

Week of March 11-17

## **FROG IN THE KETTLE**

**Scripture Reading:** Read Luke chapter 6

Perhaps you have heard of the experiment with the frog and the kettle? A frog, when placed in a kettle of boiling water, immediately jumps out of the kettle so as not to be scalded. The frog's survival instincts, given to it by God, react to the sudden change of temperature and the frog seeks safety. On the other hand, when a frog is placed in cool water and the water heated a degree at a time, the frog adapts to the gradual change in temperature until it is boiled to death.

What a powerful analogy of what can happen to believers living in a fallen world. We adapt to the gradual changes going on around us, begin to absorb the world's way of viewing life, and, if not checked, we ultimately adopt the world's values as our own. If we were confronted suddenly with ungodly values, we would probably react. The problem is that it happens ever so subtly rather than quickly. That's what makes it so difficult to see. No wonder the apostle Paul warned the Roman Christians about not letting the world squeeze them into its mold. We are called instead to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. We are to allow ourselves to be saturated with God's Word and values so that we can discern accurately and live righteously.

In our chapter reading today, Jesus preaches a sermon to his followers where he lays out a number of godly values. The sermon is not unlike the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 5-7 but this one was preached on a level place (perhaps we should call it the Sermon on the Plain☺). These kingdom values fly in the face of the world's values. Where the world prizes power, prestige, possessions and position, Jesus values the poor, the hungry, the sorrowful, and the rejected. These, Jesus calls blessed. Talk about a reversal of values!

Jesus, however, isn't done. He goes on to command his followers to love their enemies, do good to those who hate them, bless those who curse them, and to pray for those who mistreat them. You can almost hear the disciples (and us!) cry out, "You've got to be kidding! Love my enemies? Pray for those who mistreat me?" The very fact that we recoil at these commands is evidence that we have not yet adopted kingdom values. Why? Because, loving our enemies and being merciful is how the Father treated us when we were his enemies and living in sin, and that's how we are to live.

When we absorb the world's values, we evaluate everything through a self-centered lens. When we adopt biblical values, we evaluate everything through kingdom values. Is it easy? No way. Is it possible? Not in our strength. Is it biblical? Absolutely. Besides, it's better than being boiled to death in a kettle. Just ask a frog!

**Action Step:** Take some time today to read through the Sermon on the Plain to see where your values do and don't match up with kingdom values.

**Prayer Focus:** Repent where necessary and be transformed by the renewing of your minds as you saturate yourselves with the Word of God.

**Take-a-way:** *Kingdom values are right-side-up. It's the world's values that are upside down.*