

a *Grace Notes* Bible Study

The Gospel of John

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Preface to the Study of John

The gospel of John was the last of the four accounts of Christ's life to be written. John, the last living apostle, ministered in Ephesus which had become the center for Christianity in the last decades of the first century.

John's gospel is an eye witness account and relates the life of Christ to the Church. Each gospel has a specific audience and the audience for this gospel is the Church, you and me.

Following the introduction which establishes the eternal pre-existence of the deity of Christ and the birth of the humanity of Christ, when the Divine person took on a human nature, John relates the events of four days, four days in the Divine diary.

John 1:19-23. And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

And he confessed, and did not deny, and he confessed, "I am not the Christ."

And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."

They said then to him, "Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?"

He said, "I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as Isaiah the prophet said."

John's ministry was to announce the coming Messiah, to prepare the way for the advent of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

As a result of this preaching of the truth, the religious crowd went out to attack him

John 1:28 tells us that, in this scene, John was at the Jordan River near Bethany. This is

significant in that this is the point where Joshua led Israel into the promised land in 1400 BC. He reminded the people that they were a chosen race and that God had for centuries been preparing them for the coming of the Messiah.

The Religious leaders asked three questions: "Who are you?" "Are you Elijah?" "Are you the Prophet?"

Very strong in the Greek: "You!, who do you think you are?"

His answers were simple, "I am not the Christ." I am not Elijah. I am not the great Prophet."

People do not like situations that do not fit their preconceived ideas of what the world should be. Their inflexibility makes them intolerant and their traditions become more important than truth.

EXAMPLE: What are you? A Christian. What is your church? What denomination? What this, what that?

Getting nowhere, they appeal to him by saying they have to give the religious leaders an answer when they get back to Jerusalem. John's reply: "I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness."

John knew precisely who he was and what his mission was. He was a "voice".

A voice - Doesn't make an issue out of personality

A voice - Doesn't make an issue out of heritage

A voice - Doesn't make an issue out of education

A voice - A voice is heard but not seen

A voice - The words endure long after the voice is silent

John the messenger recognized it was the message and not the man.

Then he quotes Isaiah 40:3

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

NOTE: John stayed with the Word of God, not personality, and not his relationship (he was the Messiah's cousin!)

These religious leaders had come out of the great Temple in Jerusalem. They came to a wide spot in the desert along the Jordan river. Quite a contrast - but John is in the wilderness and the people who want the truth are coming out to him.

John did not go to the center of religion to begin a ministry. He did not attempt to reform the apostasy of Jerusalem. He went to the wilderness. And he was successful without a building, in the desert, yet the people came to hear the word of God.

John 1:24-27. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.

And they asked him, and said to him, "Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

John answered them saying, "I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know.

It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.

The Pharisees now come on the scene. They opposed everyone but themselves, yet they compromised truth at every turn. They were the Hypocrites of Israel.

They ask: "Why are you baptizing if you are not the Christ, Elijah, or the Prophet?"

NOTE: The religious leaders correctly saw baptism as an identification.

If John was not anyone important, why baptize people to identify them with someone who claims to only be a voice.

BUT THEY missed the point. John was baptizing to identify born again Jews with the Kingdom which the King was to usher into being.

In verse 26, John centers their attention on the Lord Jesus Christ.

The refutation of those who reject the Word of God is not found in text but context and the context of the whole Bible is the person and work of Jesus Christ.

PRINCIPLES.

1. John did not need to defend himself, only put the attention on his Lord, Jesus Christ
2. Others were involved in credentials, personality, institutional religion - John was involved with a person, Jesus Christ
3. When questioned, John answered with Scripture, the Word of God which is the mind of Christ.
4. John is an example of the believer totally occupied with Jesus Christ and when we partake of communion we are reminded that our faith is wrapped up in Christ.

Christ is the reason for our being. He is the one who came to pay a debt he did not owe on behalf of those who could not pay

As we gather together as a church we desire that Jesus Christ becomes the most important person in our lives and that The Word of God becomes the most important thing in our lives.

As Christians we are called to continually focus, rivet, our attention on Jesus Christ. He came to pay a debt He did not owe because we owed a debt we could not pay.

Who does the World say Jesus Christ is?

In Luke 9:20 Jesus asked his disciples: Who do ye say that I am?

Since that time men have been asking that question but do not often come up with the right answer as did Peter when he proclaimed that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah of God.

Since the second century A.D. there have been those who would deny the deity of Christ and others who denied the humanity of Christ.

This runs in cycles, first one heresy, then the other.

Today, man's regard of the Savior, the Son of God, has fallen into basically four categories.

1. That Jesus was a great teacher, a great man, but entirely human. He is not to worshipped but to be followed as an example. We can believe the compassion of Christ but stories of his resurrection are later additions and totally fables.
2. A second view sees Jesus as a good man as are many good and sincere men of history. We are to follow his example in our relationships with others and our sincerity towards God, but he was not God.
3. A third view sees Christ as an example or model of all men. A man who had evolved to a higher point than any other man and set new standards of nobility for man. A standard which each person can obtain. If not in this life the next or the next or the next. Keep trying until you get it right type of theology.
4. The fourth view sees Jesus as a man upon whom came the spirit of Christ at his baptism, empowered him for 3 years and then left prior to the cross. This New Age view see this spirit of Christ (or Cosmic Christ) as a spirit that can descend upon any man today. Thus, there have been and will be other Christs.

Of course each of these views denies the literal and true interpretation of the Scriptures that state that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man in the incarnation as eternal God.

John Walvoord, former President of Dallas Theological Seminary, states: "All modern defections from the doctrine of the deity of Christ assume that the Bible is not authoritative or final in its revelation of this doctrine. And where is the authoritative and final revelation according to these defectors? In their minds, as they in their wisdom

attempt to understand the Christ who made them."

Christ pre-existence is assumed fact in the New Testament.

The early Christian well knew the deity and humanity of Christ, it has taken man this long to evolve to the point of denial.

As the Old Testament assumes without defense the existence of God, the New Testament assumes without defense the pre-existence of Jesus Christ.

All that we find recorded in the Word of God is there for a single purpose: to reveal to us the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament we read of the Lord's might and power, His perfect character, His care and control over His people. We read in the Psalms of His compassion and in Proverbs of His wisdom. The Scriptures teach us about Christ. In the Epistles we read of His perfect order and endless provision of grace. And in the Gospels we meet the one who is both God and man and came from Heaven to be our Savior.

A Latin inscription found in the catacombs under the ancient city of Rome reads.

I Am what I was . God

I was not what I Am . Man

I Am now both . God and Man

And we know that Jesus Christ is God and man because of what was written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The portrait that is painted of the person of Christ in the Gospels is so vivid that we can see ourselves at his side, and we can see Him caring for us, teaching us, providing for us.

It is really, though, just a partial picture. A student at Dallas Theological Seminary some decades ago wrote down all the words of Jesus found in the four Gospels. He then read them in a normal conversational manner. The total time taken to complete such a task, weeks or days, no, only three and one half hours. The entire earthly life of our Savior is

revealed to us in three and one half hours of conversation.

It is no wonder that John ended his account of the Christ with this statement found in John 21:25

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written.

The portrait is only a simple line drawing but the life of the Christian living with Christ fills in the lines, giving depth, and perspective, and color to the brief portrait drawn by these four evangelists.

John's Gospel stands alone and apart from the other Gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels and that word *means to give an overview, an account from the same position.*

Hence we can parallel the accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, but not the Gospel of John.

John is writing much later than the other writers. He writes primarily to believers, the church, and his emphasis is on the deity of Christ.

Over 90% of what John records is not found in the other Gospels. Through the Spirit of God, John tells us things about Jesus that we would otherwise not know.

Each synoptic Gospel begins by placing Jesus in a historical setting. With Matthew and Luke it is the extended historical setting of His humanity and His genealogy. With Mark we see the historical setting of the ministry of Christ beginning at His Baptism.

John begins in a much different place. He begins His account of our Savior where it all began and where it all will end, in eternity, in the heavens, with the ever existing Son of God.

Chapter 1

John 1:1-5

1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

1:2 He was in the beginning with God.

1:3 All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

1:5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Now John is writing from Ephesus (between 85-95 AD) which, in spite of Roman control, remained a city with a strong Hellenistic (Greek) culture. Many of the believers were Greeks with this cultural background.

In Greek culture and Greek Philosophy there was idea of the LOGOS, the WORD or more appropriately, the REALITY.

So John uses a term and concept familiar to the culture and then invests it with very specific meaning unique to our faith.

We might call this a "hook", John uses a concept familiar to the reader then gives it His own, more technical meaning.

At verse 1, John states that God is the Word.

In verse 2, he begins to use the masculine pronoun to refer to the Word.

And at verse 14, so there can be no doubt that the Word is the Christ, he tells us that the Word became flesh.

JOHN HAS A THREEFOLD OBJECTIVE in verse one.

First: That Jesus Christ is eternal

Second: That Jesus Christ was face to face with the Father

Third: That Jesus Christ is God

In fulfilling these objectives John puts an end to those who say that Jesus Christ was humanity alone and not God.

In the beginning was the Word: The absence of the definite article before BEGINNING is used to jump us into a point past and observe that Christ was there.

John says, go into the past, to any beginning you want to chose, and Christ was there already. Go back further, He is there, even further, He is there.

There is never a time, even before time, that Christ did not exist.

And the Word was with God: The use of the definite article before God is common and specific and requires that we think in terms of the trinity, separate in personality and yet one in essence.

The word WITH is a preposition and means to be face to face as with an equal.

In this eternal pre-existence God the Son (the Word) and God the Father (God) were there and were equal in essence.

And God was the Word: Here we have a final statement that would test even the greatest logical minds of Greek philosophy.

The Word who ever existed, and was face to face with God, was God...

Then to add to the demand to think this through, John adds a redundancy.

He was in the beginning with God.

And he uses a demonstrative pronoun HE.

As the philosophers might rack their brains and stretch their logic to come up with some reason for these statements, John would sit by and smile and utter one word . TRINITY.

That God is three distinct persons, yet one is essence.

Each member of the Godhead has a distinct ministry, and yet they are one in essence.

Each member of the Trinity has distinct responsibilities, and yet they are one in essence.

These two verses again show us that the Bible.

Is not such a book that man would write if he could, nor could write if he would.

Now that John has identified the WORD as HIM, the Lord Jesus, he then begins talking about the work of the Savior.

John 1:3

All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

Here the historical setting of the Savior becomes more specific. Creation...

John uses the Greek word PANTA to indicate ALL THINGS, even the details of creation were called into being by the Son of God.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Paul put this truth even more specifically when he wrote in

Colossians 1:16. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things have been created by Him and for Him.

Very much the point of this verse, we do not create, we just rediscover what the Lord Jesus created.

Now John progresses to a very important point. The Word, the Lord Jesus is not merely a presence, but LIFE itself.

John 1:4

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John had a choice of two words for this LIFE that is in Jesus Christ.

BIOS (as in Biology), normally used for the higher form of life of man. The course of man's life, its duration.

