fruit, is not a unique division introduced to us by Christ in this passage. Elsewhere in Scripture, we observe Kingdom standing as an either/or dichotomy: either you are righteous or wicked, sheep or goat, wheat or tare, good or evil (Ps. 75:10; Mal. 3:18; Matt. 13:30, 25:32-33; John 5:29). With God, there is no middle ground when it comes to matters of the heart.

- Read Galatians 5:22-23 and note the fruit of the Spirit. How do these fruits correspond with the Kingdom character from our previous studies? (Luke 6:27-31; 37-38)
- If the Spirit lives within us, we will yearn to be trees that grow lots of good fruit. But this leads us to an obvious question: How can we be good, generously fruitful trees? (cf. Galatians 5:16, 25; 6:9; John 15:4-5,16)
- Kingdom Checkup: What’s the state of your heart today? What are things in your life that are forming your heart? Are you aware of the ways you want your heart transformed by the Spirit? Pray for awareness and the Spirit’s transformative power of renewal.

The Leaning Tower of Pisa is one of the most recognizable buildings in the world and was originally erected in 1170 to be a free-standing bell tower for the Cathedral of Pisa. But treacherous sub-soil conditions, along with the weight of the first three floors, caused the edifice to start leaning precariously within the first twelve years. Given the name “Pisa” which is Greek for “marshy land” one would have thought that the engineers would have taken the terrain into account during construction. But like the one who hears and does not obey the word of God (v. 49), those engineers did not combine “good profession with good practice” to ensure a firm foundation from which to build.

- What has been the foundation for your life? How have you been able to withstand trials and tribulations?
- Jesus warns his listeners of the floodwaters that will inevitably rush into our lives, seeking to fracture and expose our foundations (vv. 48-49). How can you prepare to stand against the surge? (John 14:23; Col. 2:6-7)

As you endure the rising tides of life, fortify your heart with this truth shared by Christian counselor and author, Ed Welch: “We have been brought into an unshakable kingdom and our home in Christ is secure. And this home is established on his sacrificial love. It does not collapse under the weight of our sins, the strength of our enemies, or the assault of death itself.”<sup>1</sup>

*His oath, his covenant, his blood support me in the whelming flood;  
when all around my soul gives way, he then is all my hope and stay.  
on Christ, the solid rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand,  
all other ground is sinking sand.*

## Family Dinner Table

In a recent checkup on the spiritual state of America’s youth, sociologists Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton coined the term Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD) in their 2005 book, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. Based on their research from the National Study of Youth and Religion, Smith and his team provided a diagnosis of America’s youth when it comes to religious beliefs:

*The actual dominant religion among U.S. teenagers is centrally about feeling good, happy, secure, at peace. It is about attaining subjective well-being, being able to resolve problems, and getting along amiably with other people. [MTD] is about belief in a particular kind of God: one who exists, created the world, and defines our general moral order, but not one who is particularly personally involved in one’s affairs—especially affairs in which one would prefer not to have God involved. Most of the time, the God of this faith keeps a safe distance. In short, God is something like a combination Divine Butler and Cosmic Therapist: he is always on call, takes care of any problems that arise, professionally helps his people to feel better about themselves, and does not become too personally involved in the process...The language, and therefore experience, of Trinity, holiness, sin, grace, justification, sanctification, church,...and heaven and hell appear, among most Christian teenagers in the United States at the very least, to be supplanted by the language of happiness, niceness, and an earned heavenly reward.<sup>2</sup>*

- St. Augustine famously prayed, “Without you, what am I to myself but a guide to my own self-destruction?” Discuss as a family whether or not an MTD view of God has crept into your thinking, replacing biblical obedience with the idea that God’s Word should only provide “therapeutic benefits” to its adherents.
- When you hear the word *obedience*, what is the first thing that comes to mind and why? How does it relate to today’s lesson?

### PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Samuel Pollard Institute  
Lydia and Robbie Sweet, ministry to missionary kids (MTW)

<sup>1</sup> Welch, Ed. “God’s House, a Blog Post by Ed Welch.” Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation, 2 February 2015, <https://www.ccef.org/god-s-house/>.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, Christian and Denton, Melinda Lundquist. *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. Oxford University Press, 2005.