

“Jesus, The Human Gadfly”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. Jesus the Human Gadfly! - A gadfly is a *horsefly*. Gadfly is also used for “a person who upsets the status quo.” In Plato’s “*Apology*” he uses a gadfly to describe **Socrates** relationship with the **Athenian political scene**, which he compared to a *slow dimwitted horse*. During his defense when on trial for his life, Socrates, pointed out that dissent, like the tiny gadfly was easy to swat, but the cost to society of silencing individuals who were irritating could be very high. “If you kill a man like me, you will injure yourselves more than you will injure me,” because his role was that of a **gadfly**, “to sting people and whip them into a fury, all in the service of **truth**.”
1. I think that the illustration of the **gadfly** is exactly what Jesus is going to discuss in our 2nd part this morning.
- B. **Bird’s-eye view of chapter:** Our Relation to **Christ** - Our Union & Fruitfulness (1-8);
 Our Relation to **Christians** - Love, Joy, Friends, & Fruit (9-17);
 Our Relation to **The World** - What happens, When Two Worlds Collide (18-27).

II. **LOVE, JOY, FRIENDS, & FRUIT! (9-17)**

- A. **LOVE!** (9,10)
- B. **Last week** we looked at *bearing fruit* (fruit of the Spirit) – this is still our context today, as we note our 1st topic is **Love**, which is the 1st of the 9 fruit found in Galatians (**Joy/Peace**)
- C. **My love** - *The Father loves the Son; the Son loves the believers; the believers love other believers!*
- D. **JOY!** (11)
- E. Many imagine obedience to Christ is *burdensome* because of its **self-surrender**, its **sacrifice**, & its **service**; **but** Jesus teaches the opposite associating **obedience** w/**joy**.¹
1. **Like a flag** that flies over the castle **when the King is on the throne**; **so JOY** will stand over **your life** as a testimony that **Jesus reigns in your heart**.
- F. **My joy** - What was “My Joy”?
1. Heb.12:1, **looking unto Jesus**, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the **joy** that was set before Him endured **the cross**.
 2. **His joy** was in being *the instrument of redemption* for the world.

¹ Geneva Bible

3. **His joy** was in *being used by God* to further the *eternal purposes* of God.
 - a) We can have **Joy** in the same: being an instrument in the hand of God, & in helping to further His purposes.
4. Joy is dependence on **God & not on circumstances!**
5. Joy when your **health** is slipping; when your **business** is failing; Joy in the midst of **opposition**; in the midst of **unemployment**; When a loved one **passes away**; when a **boyfriend/girlfriend** says goodbye for good.
 - a) Joy is dependence on **God & not on circumstances!**

G. **FRIENDS!** (12-15)

H. This section begins & ends w/**Love one another!** (see 12,17)

1. It is a **command to love!** – A **decision** not a *feeling!*
 - a) It is a decision to **continually seek** the highest good of others.
 - b) We aren't to love others on the basis of *their inherent goodness* or *external attractiveness*, but on the basis of *the example Jesus set for us.*²
2. He doesn't say, "*I command you to generate feelings for one another!*"

I. Up to this point Jesus said, *love your neighbors as you love yourself* (Lk.10:27)

Now, He gives the disciples a new commandment based on a **different comparison**. They are to love each other *as Jesus loved them!*

1. **Jesus loved them unconditionally:** He loved them in their **unbelief** (Mt.14:31)
 He loved them in their **pettiness**(18:1-6) He loved them in their **desertion**(26:31)
 He loved them in their **denial**(26:33,34) He loved them in their **laziness**(26:36-46)
 He loved them in their **betrayal** (26:47-50) He loved them **to the end** (Jn.13:1)³

J. (13) In Disney's "*The Jungle Book*" movie (1967) **Bagheera**(panther) quotes *this verse* to comfort **Mowgli**(jungle boy) when they thought Baloo(bear) had died saving **Mowgli's** life.

