**Wisdom's Children**

Based on [Luke 7:18-35](http://biblia.com/books/esv/Lk7.18-35)

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Pastor Nathan Fuehrer

Jesus tells his church to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them. Teaching the faith--we call it teaching the catechism--is how the church makes disciples. Catechism class is a class that teaches "What Lutheran's Believe." And I find myself in a very ironic position whenever I teach it. You see, because often I’m teaching Christians what Christians believe, or Lutherans what Lutherans believe. Isn't that strange? If somebody who's a Lutheran says, "**Well, I believe, that people are basically good,**” I'd say, **“No you don't, you're a Lutheran and you believe in original sin, that everyone is basically evil apart from God.”**

Teaching people what they believe. Seems an odd concept. It is like going to the barber shop and saying, “**Yeah, I'd like you to taper up the sides and even out the bangs a bit,”** and having the barber say, “**No, you want a buzz cut**.” Or going to a restaurant and ordering fish and chips only to have the waitress say, **no you wouldn’t, you'd rather have spaghetti.**

Teaching people what they believe...it seems odd, but that’s only because you and I have been trained to think that beliefs are just a matter of personal taste, that they come from within you. And so the idea that you need to be taught what you should believe--especially in matters of religion and spirituality—well “that’s just brainwashing.”

You and I live in a world that is immersed in the idea that, choosing what to believe about God is the same sort of decision as choosing what colour socks to wear, or what music to listen to. We live in a world that says “life is a restaurant,” and there's a whole menu of acceptable religions and beliefs for you to choose from. But the truth is this; you don't choose your beliefs, your beliefs choose you. Jesus' church isn't the only one teaching you what to believe. The world has a curriculum all its own in order to raise you and yours up to be its children.

Little children, the world wants to sell you a god. It wants to sell you a god. And it doesn't matter who or what that god is. It's like, Walmart. You want chips? well Walmart doesn't care if you buy Pringles or Doritos or both, *so long as you buy it from them*. The world is the same.

The world wants to sell you a god. And it could be Allah or Buddha, but it doesn't have to be. Maybe it's Justin Bieber, maybe Santa Clause, maybe it’s “the Cowboy lifestyle,” maybe it’s a chick flick-type romance…maybe it's good looks, maybe it’s a perfect plastic family…there are all kinds of things out there to worship, to conform your life to and to build your life around…and the world knows it.

The world wants to market and sell you a god. It can even be the true God. The world doesn't mind if you want to own the true God so long as you are buying Him from the marketplace of the world. You see, the world wants to be the sole mediator between God and man, the gatekeeper, the ferryman you have to pay to cross the river to God, the guard who collects the toll before you cross the bridge. The world wants to sell you god, and they don't like it when the Word of the true God comes to people without it. That's what Jesus means by his little parable of the children in the marketplace. “**To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, “We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep**.” When God's true message is sung to the world, the world spins it as though it is evil and wrong…tells people not to dance to it. Because the world wants to be the piper, and the world wants to pick the tune. And so it will reject God's tune every time.

This is where John the Baptist comes in. He could really have used a PR rep. Why would anyone take advice from a man who wore a camel hair suit and ate locusts; from a homeless man who rants and raves about repentance, insulting people…calling them vipers and sinners?

Well, John the Baptist did all these things without wearing the makeup of the world, without brand sponsorship, without “selling out.” And the thing that was so irksome to the world--the Pharisees and scribes--is that it was working. It’s not supposed to work like that, but it was working. People came to hear John’s message, even though he wasn't purchased from the shelves of Walmart, or airbrushed by fashion marketers. And it gnashed the teeth of the Pharisees and the lawyers, at that time the CEO's of the religious world. And so the Pharisees begin to sabatoge John's campaing, spinning his actions and subverting his motives, saying don't weep, we don't need repentance, we're abrahams children, we are safe. This man has a demon…don’t listen to him.