ZOE (as in Zoology), normally used for lower forms of life but favored in the New Testament. It is used to show a contrast to death, to that which is brought by sin.

Paul describes the contrast

Romans 7:9-11. And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died; and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; for sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me.

But he also describes the life we can have in Christ in Colossians 3:3-4, not only now but forever.

Col. 3:3,4. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

Now John writes that this life was the light of men.

Both "light" and "darkness" are favorite words for John.

Light dispels darkness, but darkness cannot dispel light. You can walk into a dark room, turn on a flashlight, and the darkness is dispelled. But we don't have flash-darkness. You cannot walk into a lighted room and turn on a flash-dark and dispel light. Light is superior.

In John 12:46, John, who used the analogy of light twenty-three times in his Gospel, quotes Christ as stating.

John 12:46. I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness.

But now we see what man does with this light.

John 1:5

And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

While verses 1-4 describe what God did to reveal Himself to man, Verse 5 describes the attitude of man to this gracious work of God.

Man did not understand, did not comprehend, and would then reject.

Look down to verse 11: **He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.**

Verses 5 and 11 summarize the human outcome of the Old Testament

Man cannot understand and hence, man rejects, he does not receive.

But that commentary is not limited to Old Testament times. Even today we see man, on whom the light has shined, not understand and because they cannot understand, they do not receive the Savior, the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

Summary of the first five verses of John's prologue.

1. The Word is Christ and He existed, as God from eternity past.
2. Christ is God and equal with the Father, the Savior was ever existing God who came to earth.
3. It was Christ who caused all things to become, He is the creator of all things.
4. In Christ is life and this life is revealed to man.
5. And yet, while this light shines brightly even today, man does not understand and man rejects this light.

But this rejection of the light, the rejection of Christ, comes not in reaction to the Light but as a result of the sins of man.

John 3:20 For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

God in His grace has done so much, so much that we cannot even begin to comprehend, do not let ignorance and lack of understanding keep you from the light.

CONSIDER HOW UNNECESSARY IT IS TO REMAIN IN DARKNESS.

A woman name Rose Crawford had been blind for 50 years, "I just can't believe it!" she gasped as the doctor lifted the bandages from her eyes after her recovery from delicate surgery in an Ontario hospital. She wept for joy when for the first time in her life a dazzling and beautiful world of form and color greeted eyes that now were able to see. The amazing thing about the story, however, is that 20 years of her blindness had been unnecessary. She didn't know that surgical techniques had been developed, and that an operation could have restored her vision at the age of 30. The doctor said, "She just figured there was nothing that could be done about her condition. Much of her life could have been different."

Too many remain in darkness, when it is Jesus Christ, God and Creator, who brings them life and light. That is what is available to us from the one who is God who came to man.

It has been said of God that He loves us just the way we are, and also that He loves us too much to let us stay the *way we are*.

As we begin the Gospel of John we are going to see just how much God loves us and that love begins with His Son.

We have examined the opening verses of John's prologue. In these verses he makes some fantastic statements about the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. He tells us that our Lord has always existed
2. He tells us that our Lord is God, equal with the Father
3. He tells us that our Lord created all things
4. He tells us that in our Lord is light dispelling darkness
5. And He tells us that our Lord is Life itself

He also tells us that while the light keeps on shining in darkness the darkness does not

comprehend it. In verse 11 we see that man in darkness does not receive the light and life of the Lord.

Now John the disciple looks back to John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Christ.

John 1:6-8

There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John.

He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him.

He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light.

John makes it very clear that John the Baptist came from God and was sent from God.

The opening chapters of Luke's Gospel tells us of the miraculous birth of John, a cousin of Jesus Christ, and that he was equipped by God and commissioned by God for a special ministry.

His ministry was that of a Old Testament prophet. He was commissioned and equipped and he spent his time with God and then went to man to proclaim the truth.

John really completes the list of Old Testament prophets and they are now set aside as the Lord himself comes.

God came as a witness to bear witness of the light: Jesus Christ. The word witness in the Greek text, used here both as a noun and as a verb, is a legal word that looks at one who can give legal testimony.

In the Old Testament Law (Deuteronomy 19:15) and reaffirmed in the New Testament in Matthew 18:16 and II Corinthians 13:1, we have the principle that as truth is established, not a truth just in the minds of men, but by two or three witnesses.

John was sent as a witness of the light, Jesus Christ. And Jesus was also a witness, a witness of the Father. Hence, God's plan is legally established.

We are also told that there is an expectation from John's ministry.

That all might believe through him.

The pronoun "him" refers to John. The purpose of his ministry was for the people's benefit, to be an additional pointer to the light.

Man, in darkness, needs all the help he can get to see that there is light. God used John.

And John the writer makes it very clear that John the Baptist was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light which is Jesus Christ.

There are those who even today follow John the Baptist and do not follow the Christ whom he witnessed. There is a sect of people living in Iraq south of Baghdad who are hostile to Christianity but claim allegiance to John the Baptist.

Remember that John is writing to believers.. These verses outline a challenge to each of us today. We have the same privilege that John the Baptist had.

1. As he was commissioned, so are we. To tell the world about Christ.
1. The anointing of the Holy Spirit, which is one of 40 things that accompany salvation, anoints and appoints us to a mission, to tell of Christ.
2. He was equipped by God and we are equipped by God. God has given all believers a common ministry of reconciliation, all believers have available to them the divine power of the Holy Spirit, we all have the truth of the Word, our instructions for life and ministry, and then added to that are spiritual gifts.
3. As there was an expectation in John's ministry there can be a legitimate, yet God controlled, expectation from our ministries.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord.

And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all.

4. And just as John gave witness to the light, we give witness to the light but have something even more. Jesus has given us His light.

Matthew 5:14-16 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under the peck- measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house.

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

John goes from the eternal and infinite to talking about one man's ministry as a witness of God.

God uses individuals, He uses man to proclaim His message and His method.

You are an individual. We may gather together as a church, a community of believers in Christ. But your relationship with the Father and with the Son is personal, individual.

God will use you, as an individual, just as he used John the Baptist. And all the infinite power and eternal truth of God comes to bear on you as you serve Him.

BUT VERSES 9 through 13 tells us that there were and will be individuals, for whom Christ came, that will not believe in the only Son of God.

John 1:9

There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

Jesus Christ, coming into the world, at a manger in Bethlehem, shed light upon every man.

John later talks more about the light of Christ shining on all men.

John 3:19-20 And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men

loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil.

For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

This light is given to all but the next two verses tell us that all do not come to the light.

John 1:10-11

Man's response to the light

He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

John sets up a paradox: Christ was in the world - here is not a God who is absent, indifferent to the affairs of His creation. He was in the world as an active, concerned, gracious creator.

And the world was made by Him - He is the One who created all things, even us. And by right of creation everything is His, even life itself.

And yet the WORLD DID NOT KNOW HIM .

Have you ever been somewhere where you should have been known, and were not recognized?

That is the way the world responds to Christ the creator. They should know Him, that all this is His, but the world did not know Him, they rejected Him.

He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

In this verse John gives a sad commentary that summarizes the first thirteen chapters of Matthew.

The rejection of the King and his kingdom.

The full weight of the Old Testament prophecies, principles, and promises of the Messiah came bear at the incarnation.

The seed of Adam, the descendant of Noah, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the son of David

came to His own . and they did not receive Him.

The sadness of this verse is later recorded as Jesus approached the Holy City of Israel.

Luke 19:41 And when Jesus approached, He saw the Jerusalem and wept over it.

Hundreds of years before the advent of Christ God lamented His people in their rejection of His grace.

HOSEA 6:4-7. What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? For your loyalty is like a morning cloud, And like the dew which goes away early.

Therefore I have hewn them in pieces by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of My mouth; And the judgments on you are like the light that goes forth.

For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

But like Adam they have transgressed the covenant; There they have dealt treacherously against Me.

These are not the words of a God who is indifferent to our negative reactions to the outpouring of His love and grace.

John 1:12-13

The Gospel of Grace extends to the world.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

We have in these verses man's part and God's part.

Man's part is to receive and then to believe. We receive when we listen to the Gospel, we believe when we trust in Jesus as the Savior we so desperately need.

God then gives us a right, an authority, to become children of God which is accomplished not by our receiving or believing but by the will of God.

The new birth as children of God does not come.

1. Of blood, physical birth, or natural descent. No one is ever born being a Christian. You are born *again* to be a Christian.
2. Nor by a human desire to have children: That is the natural will of the flesh, to procreate, extend yourself through children. But that is not the way we become children of God.
3. Nor by man's will, not by any act of human violation.

John piles up these exceptions. The nation of Israel took great pride in the sons a father might have. Placed great importance on generations. But that is not what makes a child of God.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

What a phenomenal passages this is. The eternal Word chose to come to man, knowing there would be rejection, and yet turning from that rejection to extend His grace to the world.

John 1:14

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

It has been said of God that He loves us just the way we are, and also that He loves us too much to let us stay the way we are.

As we begin the Gospel of John we are going to see just how much God loves us and that love begins with His Son.

In these verses he makes some fantastic statements about the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. He tells us that our Lord has ever existed
2. He tells us that our Lord is God, equal with the Father

3. He tells us that our Lord created all things
4. He tells us that in our Lord is light dispelling darkness
5. And He tells us that our Lord is Life itself

BUT HE ALSO TELLS US that while the light keeps on shining in darkness the darkness does not comprehend it. In verse 11 we see that man in darkness does not receive the light and life of the Lord.

In **John 1:15-18**, the evangelist begins to explain the ministry of John the Baptist but before he tells us of the opposition to the forerunner of Christ he tells us of the relationship between Christ and John the Baptist and between Christ and Moses.

This is all done to demonstrate God's pre-eminence. God will use men, God *has* used men, to proclaim His truth. But in using the humanity of Jesus God did something more. Jesus was not merely another who, in a long list of faithful men, proclaimed God's plan. Jesus fulfilled God's plan . we might say that He did what others merely talked about. And He was able to do what was spoken of by others because of Who He is.

John 1:15

John bore witness of Him, and cried out, saying, This was He of whom I said, He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.

JOHN writes about JOHN, but not the same John. The human author of this Gospel is John who was the youngest disciple and He talks about John the Baptist who was not one of the Twelve Disciples but ministered before them as the herald or forerunner of Jesus Christ.

We are told that John the Baptist was a witness of Christ.

The witness of John the Baptist is summarized under three points.

1. This was He of whom I spoke: John's ministry was Christ centered.

2. He who comes after me has a higher rank than I: While John was six months older than Jesus and his public ministry began long before Jesus' public ministry, Jesus had a higher rank.

The comparison John makes is one of humanity. As John talked about Jesus being of higher rank he was comparing Jesus to himself.

Later on he would be quoted as saying: John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

3. For He existed before me: To say this of one who is younger than you can only mean that that one was God. So this statement puts emphasis upon Christ's deity.

This summary of John's message becomes a pattern for us.

Keep our communication Christ centered. Communicate His humanity. Communicate His deity.

When Paul came to Corinth He did just that.

1 Corinthians 2:1-2 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.

For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

John 1:16

For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.