K. John says it again in **1 Jn.3:16** **By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.**

1. Now in vs.13 their relationship moves to a deeper level - **beyond discipleship to friendship!**

L. How often have we heard of a **firefighter** or a **police officer** who had given his life in the call of duty! *[Even greater a love is laying down your life for your enemies!]*

² Charles Swindoll; John, vol.3, pg.10

³ ibid; pg.10

1. Rom.5:7,8 For scarcely for a **righteous man** will one die; yet perhaps for a **good man** someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that **while** we were **still sinners**, Christ died for us.
- M. This is Speaking of **love as a lifestyle** not only as a **once & for all** event.
1. **Laying down your life is a continual process!**
- N. (15) A slave(servant) in Greek law was defined as a **“living tool”!** (His master never opened up to him)
- O. This phrase **“I have called you friends”** speaks of a **custom** which came from the courts of the **Roman Emperors & the Eastern kings.**⁴
1. **“At these courts there was a very select group of men who were called “The friends of the king, or the friends of the Emperor.” - At all times they had access to the king. They even had the right to come into his bedchamber at the beginning of the day. - The friends of the king were those who had the closest & the most intimate connection w/him, & who had the right to come to him at any time.”**
 2. This sheds light on when the Jews said to Pilate **“If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend.”** [which was a threat of Impeachment by the people]; Or, when Jesus said to Judas, **“Friend, why have you come?”**
- P. Not an **acquaintance** but a **friend!**
1. **Acquaintances** are people who know us on the outside, on the surface.
 2. **Friends** are people who know us on the inside: *our joys, hurts, failures, the secret plans of our lives, soul secrets.*
 3. Look how Jesus let these 11 **into** His life. Sharing his **future secrets** w/them. Sharing His own **struggles, pains, & emotion** w/them.
- Q. **FRUIT!** (16,17)
- R. (16) **Our branches** will bear permanent fruit **& Our prayers** will be answered.
- S. **Imperishable Fruit!** – Fruit that has **eternal** significance.
1. They say the church should be **a community of Dates** instead of **Pumpkins**. **Pumpkins** you can harvest in 6 months. **Dates** have to be planted and tended by people who will not live to harvest them. **Dates** are for future generations.
- T. **Go** – marks the direction of Christian service.
1. **“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”;** **“Go, work today in my vineyard.”;** **“Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.”;** **“Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.”;** **“Go and sin no more.”;** **“Go & bear fruit!”**

⁴ William Barclay, backed by Kittles.

III. **WHEN TWO WORLDS COLLIDE! (18-25)**

- A. Wow, *vs.18* overshadows *vs.17* like an **eclipse!** (darkens the mood)
- B. Hatred for Christians? **Why?** - They were considered...
1. **Bad Citizens** – Wouldn't confess Caesar as Lord. This branded them disloyal & dangerous.
 2. **Cannibals** – They ate bodies & drank blood in a private meal.
 3. **Promiscuous** – Love feasts, kiss of peace.
 4. **Dooms Day Disciples** – Talked of "the end", the 2nd coming.
 5. **Against the Family** – Divided families, split homes, marriages.
- C. **The World** = human society organizing itself w/o God.
1. There is bound to be a huge divide between "*a group that regards God as the only reality in life*" & "the man who regards God as **totally irrelevant** for life"!
 2. The world dislikes those who are different!
 - a) (*Illus.*) Almost 2 centuries ago, a man invented the **1st umbrella** & tried it out on a walk through the streets of London. He soon ran into the hostility of people who didn't want some oddball walking their streets w/his own **personal roof on a stick!** - They pelted him w/stones & rotten vegetables & chased him off the street!
- D. **Hatred** – Family & friends will rejoice with you with enthusiasm & affirmation over a new job, a promotion, a new relationship,...*until that relationship was w/Jesus Christ?*
1. Then all of a sudden resistance, strange looks, a cold indifference,...it's the ol' "*oh, you got religion?*"
 2. Jesus gives us how to face that situation!
 - a) **Don't take it personally. Why?** Because it is directed at Him.
 3. **Understand, some times we bring this on ourselves by insensitivity, being overbearing, aggressive, or by using pushy witnessing techniques!** (*God forgive us*)
 - a) Note also the world's hatred is not for what they **did wrong** but what they **did right**
 - b) Hatred from the world is brought on because **we are different** (at least we should be!) – Remember, *He Chose us out of this world* (19).
 - (1) It's **butterflies** still living with **caterpillars!** – We dwell on 2 different planes. – No wonder the frustration of **unequally yoked relationships.**
 - c) The world says, "*You're no fun anymore! You don't get drunk w/us, tell dirty jokes, sleep around, ...you just don't know how to have a good time anymore!*"
 - (1) Oh we can...we don't want to have *that kind of fun!* Our wants have **changed!** - It's not what we **can't do** – It's what we no longer want to do because of **holiness & pleasing** our Lord!