Then came Jesus, preaching that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, just like John. Only Jesus preached the coming kingdom, not as a funeral song, but as a wedding song. John preached in the minor key, but Jesus sang a joyful tune. His song was in the major key, the hallelujah chorus. He said **“Repent, here comes the kingdom of God, my kingdom,-- and you see my kingly reign as I release the captives, bind up the broken hearted, as I mobilize the lame and cleanse the lepers, and preach good news to the poor. So eat, drink, be joyful and celebrate.”** Jesus preaches the gospel, the salvation of sinners with no fancy packaging, without dressing up the message for the window shoppers of the world…and still Wisdom’s children accept it. God’s children accept it. “**My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me**” says Christ, the wisdom of God. He says, “**I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand**” (John 10:27-28).

But the hired hands, the Pharisees and the scribes spin the story again, to torn his joy into crass indulgence..in the hopes of stealing the sheep…they say he’s a sinner and a glutton and a lush? You see they are “the children of this generation”…the *world’s* children, and they want to own the religious marketplace. They are the world’s children, and they don’t care what you consume so long as they are the ones who get to package and to push the product you buy. **They are the world’s children, thieves and robbers who do not come in by the gate, but the sheep, “wisdoms children,” *Jesus’* children, did not listen to them** (John 10:8). They could not make them weep with the law or dance with the gospel, because the voice was not the shepherds tune.

The world can play in the minor and major key, just like Jesus and John. The world can preach law and gospel, make you sad or happy whatever’s your pleasure. The world can give you good news or bad news, comedy or drama, “just be sure to stay tuned and don’t touch that dial”, and the children of the world who are the sheep of the world will bleat for more.

But you are not the sheep of the world. You are the flock of the Good Shepherd. The world can play you a tune in the minor key or the major, and they expect you to bend like a reed in the wind. They expect you to salivate at the ring of their bell. But what the world and her children will never learn is that it doesn't matter to you whether you like the tune; it's whether Wisdom Himself is holding the flute…it’s whether the voice the sheep are hearing is from the Good Shepherd. “**John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and the world says, ‘He has a demon.’ Jesus has come eating and drinking, and the world says, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by all her children.”**

Wisdom is justified by all her children. In other words, those who have wisdom can tell the difference between the truth of God and a sales pitch, for they hear wisdoms voice. Those who are truly wise, hear the Wisdom and the Word of God and keep it. Wisdom’s children heard the message of John and of Jesus, and the scriptures say, “**They declared God just, having been baptized, but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized**.”

As you know, baptism means washing. Washing. Those who were washed in baptism became wisdom’s children. That’s what the bible says. That’s what it says in our gospel, that the people who heard this declared God just, having been baptized. But the unbaptized Pharisees rejected. And so it’s no wonder why a church has to teach people what they believe. We think our beliefs are our own, but all our beliefs came from somewhere. You’re a sports fan because the world sold you sports; you are a cowboy or a city slicker because the world made you one. You skateboard, surf, ski or snowboard because that’s the way the world got to you.

You are a product of your influences, it’s true. Some are good some are bad. **But the world’s lie is to make you believe that you have chosen who you are, you’re preferences, likes and dislikes**. It makes it easier to sell you what you need if it can convince you that you are a god, choosing what *you* believe to be right and wrong, good and bad, fashionable and foolish. And it makes it all the easier for the world to call it “brainwashing” when the Holy Christian Church teaches you what to believe.

A seminary professor was arguing once with students who complained that teaching God's Word with the aim of convincing or persuading was "brainwashing." The professor replied without flinching, "**We do not wash just their brains, we wash all of them body and soul…with water and the word"**

Truth is…if your brain is dirty, the only thing to do is wash it. In order to be wisdom’s children, we needed a rebirth of water and spirit. We need to be washed in the teaching of God, our brains and our bodies. Our beliefs either come from the world or from God. **As Christians we need to be told what we believe according to God’s Word, so that we can be washed clean of the image of the world, and be conformed to the image of Christ.** That way, like the people who were washed by John in the Jordan, we too can hear the true purpose of God for ourselves and declare God just.

When we are washed by Christ, we are remade in his image, Christ who is the power of God and the *Wisdom* of God (1 Corintians 1:24). Through believing the folly of Christ Crucified, we are Wisdom’s Children because we have heard God’s Word and have not rejected it. We have seen the cross and not stumbled over it, but kneel before it. And therefore ladies and gentlemen, children of wisdom remember, you don't need to purchase from the world what you have freely inherited from God.