The word FOR should be translated BECAUSE, begins an independent statement regarding Christ Jesus.

Because of the fullness of Him, we all received grace upon grace .

The word FULLNESS means more than just filled up, it means to overflow in abundance.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST is filled up and overflowing with.

DEITY: Colossians 2:9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form.

AUTHORITY: Ephesians 1:22-23 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE: Ephesians 4:13 That we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

ALL FULLNESS: Colossians 1:19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him.

But John indicated that this FULLNESS is extended to us in grace being given upon grace.

The fullness that we can have has the following features.

1. Overflow with blessing: Romans 15:29
2. Overflow with Joy and Peace: Romans 15:13, I John 1:4
3. Overflow with the application of doctrine in the sphere of divine power: II Thessalonians 1:11
4. Overflow with joy even in the midst of affliction: II Corinthians 7:4
5. Overflow with obedience: II Corinthians 10:6
6. The fruit of Righteousness: Philippians 1:11
7. Knowledge, Wisdom, and Understanding: Romans 15:14, Colossians 1:9
8. Even with material things: Philippians 4:18-19

In that passage Paul is in prison yet writes of an overflowing fullness. He was given a gift by the Philippian church.

Philippians 4:18 But I have received everything in full, and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

9. And we can overflow with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:19 To know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Now let's examine John's next statement to see how this fullness is made available to us, how it becomes a real potential in our lives.

John 1:17

For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

This then is more than explanatory, it is the mechanics by which this greater grace is extended to us.

The parallel used by John is very interesting.

The Law was given through Moses

The grace and the Truth through Jesus Christ became.

SO THEN: The Old Testament Mosaic Law gave way to Grace and Truth which BECAME through Jesus Christ.

The purpose of the Old Testament Law.

POLITICAL: In coming out of Egypt and going into the Promise Land, Israel became a true nation. A nation needs constitution, a set of laws regulating life to insure maximum freedom.

1 Timothy 1:9 Realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers.

MORAL: The Old Testament Law was designed to keep the lid on Israel until the proper time for the Messiah to come.

Galatians 3:19 Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made.

Galatians 3:23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being

shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.

INSTRUCTIVE: The Law was given to teach the sinfulness of man and sinlessness of God.

Romans 2:18 And to know His will, and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law.

Romans 7:14 For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

DIRECTIVE: The Old Testament Law was given to point to the need for a sinless Savior and direct man to Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3:24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.

But as important as the Law was, there was one thing it could not do.

Romans 3:20 Because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

Romans 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

Galatians 3:11-12 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, The righteous man shall live by faith. However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, He who practices them shall live by them.

THE LAW

- Could not justify
- Could not save
- Could not deliver
- Could not bring a man into fellowship with god, neither in time nor in eternity.

THE LAW WAS FULFILLED, not merely replaced by Christ, not merely seceded by a better system, but fulfilled in our Lord, in His life, and in His death.

Romans 8:3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did:

sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh.

Romans 10: 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us.

AND IT WAS CHRIST who takes us from law to grace.

Romans 6:14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.

So as we look into John 1:17 we do so seeing the greater grace that is realized, that is a reality, that becomes through Jesus Christ.

Remember that Christ is fullness of all things, that His fullness is available to us.

LOVE fills up and overflows the LAW.

Romans 13:10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.

Romans 13:8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.

Galatians 5:14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

PRINCIPLES.

- God chose as His policy towards man, grace.
- Grace is all that God is free to do for us through Christ's death upon the Cross. . . it is God's Riches At Christ's Expense.
- Grace is revealed through Jesus Christ, Grace is demonstrated by Christ, and Christ is our pattern and example of grace.
- We find out about grace when we find out about Christ, grace and truth through Jesus Christ.
- But grace is not a mere system, it is God's policy, but for us it creates a system of

freedom in which we can know truth and with that, have spiritual love.

John 17:26 I have made Thy name known to them, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou didst love me may be in them, and I in them.

- And this love fulfills the law and goes far beyond any system, and religion, any legalism, any ritual of man.

If you get no other point of application today I want you to see how meaningless it is to live the Christian life by some system of legalism.

Galatians 5:4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

What Jesus Christ our Lord has for us is so much greater than the Law which has served its purpose or the legalisms of men which have no purpose to begin with.

And the last point is seen in the next verse: This love brings us face to face in fellowship with Jesus Christ. . .

John 1:18

No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

As Jesus Christ is drawn into the bosom of the Father, our life is drawn into the bosom of Christ - we are in His everlasting arms, we are under His wing, we are protected by Christ the Rock, He is our mighty fortress.

As Scriptures so beautifully proclaim: Christ is our life . our life is hid in Him.

INTRODUCTION.

The priests were pompous, the Levites legalistic, the scribes were the students, the Pharisees were formal, the Sadducees were sullen, and the Herodians hyped the system.

Everyone has a neat little role to play in the religion of Judea when Jesus came.

A role that had developed by politics, economics, culture, traditions.

And the roles they came to play were comfortable, but into their comfort zone God brought John the Baptist and things got uncomfortable real fast. And then God did something that was even more uncomfortable, He sent His Son

John 1:19-23

And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who are you?

And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

And they asked him, What then? Are you Elijah? And he said, I am not. Are you that prophet? And he answered, No.

Then they said to him, Who are you? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What say you of yourself?

He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah.

In the previous verses we saw the shift in the gospel of John from the theology of the prologue to the personality of the herald or forerunner of Jesus Christ, John the Baptist.

With this we saw that John the Baptist was under interrogation by a group of priests and Levites sent by the Pharisees to investigate this preacher who did not fit in.

From the dialogue of verses 19-23 we concluded three things about John the Baptist.

1. He understood who he was and did not claim to be something he was not.
2. He would not allow others to make him into something he was not.
3. And he used the interrogation as an opportunity to talk about Christ.

And we also learned something about his interrogators, the religious community of the day.

In their questions they demonstrate a knowledge of the Old Testament prophecies.

They gave John three choices, are you the Messiah (the Christ), are you Elijah, are you the great prophet.

Now each of those choices carry the possibility from prophecy. But they left out one choice.

Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1 both predict that a messenger will come to prepare the way of the Lord.

So while their questions were biblical, they were not complete. They had failed to consider the full counsel of God and the one thing they left out was what John was.

A messenger, a voice crying in the wilderness.

Like so many then and so many now, they were only willing to accept John's message and ministry if it conformed to their expectations and their expectations were wrong.

But this was no surprise and the writer John even tells us it was not a surprise because of who sent these inquisitors.

John 1:24

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.

The verb is a perfect passive participle which would indicate the Pharisees repeatedly sent the priests, Levites, scribes, and others in to investigate John.

And none of them could figure him out because he did not conform to the packaged religion they had nicely fallen into.

John 1:25-28

And they asked him, and said to him, Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?

John answered them saying, I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know.

It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.

These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Observations regarding John's ministry

Four things John's ministry was not.

1. It was **not a ministry** of self but pointed to another. Any ministry we have must point to Jesus Christ. Whether it is a ministry of the Word, or Prayer, or Helps, or Comfort, the objective, the focal point must not be ourselves but Christ.

John was a herald, one who announced the Savior. The apostle Paul would later tell the Corinthian church regarding his ministry that.

2 Corinthians 4:5 . we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.

Even God the Holy Spirit, the third member of the trinity, does not speak of himself.

John 16:13 Howbeit when the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

2. John's ministry **did not conform**: That was a time that institutional religion was at its zenith in Judea. The Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Rabbi's were highly organized and had been functioning according to a human standard for nearly 300 years. But their standard, their system, their method, their purpose was false.

John did not do what every other minister did. He did what God wanted him to do.

We are told that organized religion did not like this.

John 1:23-25 tells us that the religious leaders traveled the twenty miles to see this preacher and then criticized him because he did not conform.

They had packaged religion, that tied up their faith into a nice little package. But in doing so they had put God into a box, and determined by themselves what God was like, what faith should be, and how God's messengers should behave.

3. John's ministry was **not a ministry of convenience**.

We see in verse 28 that he was beyond the Jordan in the region of Bethany (not the same village that was near Jerusalem). People had to travel more than 20 miles to get to the place where John was teaching and baptizing.

People today want their relationship with Christ to be one of convenience, an easy situation, meeting their requirements.

How many of you would be here today if you had to travel twenty miles . and not by car but by donkey, camel, or by foot?

4. John's ministry was **not one of pleasant platitudes** but of power.

His message was of the coming Kingdom of God, a kingdom that would come with power. He told the people not what they wanted to hear but what God wanted them to hear.

When the religious crowd came around we are told.

Matthew 3:7 . he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

But what was John's ministry.

A ministry of prophecy (verses 26-27): John's ministry was spoken of by the prophets 700 years prior to Jesus' Day. And he gave prophecy regarding the coming Savior (verse 27).

A ministry of Preaching: He did not discuss, he did not philosophize, he communicated truth.

A ministry of Repentance: He knew that his preaching must effect a change of mind.

A ministry of People: His ministry was not to ritual or rules or conventions, but to the people who needed salvation.

A ministry of Proper Perspective: He realized he was nothing and that Christ was everything. He was humble in his M.A.

A ministry of Power: His ministry pointed the way to the omnipotent Son of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Your ministry, as per your spiritual gift and your geographical local, is the same ministry that John had.

Prophecy: The Bible addresses the act that every believer is equipped to minister.

Preaching: Your ministry communicates either by your lips or by your life. You communicate truth in how you live.

Repentance: When you meet an unbeliever you should have one thought in mind, Bringing them to a saving knowledge of Christ, Change their mind regarding Christ.

When you meet a believer who is not learning Doctrine on a consistent basis, you should also desire their repentance, their change of mind - to get with God's program.

People: No one is called to minister to the walls or the rocks. God is in the business of Saving people and we are to be about our Father's business.

Proper Perspective: We are nothing more than servants to the Ruler who serve, Jesus Christ.

Power: Not our power, not our ability, only our availability and using the power that God has provided. That alone will cut it in life.

John 1:28

The Place of John's Ministry.

These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

John was not Elijah, but his ministry was similar. It was a ministry of warning, warning the people prior to the coming not of the kingdom, but of the king.

That final prophecy in Malachi, chapter four ends with the curse that was perpetuated from the fall of man.

It is to people under the curse of sin that John came and is with people under the curse that Jesus would begin his public ministry.

And in the other gospels we find that this included the aristocrats and the beggars, the religious people and the common sinners . all meeting on the common ground of the banks of the Jordan.

The banks of the Jordan were not a place for the rich to flaunt their wealth or the wise to display their knowledge or the poor to be brushed aside. This was a place of common ground and the only common denominator was that these people knew they were sinners in need of a Savior.

Back in Jerusalem, the religious institutions were at their highest. The Temple activity was in full swing . yet it was not there that Jesus went to begin his public ministry.

John chose to be with the positive receptive believers. And this is where Jesus came and began His public ministry. He was even baptized in the same waters of the Jordan.

QUESTION-APPLICATION: Where would Jesus be this morning if he were to come from heaven to earth. Would he be in a church? Which one? . He would be with those who are serious regarding life and to be serious regarding life you first have to be serious about your faith.

