**Introduction**

It has been quite a while since I was in seminary, but every year there is a new crop of pastors and vicars. And every year when you talk to some of them they still have this one particular worry. A worry that I always thought was absolutely insane. Talk with them long enough and they will use the world Biblicism. You probably don’t know that word, which is a good thing. Because the concept itself is stupid. Believe it or not, it is the fear of academics that people might know and quote their bible too much. And almost every newly escaped student seems to carry this fear. We certainly wouldn’t want parishioners who treat the Bible like it is the living Word of God.

Even the lessor form of the phobia - Fear that someone somewhere may apply a bible verse to themselves – is strange to me. Yes, they are usually talking about someone just taking a verse like Jeremiah 29:11 – “Know that I have plans for you” – and taking it to mean that I’m going to win the lottery and get my Benz tomorrow. And yes, people wracked with this phobia, are concerned with something that I spend a good amount of time on – understanding the context. Giving the part of the Bible you are reading a deep read. But I largely think any problems in this vein are self-correcting. When I don’t get my Benz tomorrow, I will have to reconsider just what plans God has for me. And if it upsets me, I’ll have to take it up with God. And even if It gets heated, God invites prayer.

**Text**

Now it is a fair question to ask “Pastor, what the heck are you talking about?” Ultimately I’m talking about “I thank you, Father…that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children” and the promises that come after. But following my concern about context, I think we have back up a bit.

Chapter 10 of Matthew – which we spent the last three weeks reading – was Jesus’ sermon on sending out the apostles. They are to go throughout Israel proclaiming the kingdom. But unlike Luke who does narrate the disciples return from this mission, Matthew just lets it drop. What we get is something of a summary of Jesus’ early Galilean mission. Matthew 11 begins with the notice that “Jesus went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.” And we get a series of pictures of that mission’s reception.

First we get the disciples of John the Baptist coming and asking “are you the one, or should we expect another?” And Jesus points them at the deeds of the messiah. Tell John what you see. “The blind receive sight…the dead are raised, and the poor have good news preached to them.” But then he tacks on, “blessed is the one who is nor offended by me.” Parts of the promised deeds of the messiah, according to John the Baptist, are the “axe is already at the root of the tree.” “His winnowing fork is in his hand and he will clear his threshing floor.” But this Jesus doesn’t look like that, at least not right now. Do not be offended that for the moment the power and the glory are hidden. Hidden in plain sight. It is not that often that you see dead people raised. But still hidden.

That causes the crowds to start talking about John, who is sitting in prison. And Jesus confronts them. “What did you go out to see?” They certainly know the answer. They went out to see a prophet. They were not expecting someone wishy-washy blown like the reed. They were not expecting the soft clothes of palace. They went to see the prophet. And that is what they got. Their naïve understanding the man in camel’s hair was right. This one is the Elijah. But how does every prophet die? Typically at the hands of those he’s sent to. Elijah was spared that by a fire-y chariot, Maybe so that he could come back at this time. But the summary is again, trust what you have seen.

But the crowds are agitated. They saw John rightly as the prophet, but chalked his message up to demons. Like goldilocks with Papa Bears porridge, too hot. And they saw Jesus, eating and drinking and proclaiming good news, and like Mama Bear’s bead, too soft.

And lest we think this is a problem only for the Jews, we have to remember that the cities of Galilee were mixed. Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum. They were witness to miracles, to signs and wonders not seen since Moses. And did they repent like Nineveh? No, they largely yawned. If Sodom had been given these wonders, it would still be present Jesus says.

Those who should know it up here – like the pharisees or John’s disciples – can miss it, because it is too plain. Those who know it from their gut, can miss it because the sin that lives in that gut wants something different. And those who should have been startled awake from their slumbers, go on sleeping.

**Christology**

Why is this?

Because this is the will of the Father. That those who think they are wise, miss what is hidden in plain sight. That those who have trained guts – that this is the correct way for the messiah to be – will walk away, while the untrained children marvel. That those who think they deserve it, will miss the real thing.

“All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father, except the Son and anyone to who the son choose to reveal him.”

If we are depending upon our heads, we will miss him. If we are depending upon our guts, they will lead us astray. If we depend upon our wills, we will sleep through it.

So then what are we to do?

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

God visited us in His son and Jesus revealed the Father to us. That cross is the love of the Son for all creation. The resurrection is the love of the Father for the Son, and the acceptance of the Son’s prayer – “Father forgive them.” The proclamation of the good news to the poor – the mission of the apostles and the church – is the love of both the Father and the Son flowing out through the work of the Spirit.

The Will of God is that we should hear that proclamation of Come to the Wedding Feast. God desires to be known and has revealed himself. Hidden on the Cross, in the Resurrection, and in His church. Hidden in full sight of the wise of the world.

**Moral**

But what that means is that we have to put down all our prior spiritual claims.

Because it doesn’t matter how smart we are, or how intuitive or connected or any of the things that we might have thought were worth building on. Because none of those things know God. The only way we know God is by his self-revelation.

And for us, that self-revelation is mostly about the Bible. He’s revealed it to little children. Jesus loves me this I know for the bible tells me so. It’s probably the most important hymn verse to remember.

And the yoke of Jesus is not the constant dread of unknowing. It is not the work of submission, or the work of unlearning. The yoke of Jesus is walking in the ways that he has already gone. It is learning from him.

**Eschatological**

And probably the biggest thing that we can learn is to do exactly what Jesus did at his deepest moment. “Father, into you hands I commit my spirit.” Jesus knew his Father, and trust the love of the Father. He came to reveal that to us, and he has.

The yoke is easy and the burden light, because we know that the Father of all loves us. The Father of Jesus does have plans for us. And those plans are not just for tomorrow, but those plans are for eternity.

Yes, there are lots of things that are in the Bible that are confusing. But this is not one of them. And it puts us on the right path. God – the Father, Son and Spirit – loves you and wishes for you to know Him. Put down your heavy load, and come to Jesus.