E. (20) **Persecute** - “to put to flight”, “to pursue”, “to chase like a wild beast.”

1. **Christianity** is the most persecuted religion on the planet. It is *illegal* or *severely restricted* in **51 different countries**.

a) *More than 43 million Christians have been killed for their faith since the crucifixion of Jesus. *It's been estimated that more Christians have been martyred in the 20th Century than in all the prior 1,900 years combined. * There have been more than 26 million documented cases of martyrdom in this century alone. * More than 200 million Christians in over 60 nations face persecution each day 60% of these are children * 150-165,000 are martyred each yr.

2. We are excited to invite you to the **VOM Regional Conference: Bound w/ Them, Sat, Nov.14** here at CM. (Free!)

a) VOM speakers will **encourage** and **challenge** you with their testimonies.

3. **Tom White**, Executive Director of VOM-USA, was imprisoned in **Cuba** in May 1979. After many missions dropping hundreds of thousands of gospels onto the communist island, his private plane crashed on a Cuban highway. He was sentenced to 24 years in prison. He received brutal treatment in the prison.

4. **Steven Khoury** youngest ordained Arab pastor in **Israel/Palestinian territories**.

5. **Eric Foley** founded VOM Korea, to support the work of the indigenous underground church in **North Korea**.

6. **Mujahid El Masih** was committed to jihad in **Pakistan** until Jesus brought him peace, and he became a pastor.

7. **Getaneh Getaneh** of **Ethiopia** was imprisoned and suffered for his faith when communism came to his country.

F. (22) Not sin in the general sense (*they are without excuse*) but the particular sin of **hating Jesus & those who belong to Him**.

IV. **WITNESSING!** (26,27)

A. (26) The voice of the church has always testified of Him, & here we see that testimony is backed up w/the H.S. testifying through us!

B. (27) “Saving knowledge is diffused over the earth, not like **sunlight** but like **torchlight**, which is *passed from hand to hand*.”⁵

1. Just open your mouth & tell about what God has done for you!

2. Christian witness comes from **long fellowship & intimacy** w/Christ!

C. A witness is one w/an **outward testimony!**

1. A Christian witness is a man who not only **knows Christ** – but who **wants others to know Him too**.

⁵ James Strachan, Leadership, Vol. 7, no. 2.

- D. **End:** Christianity spread rapidly during the first century because *all Christians* saw themselves as responsible for disseminating the gospel.
1. Q: How many people are you making homesick for God?
 2. Give a man a *Dollar*, and you cheer his heart.
Give him a *Dream*, and you challenge his heart.
Give him *Christ*, and you change his heart.
 3. John Wesley used to say, "I look upon **all the world** as my parish."
- E. Instead of telling people to **give up things**, it's better to tell them to "seek first the **kingdom of God**," and then they will get **new things and better things**, and the **old things** will *drop off by themselves*.
- F. * If we are *abiding in Christ*, we will *love the brethren*, & *get victory* over the **hatred of the world**.
- G. **Communion:**
1. Let's *love one another* by partaking in the bread & the cup together!

Massive reproduction has caused the gadfly/horse-fly population to **triple** in many countries.
Gadfly lays eggs on **bright lights**.

Heat/persecution/we're His offspring.