The Church today must be a place of common ground and the only issue is What think ye of Christ?

John 1:29

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

On the day following the previous interrogation by the religious leaders, Jesus came to John, on the banks of the Jordan.

John exclaims: Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Then, in verses 30-34, John the Baptist speaks of the person of Christ.

In this section we have the two main things that we must understand about Jesus Christ, His person and His work.

THE WORK OF GOD'S SON.

Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

As common as the title is, the Lamb of God, it is only used twice in the Bible, both times in this chapter as John records the words of John the Baptist.

In Acts 8:32, 1 Peter 1:19, and in the Revelation, Jesus is called the Lamb, but only here and in verse 36 is He identified as the Lamb of God.

By using that title and proclaiming publicly that Jesus was the Lamb belonging to and sent from God, the Jews listening would have added volumes of information from their frame of reference to this statement.

This title, along with the accompanying statement, who takes away the sin of the world, revealed to Israel the work of the Messiah.

The title of Lamb was to remind the Jews of various things.

1. The Passover Lamb of Exodus 12: The blood of the lamb protected Israel from the God's wrath on Egypt. So the Lamb is the lamb who PROTECTS.
2. The Lamb of the daily sacrifices (Numbers 28:4 and Ezekiel 46:13): These daily sacrifices were done to demonstrate the need for one who is innocent to take the penalty of sin from man. So this Lamb is the lamb of SUBSTITUTION who dies in our place.
3. The Lamb of the guilt offering (Leviticus 14:12, 21:24): This is the sacrifice that takes away the guilt of sins. So this Lamb dies to take away GUILT.

4. The Lamb of the First Fruits (Leviticus 23:12): As part of the feast of first fruits a lamb was offered in sacrifice to the Lord. This Lamb reminds us that God OWNS AND CONTROLS all things, beginning with the first things.
 5. The Lamb as a testimony for the cleansing of leprosy (Leviticus 14:10): This lamb was sacrificed as a person was judged clean by the priests. This Lamb is the lamb that CLEANSSES us from the STAIN of sins.
 6. The Lamb offered at the time of Priest's Ordination (Leviticus 9:3): This reminds us that any service we might execute begins with the Lamb, Jesus Christ, his sacrifice. So this is the Lamb of BEGINNING.
 7. The Lamb offered at the beginning of a Nazirite vow (Numbers 6:14): Not only is the beginning of our service because of the Lamb, but the service itself is because of the Lamb, the sacrifice of Christ. This is Lamb of SERVICE.
 8. The Lamb that was offered as Israel entered the Promise Land (Numbers 15:5): This is an offering that told Israel to take possession of what God provided. This Lamb is the lamb of DIVINE ASSETS for life.
 9. And lastly there is the Lamb of Promise from Isaiah 53: The Lamb who is the Servant who was led to the slaughter. This Lamb is the lamb of SACRIFICE.
- The Jews who heard John call Jesus the Lamb of God would have been thinking about these historical, Old Testament, sacrificial reminders of the Messiah, the Lamb of God. But we can add two other things to that, two things we can be reminded of because we have the full canon of God's Word.
10. The unique lamb of God who provides salvation.

1 Peter 1:18-21 Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the death of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

11. And the Lamb of triumphant and eternal rule. Jesus will forever have the title, the Lamb of God.

Revelation 5:13 And every created things which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.

Revelation 22:3 And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him.

The next statement John makes about Jesus would have caused some thought to cross the minds of Israel.

. who takes away the sin of the world.

This would have been a new concept for Israel.

PRINCIPLES.

10. In the Old Testament we have the extensive use of the word Atonement (nearly 80 times). It is the translation of either KAP-HAR meaning "to cover over", or KIP-PUR as in Yom Kipper, the Day of Atonement.

11. The Old Testament concept of God dealing with sin to cover them over, to conceal them until a time that sin would be once and for all dealt with.

Exodus 29:36 And each day you shall offer a bull as a sin offering for atonement, and you shall purify the altar when you make

atonement for it; and you shall anoint it to consecrate it.

READ Hebrews 10:1-12

Hebrews 10:4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Hebrews 10:11 And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

But Jesus Christ would do what the Old Testament sacrifices could not do, He would take away the sin of the world.

But the word ATONEMENT is not found in the New Testament In the KJV we do find it in Romans 5:11.

And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the (KJV atonement) reconciliation.

But "atonement" is a mistranslation of the Greek word, which is the word for reconciliation, or the bringing of peace between God and man.

What Jesus Christ was to do at the Cross was not a mere covering over of sins. He took sins away.

Colossians 1:13-14 For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 2:13-14 And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us {and} which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Hebrews 9:28 So Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without {reference to} sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

So when John the Baptist proclaimed that Jesus was the one who would take away the sins of the World, he knew and those around about knew that this was something new in Israel, the Messiah who would once and for all take away the sin of the world.

At the Cross it would be the omnipotent and omniscient power of God that would take all the sins of the human race and impute them to Jesus Christ who would die for those sins. Not merely cover them over, but take them away, out of the picture, to total non-existence.

THE APPLICATION IN THIS: For you, today, sins are not the issue when it comes to salvation and should never be the issue when it comes to the Christ Centered Life.

We have sinned, but we are forgiven; we will sin, but we will be forgiven. We are not perfect, we are not sinless, we however exist in God's system which is a system of forgiveness.

Now sins may bring discipline and hurt to self and to others, but all sins were paid for on the Cross.

And it is the taking away of sins that allow for a relationship with the person of Christ and His Father, our great God.

John 1:30-34

The Proclamation of the Person of Christ.

This is He on behalf of whom I said, After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.

And I did not recognize Him, but in order that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.

And John bore witness saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him.

And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.

And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.

JOHN HAS FIVE THINGS TO SAY ABOUT THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

1. He repeats the statement made in verse 1:15.

The literal Greek text would translate: "After me comes a man who before me has become, because first of me he was."

The idea is that Jesus existed before John although John was physically six months older (not souls pre-existing). But that He, the Lord Jesus pre-existed as God and thus has a higher rank.

The superiority and uniqueness of Jesus is thus noted.

2. Twice, in verse 31 and 33 John stated that he did not recognize Jesus.

But they were cousins and would have been together at times in their upbringing. John was raised in Judah and Jesus in Galilee, but even then there would have been times of family gathering.

This does not mean that they were strangers, but it does mean, in context, that John did not know Jesus was the Messiah. Not until He came to John at the banks of the Jordan River.

But this is not unlike the manifestation of Jesus' person and work and ministry was to all Israel.

He was revealed, manifested at the proper time and that was the beginning of His public ministry.

3. John gives us a testimony of the Holy Spirit descending out of heaven and remaining on Jesus Christ.

He also says that the Holy Spirit descended as a dove.

The word AS is an adverb of near comparison, not exactly like a dove. John did not see a dove but saw something

indescribable, but it was like a dove descending.

The verb that is used for John SEEING the descending Holy Spirit is different than the one used back in verse 29 when he SEES Jesus.

4. His understanding was because of the promise of God the Father who sent John. John was told by God to be looking out for the one upon whom the Spirit would descend and remain and that this one would not baptize with water, but with the Holy Spirit (not Ghost).

John's baptism was in water, a cleansing from sin. But the baptism that Jesus would bring identified the believer with God, it did more than just cleanse, it gave life.

5. And then in the final verse of this paragraph, John proclaims that this one, and no other, is the Son of God, a title that has been repeated through out the church age.

SUMMARY OF THE FIVE STATEMENTS ABOUT THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

1. He is superior and unique in His pre-existence and incarnation.
2. God the Father revealed Him to man at the proper time.
3. The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus in His ministry.
4. His ministry brought to man the baptism of the Holy Spirit which gives eternal life.
5. And Jesus is the one and only Son of God.

Consider that He is the Son of God and that He came to take away sins once and for all, and He did that for you.

What God provides through Jesus Christ, the security of eternal life, the significance of a destiny in time and eternity, the love, the joy, the peace, are the things we can never lose.

In John 1:35-42 verses we see the initial meeting between Jesus and his first disciples. This is not the call of these disciples which would take place later on the shores of the sea of Galilee. That would be a call to service. Here we have a declaration of faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah.

John 1:35

Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples.

This occurs after the baptism of Jesus and after the temptations in the wilderness. Jesus ministered in both Jerusalem, Judea, and Galilee prior to calling his disciples to follow Him fully in Matthew 4, Luke 5, and Mark 1.

When it says JOHN WAS STANDING, this is an idiom for preaching. John was doing what he was called to do. Preach the gospel of the Kingdom to people.

Two of his disciples, Andrew and John (the writer of this Gospel), were with John the Baptist.

John 1:36

And he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and said, Behold, the Lamb of God!

Jesus walked into the crowd and John interrupted his own message with a repeating of what he had said on the previous day . Behold, the Lamb of God!

He identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God and had previously stated that He was the one who would take away sins.

John was evangelizing a large group of people. His message was a message of repentance or the changing of one's mind.

Matthew 3:2 Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

His message included repetition. In any communication of truth we see repetition. Some get bored with it. As John talked about the Lamb of God some probably whined that he said that yesterday.

Consider this point about repetition. We repeat hymns we love over and over again. Well, for some the doctrines they love are music to their ears.

When John saw Jesus, the message shifted to Him, the Lamb of God. Whatever John was saying was interrupted to point others to Jesus Christ.

An evangelist may use many hooks to fish for people, but the message must find its focus in Christ who takes away their sins.

The evangelist, in this case John the Baptist, is never greater than Jesus Christ. John was not promoting his own show, so when Jesus came on the scene, everything changed and focused on the Christ.

READ John 3:26-30.

Two of the disciples of John got the message. They left John and followed after Jesus Christ.

John did not call after them wondering where they were going. This was his purpose, to prepare the way for the Son of God.

An evangelist is not in the business of getting a following. Once people are saved he is willing to turn them over to others so they can be taught and grow in grace..

In this case, John turned these two disciples over to Jesus Christ.

John 1:37

And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

Out of this crowd that perhaps numbered in the hundreds of people, two men heard John and then made a decision to follow Jesus.

Commonly the word (**mathetes**) “**disciple**” is translated to mean a learner or a student. But it really is much stronger than that.

A disciple was devoted to his master. A disciple gave unhindered loyalty and obedience to his teacher.

SO ANDREW AND JOHN HAD given loyalty to John the Baptist, the prophet, but now would begin to follow Jesus and be His disciples.

FOLLOWED is an aorist tense and looks to what they did at that time. This was not the leaving of all things and following Jesus that would occur later in Galilee.

John 1:38

And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and said to them, What do you seek? And they said to Him, Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?

This is the first time in the Gospel that we read the very words of Jesus Christ. He is asking a question: “What do you seek?” Or in our vernacular, “What do you want?”

They answered: “Rabbi, being translated teacher, where are you staying?”

By his speech and accent they would have known that he was from Galilee as were they and that he did not reside in Judah. So a common question.

SOME OBSERVATIONS.

1. The first thing Jesus says in the Gospel of John is a question . what do you seek.
2. But the ones to whom it is asked do not answer. They respond with another question that is really not to the point.
3. They were not sure what they were seeking but they were following Jesus Christ the Lamb of God.
4. Turn to John 21:22 here we have the last words of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of John: Jesus said to him . You follow Me!

So the first words: What do you seek. The final words: You follow me.

5. Between these two statements we have the Gospel of John, the good news about Jesus Christ. We find out what we are to seek and we find out about the one we are to follow.

6. Like many young believers, Andrew and John did not know what they were seeking, but they were following Jesus Christ.

John 1:39

He said to them, Come, and you will see. They came therefore and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

What John was doing by the Jordan was mass evangelism, this is a pattern of personal follow up.

COME is an imperative mood verb and allows for these two men to make a volitional decision. They responded positively to following Jesus.

According to Roman time this would have been 10:00 am, so these disciples spent the better part of a whole day with Jesus.

They learned enough about him to want to tell others, which is the principle of multiplication evangelism. That morning there was one (John the Baptist), now there are two (Andrew and John), and soon there will be three (Peter), and then more and more

John 1:40

One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

As we see the Lord bringing together those who would eventually make up the twelve disciples we see some interesting principles.

1. They were from widely different backgrounds and had very different personalities.
2. They spent nearly three years together and they fought, argued, and made a lot of mistakes.
3. Yet they stuck together because of their common relationship to Jesus Christ.

4. Jesus saw something in this band of misfits that was of value and that there differences would be a strength, an asset and not a weakness.

Proverbs 27:17. Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another.

ANDREW is the disciple who goes from the shadows to be a great witness for Christ.

1. He was the brother of Peter, who is mentioned 158 times in the New Testament while Andrew is mentioned 13 times. He lived in the shadow of his big, boisterous brother.
2. But every time we see Andrew, he is bringing someone to Jesus Christ. First Peter, then the young boy with the loaves and fishes, then the Greeks who wanted to see Jesus.
3. When the Greeks sought out Jesus they first approached Philip (he had a Greek name) and Philip, not knowing what to do, went to find Andrew who brought them to Jesus.
4. Andrew is an illustration of friendliness and hospitality.
5. He so loved Jesus Christ that he wanted others to know about this one who was the Messiah, the Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the World.

John 1:41

He found first his own brother Simon, and said to him, We have found the Messiah (which translated means Christ).

1. The words FOUND FIRST indicate that this was just the beginning of a ministry of telling others about Christ.
2. We see that he began this ministry with the one who was the closest to him, his brother Simon.
3. His message was clear and to the point, we have found the Messiah.

4. He did not attempt to take credit for this find, he includes John, WE HAVE FOUND the Messiah.
5. The word FOUND is a perfect tense, we have found and we continue in the present to find the Messiah. The word itself means to find something good after seeking it.

John 1:42

Andrew then brings Peter to the Jesus Christ.

He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas (which is translated Peter).

Here is something believers have been doing ever since, Leading people to Christ . Andrew brought Peter to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Jesus welcomed Simon son of John and gave him a new name, Cephas which in the Greek is Peter literally translated, a stone.

The significance of this will be seen when Jesus is revealed as the corner-stone . Peter will be a chip of the corner-stone and a strong pillar of the early Church.

This will occur based on what is happening now. It is part of the destiny Christ has for Simon, son of John. And it will be others who will give you this name. The stone off of the corner stone.

NOW EACH ONE of us also has a destiny and in the plan of God we will be something we are not now.

GOD SEES US AS WHAT we will be as part of His plan as we learn, think, and apply the Word of God.

AND THAT NEW NAME THAT SIMON GOT, well there is a new name waiting for each of us .

Revelation 2:17, He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the

stone which no one knows but he who receives it.

IN HEAVEN RIGHT NOW IS A WHITE STONE with your name on it, but it is a name you do not know yet.

The only one who knew his name this side of heaven was Peter. But many believers who will never be what they can be in God's plan, who will never reach their grace potential will never get their white stone and will never know their eternal name.

God deals with each of us as individuals. Our faith is not a religion but a relationship and in that relationship God is our Father and we are His Children. Jesus Christ is the head of the body and yet the body is made up of individual parts.

We have the potential of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a friendship with Him who died for us and was raised for us that we might serve a risen Savior.

So much of the Gospel of John looks at how Jesus approached individuals and how they approached Him. This individual and personal relationship is even seen in His disciples and how they came to follow their Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the previous verses, we were introduced to Andrew and Peter, John the writer of this Gospel was also present. Now, in John 1:43-51, we see Jesus meeting two more men who will become his disciples, Philip and Nathanael.

Andrew and John had been disciples of John the Baptist and when they heard their teacher proclaim that Jesus was the unique lamb of God, they followed Him and sought out the Savior.

Andrew then went and found his brother Peter and brought him to Jesus Christ.

While we see a pattern of evangelism, we also see a pattern of our relationship with the Lord and the one thing that is clear is that as

our relationship begins in individual ways it continues in individual ways.

Jesus Christ said in John 14:6 I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.

And also in Matthew 7:14 For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life.

There is ONLY ONE WAY TO A RELATIONSHIP with God and that is through faith in Jesus Christ, but there are many roads that lead the individual sinner to Jesus Christ.

Andrew came because of what John the Baptist preached, Peter came because Andrew brought Him to Christ.

And now we see one who was sought out by Jesus.

John 1:43,44

The next day He purposed to go forth into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, Follow Me.

Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter.

Here we see Jesus taking the initiative to seek out Philip.

We are told that Philip was from the same village, Bethsaida near Capernaum, as Andrew and Peter, and from other passages, James and John.

PERHAPS as these disciples with the Lord traveled to Galilee to attend the wedding feast in Cana, they mentioned to Jesus their friend Philip.

THEY MAY HAVE told Jesus that their friend was also seeking the Messiah, the Savior.

So Jesus sought him out and upon finding him said, "Follow Me".

FOLLOW ME is a verb and a pronoun: Active voice imperative.

A command which gave Philip a volitional decision to respond.

The word is significant in many ways.

1. It comes from a very old word that means PATH. And in following Jesus Philip set his foot upon a new path of life.
2. It is generally used in the Bible to follow the earthly Jesus and establishing a personal relationship with Him.
3. Jesus did not wait for volunteers when issuing this invitation. He sought out those who would follow Him.
4. One who sets his foot upon this new path gives up other paths upon which his life was set. To follow Jesus was to embark upon a new adventure on a new path.
5. Since the one who follows shares in the life of the one he is following, he shares in His joy as well as His suffering.

To "follow the Lord" is much more than a mere physical act of following someone. It is following Him on a new pathway of life.

We can see at verse 45 that Philip understood the significance of the offer to follow the Lord Jesus because, he did not follow him .

Not in a physical sense. He followed Him by going out and finding someone else just as Jesus had found him.

John 1:45

Philip found Nathanael and said to him, We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

I THINK IT IS interesting that he uses the plural: We have found Him .

Previously, when Andrew went to Peter he used a plural, We have found the Messiah, to include John.

BUT HERE PHILIP IS USING THE PLURAL TO include Nathanael.

The depth of his description, the one whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, indicates that both Philip and Nathanael had an understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Together they had studied the Old Testament and were seeking the Messiah who has now come to them.

In calling Jesus the Son of Joseph he uses a very common way of address . Jesus ben Joseph or in the Greek Jesus UIOS TOU Joseph.

John 1:46

And Nathanael said to him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip said to him, Come and see.

There are a number of things we need to see in this verse.

- Nathanael, who is also called Bartholomew, was from Cana of Galilee.
- There was a sense of superiority and even bigotry in his question of whether or not anything good could come out of insignificant Nazareth.
- The word “good”, however, is **agathos**, which would also indicate that Nathanael is thinking in terms of divine good, and failing to understand why the Messiah, sent from God, would end up in Nazareth.

This is not too unlike people today who identify places as more important than people. Who have a bias or even a bigotry regarding where a person came from and fail to see the person, his message, and that God often chooses the weak things of the world to confound the wise.

Micah 5:2 But as for you, Bethlehem Ephratah, Too little to be among the clan of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.

Philip did not have an answer for this so he did what perhaps all of us should do more often . he told his friend Come and see.

BEFORE WE LOOK FURTHER AT Nathanael, let's look more closely at Philip.

Philip is a Greek name which would tell us that his parents were probably not devote

Jews but influenced by the Hellenistic (Greek) culture.

His description of the Messiah to his friend shows us that he was a student of the Word. He knew what the Bible said about the promised Messiah from both the Law and the Prophets.

Philip is also seen as a man who finds himself out of his depth at times. When Nathanael questions him, he says Come and see. When Jesus feed the multitude, Philip's response was that even 200 denarii would not feed that many. When the Greeks came to find Jesus they came first to Philip but he did not know what to do so he took them to Andrew.

While some of the disciples were of exceptional ability, Philip is seen as a perfectly ordinary man. And it is encouraging to see that Jesus went out of His way to find this most ordinary disciple.

And we see a virtue in Philip. When he did not know what to say or do, he took the ones with questions to those who had the answers. He did not mind saying: I don't know but come and see .

As a result of this “virtue”, Nathanael came to Jesus Christ.

John 1:47

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

The word GUILLE was used at one time for bait in a trap. The word came to refer to those who used cunningness to deceive.

Homer used this word for the Trojan Horse. In the Greek Old Testament it was used of Jacob, the chiseler.

So Jesus said of Nathanael that he was not a man who used deceit or cunningness to trap others.

Hence a man who was open, honest, said what he meant and meant what he said.

The fact that he did not even try to humbly deny Jesus' evaluation of Him shows us that he was an open and honest man. A man of guile would have probably tried to assert his unworthiness with false humility.

John 1:48

Nathanael said to Him, How do You know me? Jesus answered and said to him, Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.

In Israel, a home, a good home, always had a fig tree planted in the yard to give food and shade. The fig tree came to be a symbol of home. To be under one's fig tree was to be at home.

Also, the fig tree came to be a place of prayer, meditation, and study of the Word of God.

Now God the Father gave some information to the humanity of Jesus that let him know what Nathanael was doing when Philip came to him . he was praying or studying or meditating on the Word, Bible Doctrine.

Nathanael's response.

John 1:49

Nathanael answered Him, Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.

NOTICE: When Nathanael address Jesus in verse 48 he did not use a title of respect, but now, impressed by the Words of Christ, he calls Him RABBI.

He then adds: "You are the Son of God, You are the king of Israel."

Nathanael did not recognize all that Jesus being the Son of God implied but he was proclaiming his faith in Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who was God.

The term King of Israel is important for two reasons.

1. Jesus had called Nathanael an Israelite and now Nathanael claims that Jesus is the King of Israel . his king.

2. While Nathanael offers this title out of respect, others would come to use it out of derision.

Mark 15:32 Let this Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, so that we may see and believe! And those who were crucified with Him were casting the same insult at Him.

John 1:50

Jesus answered and said to him, Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these.

It was Jesus knowing Nathanael was under the fig tree that brought Nathanael to faith in Christ.

For Philip, it was Jesus, seeking him.

For Andrew and John, the testimony of John the Baptist.

And for Peter, his brother bringing him to Christ.

There are many roads that are traveled, but only one gate and that is the only way to salvation, Jesus Christ.

John 1:51

And He said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, you shall see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

The Jews of Jesus' day, like Nathanael and the others, were familiar with the story of Jacob's night vision.

Genesis 28:10-12 Then Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran. And he came to a certain place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head, and lay down in that place. And he had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

In that vision, heaven and earth are brought together by a ladder, upon which angels ascend and descend.

In Jesus' statement of John 1:51, He is the ladder, the bridge between heaven and earth. And it is on Him that the messengers of God, the angels, ascend and descend.

NOTICE ALSO that in this verse Jesus begins by addressing Nathanael and then opens his statement up to the others who might be round about.

By following Jesus they would see great things. Heavens would open and remain open, the ascending and descending angels would bring forth the whole power of God and the love of God which was now available to men, in the Son of Man.

In this one chapter Jesus has been called,

- the Word,
- eternal God,
- the true light and the light of men,
- the only begotten of the Father,
- the only begotten God,
- the Lord,
- the Lamb of God,
- the Messiah,
- the Son of God,
- Rabbi, and
- the King of Israel.

His eternal pre-existence as God, His deity, His humanity, His sovereign authority is proclaimed by man.

Yet He calls Himself, "THE SON OF MAN."

That is the title Jesus used for himself exclusively and more than any other title. He was the Son of Man, who came as man to serve, who came to save, who came to deliver us from hell and death . to be the man Jesus, whom we can follow.

AND HE SAID . FOLLOW ME

Chapter 2

In John, Chapter One: The Testimony of Christ by His Words

In John, Chapter Two: We begin the Testimony of Christ by His Works.

It is here, in John 2, that Jesus begins the manifesting or revealing of His glory.

John 2:11: This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

A wedding marks a beginning: And this was the beginning of the ministry of Jesus Christ and the beginning of His miracles.

John 2:1, 2

And on the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; and Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the wedding.

We are not told who was being married.

Marriages in the Jewish culture of Galilee were very different than our customs. The marriage was preceded by a betrothal period of up to one year. At the end of that time the groom with his men would come to the house of the father of the bride and carry her off.

At the groom's home a wedding feast followed that could last up to seven days.

The wedding feast was considered a legal responsibility of the groom and included provision for food and drink. It was more than a mere courtesy.

Now in verses 1 and 2 we have two different verbs used two different ways in these sentences that tell us of Mary's presence and the presence of Jesus and His disciples.

The Greek verbs in these verses have led some commentators to believe that Jesus' mother was related to the bride or bridegroom, and that while Jesus would have been a relative, His disciples were not.

Furthermore, some see Jesus and His disciples as being invited at the last minute,

perhaps during the final days of the wedding feast. They arrived in town, the feast was ending, Mary was there, Jesus and His disciples were asked to join the festivities.

Six disciples had decided to follow Jesus and they were with Him at the Wedding.

Included were Peter and Andrew, James and John, Philip and Nathanael.

One principle we should see: Even Jesus, during the brief 3½ year ministry he had took time out for social activity. We need to do the same.

1. Life includes opportunity for pleasure.
2. Husbands must take the time to spend time with their wives in recreational and social activity.
3. Families must do the same.

This wedding feast also has a symbolic prophetic significance.

Jesus was present, so were his disciples, invited guests, friends and loved ones. And of course the bride and the groom.

Jesus will be present at a wedding feast that is yet to come, He will be the groom, His church His bride.

Revelation 19:7-9, Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. And he said to me, Write, Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

John 2:3

And when the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, They have no wine.

The steward or governor of the feast miscalculated either the number of guests or how much they would drink because they ran out of wine.

This was a social, religious, and legal disaster. Through the course of the marriage feast, which lasted over a number of days, there was certain toasts that were required by social standards . no wine, no toasts. These toasts were prescribed in the Talmud so this was a problem in light of religious tradition. Legally the groom was bound to provide sufficiently for the invited guests. At times lawsuits would result from failing in the obligation. And of course you have a social problem, running out of food at a party.

In verse four, Mary, knowing that Jesus (her son) is the God Man, brings the problem to Him. She was appealing to His deity to correct the situation.

John 2:4

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.

That is to say, "What has this situation to do with me or with you? To intervene using my deity would not be proper timing for my hour to be glorified is not yet come."

This was not so much of a rebuke as it was a statement of separation or a new relationship He now had with His family.

Jesus had been with His family, his mother, brothers and sisters, for thirty years. But now He was offering Himself to Israel as their servant king, their Messiah. He was applying a principle that He had stated many years before: He had to be about His Father's business.

John 2:5

His mother said to the servants, Whatever He says to you, do it.

Mary accepts this statement and faith-rests the situation and passes this rest in faith on to the servants.

Whatever he tells you (subjunctive mood) you do (imperative mood of command).

John 2:6

Now there were six stone water pots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each.

Six water pots used for ceremonial and social washings prior to feasts and synagogue activity. They were empty. Nothing more useless than an empty canteen, but these were big canteens: they held two to three firkins = 18 to 27 gallons of water.

John 2:7,8

Jesus said to them, Fill the water pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

And He said to them, Draw some out now, and take it to the governor of the feast. And they took it to him.

Jesus had the servants fill the water pots with water and then draw from them wine.

Many believers get distracted from the essence of the story and the importance of the miracle when they get hung up on the wine issue.

The word is OINOS, which means fermented wine, not grape juice.

You cannot, by any means of trickery, make aged fermented wine out of water in a matter of moments. It takes time to make fine wine and yet this miracle cuts across time and makes the finest wine out of water in a matter of seconds.

John 2:9

And when the governor of the feast tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the governor called the bridegroom.

The servants were then instructed to take a glass of wine to the governor of the feast (the host of the feast).

The governor did not know where the wine came from. The servants did know where it came from.

NOTE: While both the servants and the governor could enjoy the taste of the wine equally, the servants could have a greater appreciation of it because they knew where it came from.

What God provides in grace to the human race can be enjoyed by believers and unbelievers alike. But as a believer in Christ you know the source and you can have a greater appreciation for that which God provides.

Everyone can enjoy the beauty of a sunset but the believer in Christ can enjoy it even more because he knows the One who made the sun and caused it to set.

John 2:10

And said to him, Every man serves the good wine first, and when men have drunk freely, then that which is poorer; you have drunk freely, then that which is poorer; you have kept the good wine until now.

The governor of the feast is so impressed with the quality of the wine that he calls the groom to compliment him on the excellent wine.

God doesn't make junk. What God has in store for you surpasses excellence. This is our life beyond knowledge, beyond thinking, beyond dreams.

Ephesians 3:19-20 And to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10 But just as it is written, Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

John 2:11

This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

PRINCIPLES.

The abundant life that God has for us includes times of pleasure as well as times of problems.

Jesus Christ was concerned about the small matter of the lack of wine at a wedding feast. In the same way He is concerned about the smallest detail of our lives.

Remember: He has every hair on our head numbered.

Just as the servant had a greater appreciation for the wine because they knew where it came from, we can have a greater appreciation of life because we know where life comes from.

We can appreciate all things as grace from our Heavenly Father.

By way of application, just as the best wine came at the end of the feast, the best of the Christian way of life comes at the end of life, as we who have learned the Word of God at enjoying maximum application and thus maximum enjoyment.

AND THAT IS WHAT JESUS PROVIDED . do not ever think you will lose when you open the door and let Jesus in.

John 2:12

After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother, and His brothers, and His disciples; and there they stayed a few days.

Following the wedding feast Jesus and His mother, His half brothers (Joses, James, Simon, and Jude) and His disciples (Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Nathanael) went to Capernaum where Peter lived and the whole team would eventually reside.

We could see this as reconnaissance evangelism. A short visit precedes a lengthy term of ministry.

But that first visit was only a brief one. The Passover in Jerusalem was at hand.

John 2:13

And the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

The Passover was a celebration that dated back to 1440 BC and the Exodus. It centered upon the doctrine of Salvation and The Messiah. But the Jews of Jesus' day had made it a mere ritual without reality. The Jews had failed to obey the truth, to witness, to stand for the Word, so this great event took on the form of a social and political holiday.

Unlike Exodus 12:11 where it is called the Lord's Passover here it is called the Jew's Passover. It was still an important enough event that Jesus and His team of disciples wanted to be in Jerusalem at that time.

The First Cleansing of the Temple

John is the only one who records this cleansing of the Temple that was the first public act of Christ. The other Gospels record a cleansing of the temple that occurs three years later just prior to the crucifixion.

It is very fitting that the two cleansings of the Temple surround the public ministry of Christ.

When you clean something out you really are doing two things.

You are getting rid of the old, the dirty, the useless, the filth.

But then you are also getting ready for the new, the useful.

Jesus will get ride of the old, but it takes individual volition to replace it with the new that God will provide.

And Israel did not take the advantage so three years later the Temple needed to be cleaned out again.

Matthew 12:43-45 Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places, seeking rest, and does not find it. Then it says, I will return to my house from which I came; and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order. Then it goes, and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation.

Too many people today see the Christ Centered Life as merely cleaning up their act, but unless you are conforming your life to Jesus Christ through the intake of Bible Doctrine, you are empty, clean, but empty.

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

John 2:14-16

And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers seated.

And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables;

And to those who were selling the doves He said, Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise.

This event takes place in the Temple grounds in what is called the outer court or the Court of the Gentiles.

Here was the only place on the Temple mount that Jews and Gentiles could mingle. This was also the place reserved for Gentiles who wished to come to the Temple to pray and worship. But it was no longer a place of prayer and worship, it had become a commercial center for the High Priests to line their pockets with profit.

Now this market, in the court of the Gentiles and under the control of the High Priest was

rather new in origin and was the result of a political struggle between the High Priest and the Sanhedrin or Jewish council.

Prior to this, there had been four markets located on the western slope of the Mount of Olives where pilgrims and worshippers could purchase animals for sacrifice, exchange money into the approved Temple shekel, and buy other items approved for worship.

Part of this exchange was legitimate and follow Old Testament law and teaching.

The Temple tithe, tax, and offering could only be given in the approved coin. At this time it was the Tyrian shekel which was the closest available equivalent to the Old Hebrew shekel.

Exodus 30:13 This is what everyone who is numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as a contribution to the Lord.

Also the markets provided a place to purchase doves for the offerings by the poor, the women, and for the offering made to testify to the cleansing of leprosy.

Leviticus 12:8 But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean.

So the markets provided an inexpensive place to purchase doves for the sacrifices.

Also, the markets would exchange an animal, a lamb, a bullock, that was not fit for the sacrifice for one that was. This was like trading in a used car.

Exodus 12:5 Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.

The four markets were governed by the Sanhedrin and while they did operate for profit, the profit margin was limited.

But the profit went to the Sanhedrin and soon the Priests sought a way they could tap into some of this market. When Annas became the

High Priest he enacted a number of reforms. Soon he decided to go into competition with the Sanhedrin and open up his own markets on the Temple grounds.

So while the motive was profit for the priests the purpose was political, a political move to exclude the Sanhedrin from making any profit off the pilgrims who came to worship at the Temple.

The priests were in a position of political strength.

The priests were the ones who controlled the Temple mount area and they had an ideal location to set up their market, right in the court of the Gentiles.

Also, the priests determined if the coin for the Temple Tax was acceptable. If they decided a coin was too worn, they could reject it and require the coin to be exchanged, for a slight fee, with another coin.

The priests also decided if the animal for the offering was acceptable, and even if the dove meet the required standards. If they were not, and they usually were not, they required you to trade for an approved animal or dove.

The power of the priests would effectively shut down the four markets on the mount of Olives controlled by the Sanhedrin. So this was politics and profit.

But what was even worse was that this market was set up in the court of the Gentiles and thus eliminated the possibility of any Gentile from coming to the Temple to worship God.

So it is into the midst of this political, profit, and power struggle that the Lord Jesus Christ comes and take decisive action that restores something the priests had forgotten about . worship.

That is what provoked the righteous anger of Christ. The exclusion of worship of the Gentiles for the profit of the priests.

But this righteous anger was predicted by Malachi nearly 400 years before the Lord went into the Temple Court.

Read Malachi 1:10 through 2:3

The Disciples were able to apply doctrine to experience and remembered Psalm 69:9

Psalm 69:9. For zeal for Thy house has consumed me, And the reproaches of those who reproach Thee have fallen on me.

John 2:17

His disciples remembered that it was written, Zeal for Thy house will consume me.

There is a parallel between what happened last week at the wedding feast and what has now happened at the Temple in Jerusalem.

SOME THINGS SIMILAR.

1. The presence of Jesus
2. The presence of a large group of people
3. Jesus' presence resulting in an apparent loss

BUT THEN ONE THING DISSIMILAR.

1. At the wedding feast Jesus provided an abundance, the people ended up with more.
2. At the Temple Jesus also provided an abundance, but the people ended up with less.

AT THE TEMPLE Jesus took away their profits, but He provided Himself, the person of God incarnate.

They could have had Christ, a greater abundance than all the profit they could have made in a lifetime. But they rejected the Son of God.

WHEN JESUS CHRIST CONFRONTS US it may be a confrontation of loss. The loss of wine, the loss of money, the loss of social, political achievements, the loss of influence and control.

At both the wedding feast and at the Temple we see loss in the presence of Christ.

But we also see the potential of abundance . in one case received and in another case rejected.

After Jesus Christ cleared out the Temple courtyard, with all the animals on the run, with tables thrown out the windows, with the money changers hiding behind the outer wall, and the doves flying high to freedom . the now empty Temple was full.

JESUS CHRIST STOOD IN THE MIDST OF THE COURTYARD and it was more full, more abundant, than it had ever been.

YOU SEE JESUS ADDS AN ABUNDANCE to life. But while some enjoy it, relish it, and love the life Christ provides. Others run from it, reject it, and hide behind the pillars, seeing an empty courtyard rather than the fullness of Christ.

BUT NOTICE SOMETHING ELSE.

At the wedding feast the disciples believed.

John 2:11. This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

But at the Temple, they did more, they understood.

In the presence of Christ we go beyond believing, we go to understanding.

These disciples were beginning to put things together and they were beginning to remember and apply to life what they knew of His Word.

IN THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST THERE IS ABUNDANCE IN HIM, there is faith, there is understanding . if we just take it.
INTRODUCTION.

What are you going to do when you hear something, when you are hit with something you do not understand?

Paul mentioned this in II Corinthians 4:8

2 Corinthians 4:8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing .

Have you ever considered that if man rejected everything he did not understand, man would understand nothing.

We have two paragraphs that close out the second chapter of the Gospel of John. Each one shows the reactions to the dramatic event of Jesus throwing the traders and money changers out of the Temple.

John 2:18

The first reaction was from the Jews.

The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?

This group would not be the Priest alone, who were running the Temple market, but the merchants who were involved in the day to day selling of sacrifices and the changing of money.

They did not dispute what was done. They knew there operation was contrary to law and morality. They knew the promises of Malachi, that one would come to the Temple and clean it up.

Malachi 3:1-3 Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. And He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness.

So instead of asking why He did what He did, they ask for His credentials.

They want to see a sign .

Later, in I Corinthians 1:22, the apostle Paul would be critical of the Jews who were always seeking a sign on which to hang their belief.

1 Corinthians 1:22 For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom.

On about six occasions recorded in the Gospels, the religious leaders or the Jewish people demanded of Jesus a sign.

His consistent response is summed up by Matthew.

Matthew 16:4 An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah. And He left them, and went away.

The sign He gave them was the sign of Jonah the prophet, as He does here in John chapter 2. Jonah was in the belly of the great fish three days and three nights and was then returned to live. Jesus would be in the grave three days and three nights and then be resurrected.

John 2:19-21

So the sign that Jesus would give them was not to be seen then but later, at His resurrection.

Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. The Jews therefore said, It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days? But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

The information regarding the sign is cryptic. It was certainly not understood by the Jews. They looked only at the actual physical Temple that Herod had built.

One thing we get from their response is an accurate fix on the date. Extra biblical sources indicate that construction on Herod's Temple began in 19 BC. The would make the year of this portion of John 28 AD.

The word DESTROY is a verb Second Person Plural, aorist, active, imperative.

YOU DESTROY THIS TEMPLE . at the second trial of Christ on the eve of the crucifixion the accusation would be that Jesus conspired to destroy the Temple Himself, but even if He was talking about the actual Temple, that was not what He said.

BUT WHAT I WANT YOU TO SEE though is that there are two groups present. The Jews, very vocal, and the disciples, very quiet.

We have seen the reaction by the Jews, but the next verse gives us the response of the disciples .

John 2:22

When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken.

With this verse John takes us ahead to the resurrection of Christ. He tells us that the disciples remembered what the Lord had said, and they believed the Scriptures, and the word spoken by Christ.

With this indication of what happened in the future, we can determine what they did at the time of this saying.

UNLIKE THE JEWS, they did not react and reject, but instead they listened, thought about it, and waited until a later time of understanding and application.

YOU SEE, THE DISCIPLES DID NOT UNDERSTAND this cryptic statement anymore than did the Jews, but they did not argue from ignorance, they did not react, they did not reject.

TODAY AS CHRISTIANS study the Word of God we too often imitate these Jews rather than the disciples. We react and reject.

Howard Hendricks of Dallas Theological Seminary had a saying I will never forget. When you are faced with something you do not understand, just put it on the back burner and let it simmer. Soon the Holy Spirit will bring in other information that will bring that information to full boil of understanding.

That is what the disciples did, they put this information on the back burner.

JOHN THEN, IN THE FINAL PARAGRAPH, SUMMARIZES THE MINISTRY of Jesus in Jerusalem during this visit.

John 2:23

Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, beholding His signs which He was doing.

THIS VERSE shows us what these people were impressed with.

This BELIEF or FAITH was in His name and refers to one's reputation.

BEHOLDING is an aorist participle and in Greek the action of the aorist participle always precedes the action of the main verb which here is BELIEVED.

This means they saw the signs, no doubt miracles of healing, they believed in the reputation of Jesus as a great healer, but not as the Son of God and not unto salvation.

They were IMPRESSED with what the Lord did, His acts of power. What He was doing. But they were not impressed with something that was fundamental in understanding who He is. and that was that He was God who, because of His great and pure love for them, became Man.

SALVATION is faith, belief, trust in Jesus Christ as one's Savior, the only Savior, the Christ, the promised Messiah.

John 2:24,25

These verses show us that this was not faith at salvation. These who believed in Him as a worker of miracles would later reject Him, some would even be in the mob that would shout out for His crucifixion.

But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men.

And because He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man for He Himself knew what was in man.

In our vernacular we might say that Jesus knew where they were coming from. You see, he did not need anyone to bear witness or validate nor authenticate who He was. Had this been left to man they would have wanted

Him to be their king, and overcome the Roman oppressors. He knew that they wanted a King and were not willing to accept a Servant.

Jesus knew that the people of Jerusalem were looking for a Savior according to their own preconceived ideas. They had an unrealistic expectation according to what they wanted when they considered Christ.

THIS WHOLE ISSUE COMES TO A HEAD IN JOHN CHAPTER 6.

John 6:2 And a great multitude was following Him, because they were seeing the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.

John 6:15 Jesus therefore perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.

John 6:29 Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.

John 6:30 They said therefore to Him, What then do You do for a sign, that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?

John 6:58 This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate, and died, he who eats this bread shall live forever.

John 6:60 Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard this said, This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?

John 6:66 As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore.

Today we can read this and look back to John 2:23 through 25 and do one of two things. We can either apply it to others and perhaps better understand why some do not remain faithful to Christ and consistent in His Word . or we can apply it to ourselves and ask, each one of us, ask ourselves, why are we here right now?

And consider that if we are not here for the right reason, we may be one of the many who

do not remain faithful to the Lord and consistent in the Word.

LET'S ASK OURSELVES THESE QUESTIONS.

Are we impressed with the person, the man, Jesus Christ, or with what He has done?

Are we only impressed with what we can understand, what we can figure out, or are we willing to put our faith in the One who understands everything.

Are we like the money changers and merchants of the Temple who are here for only what we can get? Are we so pragmatic that we are unwilling to serve?

Is faith only found in the unusual, the supernatural, the spectacular, or are we living by faith in the ordinary routine of the day by day life of faith.

Are we only impressed with the NOW, the immediate, or are we willing to wait upon the Lord, to bring His word to completion?

Is our faith in Christ a response to the One who loved us so much that He became man, lived among us, and died on the Cross to save us . or is our faith merely temporary because it is not rooted in Christ our Savior, who became man, became sin, for us?

Chapter 3

Remember the closing verses of Chapter 2.

John 2:24-25. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man for He Himself knew what was in man.

Now look at the opening words of chapter 3: "Now there was a man - "

And we know that Jesus knew exactly where man was coming from.

John 3:1

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

We learn three things about him.

1. His name was Nicodemus: Name means victor over the people. Secular sources identify him as Nicodemus ben Gurion, the brother of Josephus.
2. He was a Pharisee: The religious separatists who developed out of the ranks of the scribes. They saw themselves as the custodians of truth and the Law. At the time of Christ they numbered about 6,000
3. A ruler of the Jews: A member of the Sanhedrin and later a defender of Jesus before the Sanhedrin in John 7:45-52. The Sanhedrin was the council of 70 men who were responsible for religious decisions and some civil rule under the authority of Rome.

From other sources we also find that Nicodemus was one of the three wealthiest men in all of Jerusalem. It was not until the crucifixion that he publically made known his faith in Christ. Because he assisted in the burial of Christ, he was stripped of his position and wealth and expelled from Jerusalem. His later years were spent being persecuted because of his relationship with Jesus Christ.

John 3:2

This man came to Him by night, and said to Him, Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

There are three possible reasons Nicodemus came to interview Jesus at night.

1. Night was a normal time for meetings in the Near East then and even now. So this was not unusual.
2. Some suppose that Nicodemus chose a time when he and Jesus could talk

without interruption, and that night best suited this purpose.

3. But more likely, it was because of fear of reprisal from the Pharisees and the entire Sanhedrin that caused Nicodemus to come at night.

I favor that last position because later on in John 7:50-51 he defends Jesus but only in a legal sense, never mentioning to the council that he had talked with him.

Also, in every mention of Nicodemus in the Bible we see also the reminder that he was the one who came to Jesus at night.

Thus, this was seen as unusual and out of the ordinary. And something that important enough to mention.

That the one who once was in so much fear of even talking with Jesus would later assist in the embalming and burial of the Lord Jesus Christ making himself unclean for the Passover and a curse to the other Pharisees.

Nicodemus makes some interesting statements.

He calls Jesus a Rabbi: This was a common title of respect for anyone who taught the Scriptures; so much so that Jesus later prohibited the use of this title in Matthew 23:8 saying we only have one teacher, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

we know

This is a plural indicating that Nicodemus is speaking for more than just himself, perhaps there were other Pharisees who were curious about Jesus.

The word "know" is **oida**, which refers to a very complete and confident knowledge."

you have come from God

He is attesting to divine origin without attesting to deity itself.

a teacher

This is **didaskolos**, which refers to someone who has prepared contents and has as his intention a change in the ones who hears.

For you see, none can do these signs except God is with him.

Now, Nicodemus says a lot of good things, but he never really nails the issue. He never really says that he believes that Jesus is God, the Jesus is the Messiah.

He believes a lot of things about Jesus, but he doesn't express faith in Jesus as the Son of God.

John 3:3

Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Jesus is listening to what Nicodemus has to say and recognizing that he is going around the issue. So He brings the discussion to the issue - eternal life.

On any number of occasions in the Gospels we see Jesus giving an answer to questions that were not asked. Here is an instance of that. Nicodemus did not ask about eternal life, he did not ask about the kingdom of God, but everything he did said indicated that there was a desire to understand, a desire to learn.

Jesus used His gift and ability to discern what Nicodemus was really asking and answered the unasked but more important question.

Principle

Jesus Christ cuts through the smoke and gets down to the real issues of life. Often what we say, even what we ask, is a smoke screen. Hiding what we really mean and even hiding what we really need.

The Word of God, the written Christ, reveals the true needs of our lives. A very humanistic approach to life sees man as a being of need who seeks to satisfy his needs, but as soon as

one need is satisfied, another appears in its place. So man works, man lives, to satisfy his never ending needs, and the process is unrelenting and continues from birth to death.

It is in response to Nicodemus's questions that we have the first extended message by Christ in the book of John.

The first, but certainly not the last. Of all the Gospels, John's is a Gospel of answered questions. Even the simple phrase that begins "Jesus answered" is found nearly 50 times in John, more than in all the other three Gospels combined.

This is a Gospel of answers, in a book of answers, that is given to a people who have a lot of questions, you and me.

The discourse goes from Jesus pointing out what man needs to an explanation of what God provides. Man need is often not known by man. Nicodemus thought he needed and requested a validation of Jesus' power; but before the power of God in Christ has any relevance, man must first become aware of his crucial spiritual needs.

Simply put, before you believe in the Savior you must recognize that you need a savior.

John 3:3-8, Man's need

John 3:11-15, only faith can fill that need

John 3:16-21, the provision and the object of faith.

In verse 3 the principle of need was stated.

Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

This response confused Nicodemus.

John 3:4

Nicodemus said to Him, How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?

So, at verse 5, Jesus begins an explanation of the need to be born again.

John 3:5-8

Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born again.

The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.

In these verse Jesus establishes a requirement for entering heaven.

He begins by saying "truly, truly", which is repeated three times in this discourse. The Greek word is **amein** (repeated), which refers to a validation of a fact being communicated.

The requirement: Born of water and the Spirit, which is then explained in verse 8

That which is born of flesh (water) is flesh and that which is born of Spirit (born again) is Spirit.

Now at this point we can imagine that a look of puzzlement must have crossed Nicodemus' face. The Lord responds to that look.

Do not marvel

The Greek word is **kaumadzo**, meaning "to be astonished, to question, to be surprised"; but it includes the idea of wanting information. When those around Jesus were astonished, information was provided.

The words "born again" are **gennao anoken** which mean to be born from above, a heavenly birth. Now it is a second birth, a spiritual rebirth. So the term "born again" is a consistent translation.

The idea is that one of being spiritually born and becoming a part of a spiritual family.

The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where

it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.

Verse 8 contains a play on words which is only recognized when you look at the Greek. The word for wind is **pneuma**; the word SPIRIT is also **pneuma**. Both words are the same but in one context **pneuma** is used to explain that which is familiar and yet a mystery, and in another context to explain what is unfamiliar and a mystery.

Some suppose perhaps that a breeze came up while Jesus and Nicodemus were talking. A breeze comes and goes, from where, to where, who knows; but it is felt, it is heard, but is a mystery.

In the same way man is born again, it is known and enjoyed, it is heard in the presentation of the Gospel, but it is still a mystery.

Now you can get involved with the theological aspects of regeneration and explain it technically, just like you can explain the wind technically, but that is not the whole picture is it?

The real focus of these verses is that man has a need, and although that need is not understood, it can be experienced; and the solution to that need, the fulfilling of that need, is only going to be met by the work of Spirit.

John 3:9

Nicodemus answered and said to Him, How can these things be?

This seems to be more a statement of frustration than anything else. Here is a man who for his whole life has strived for spiritual perfection, who has studied and lived the Talmud, who has risen to the highest position of religious stature in his community, in his whole nation, and now he is being told by an itinerant rabbi that he has a need that is not only unfulfilled but cannot be filled by anything he has done.

I have seen that look of frustration on the faces of believers who are moved out of their comfort zones and brought face to face with the idea of a personal, daily walk with Christ.

The believer who hears that their legalism doesn't work, that the amounts of their giving won't cut it, that all their ritual without any reality is just fantasy. Even good things, like notebooks full of doctrine, are not going to fill that crucial need that they have of having a personal relationship with the God who created us.

Jesus answers Nicodemus with sarcasm.

John 3:10

Jesus answered and said to him, Are you a teacher of Israel, and do not understand these things?

We might wonder why Jesus came back at Nicodemus with such sarcasm. But it has a purpose, it is sanctified sarcasm. It is intended to get Nicodemus to stop depending upon what he is and instead to depend upon God's plan in Christ.

For "know" Jesus uses a simple word, **ginosko**. He is saying that Nicodemus doesn't even understand academically much less to the point of any spiritual application.

In John 3:11-15, Jesus tells what it will take to fulfill the need to be born again.

John 3:11-15

Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and you do not receive our witness.

If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, even the Son of Man.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up;

that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.

The need to be born again (from above) and have eternal life is a need that will only be fulfilled by what God provides, not by what man does. These verses emphasize the marriage of grace and faith.

Verse 11, The witness of the wind, just mentioned, seen, heard, known, explained. But not received by Nicodemus.

Verse 12, "If you do not believe the earthly things I tell you, how will you ever believe the heavenly things I tell you."

Verse 13, "No one, not you nor any of the religious leaders of that day, not any man, has gone to heaven to talk with God, But He who descends from heaven (has), even the Son of Man."

Now the title Son of Man does not mean as much to us as it would have to Nicodemus.

We might see this title, that was by far the preferred title of Christ when referring to himself, as a diminutive or merely an emphasis of His humanity. While it does emphasize His humanity, it also presents him as the promised Messiah.

Daniel 7:13-14. I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

The Old Testament books of Daniel was the most popular book for the Jews during Jesus' ministry. It was number one of the Jerusalem Times best sellers list. The Jews looked for the Son of Man, who would establish His kingdom, and, in doing so, defeat the Romans.

This title SON OF MAN was a title of authority, dominion, and power. And that is what

Nicodemus would have heard, that this Jesus is claiming to be the Son of Man of Daniel, the promised King, the Messiah, the Christ.

In verse 14, Jesus gives a further Old Testament reference that foretold his death: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up;"

This looks back to the period of wandering in the wilderness.

Numbers 21:6-9. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.

So the people came to Moses and said, We have sinned, because we have spoken against the Lord and you; intercede with the Lord, that He may remove the serpents from us. And Moses interceded for the people.

Then the Lord said to Moses, Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he shall live.

And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived.

This is a very straight-forward analogy. You sin, you die! You look to the one who was made sin (a serpent is a symbol of sin), and you live!

John 8:28-29. Jesus therefore said, When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.

And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.

The enemies of Christ lifted Him up to die on the Cross, but God lifted Him up to bring life.

And what does this require? "...that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life." Belief, faith, in the One God provides, the Son of Man.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

We have God's love, God's gift, given to all who would believe, and God's promise - eternal life.

Now here is where Jesus is getting very specific with Nicodemus. He is the Son of God, He is the one in whom faith must be placed. Is Nicodemus a WHOEVER? Is everyone a WHOEVER? Then anyone can believe in Him and the promise is sure, they will not perish but will have eternal life.

John 3:17

For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.

"Should be" expresses the desire of God as an aorist, passive, subjunctive. It is God's wish that mankind believe in His Son as their Savior. But God's sovereignty is great enough to allow for man's free will to be exercised. Jesus did not come for condemnation but for salvation.

The gospel of Jesus Christ proclaims truth to a lost and dying world. Satan's counterfeit gospel has been around for a long time. Satan has, over the centuries, figured out a very simple way to distort and cloud the issue of salvation. He adds to it. It is deluded by human works, both mental and physical, that man has come to believe must be accomplished by man if man is to be saved.

But in Jesus' dialogue with Nicodemus we see the Gospel of Jesus explained by Jesus. We are going right to the source. The Gospel as explained by Christ is.

CLEAR: It will leave no questions as to what must be done to have eternal life.

COMPLETE: It will leave no holes, nothing that must be done later on.

CONCISE: It will be short, swift, and to the point, man's salvation is too important to muddy it up with a lot a superfluous information.

CHALLENGING: It will encourage a faith decision, it will not merely be presented as an option, but rather a necessity for eternal life. You must be born again.

CONVICTING: It will not rationalize or excuse the problem of sin and evil.

COMMUNICATED: It will be proclaimed, not only to Nicodemus but to all who desire eternal life. It is not hidden from man but proclaimed to man.

John 3:18

He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

This is a real **good news, bad news** verse.

The **good news** is that Jesus did not come into the world to judge the world, he did not come to condemn; he came to save. For the believer there is no judgment.

Romans 8:1. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

But Jesus is not the judge for the unbeliever either. Jesus will not judge the unbeliever until the great white throne judgment. Now, in time, He comes to the unbeliever with an invitation of salvation.

1 John 4:14. And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

2 Peter 3:9. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

The Lord's desire is to be the Savior of the unbeliever and our desire should be for the unbeliever to know Him as their Savior.

The **bad news** of this verse is that man is under condemnation already, and apart from Christ there is no way out of that condemnation. Condemnation is sure when there is no faith.

The unbeliever has not believed in Christ in the past; the result is that the unbeliever is under condemnation.

John 3:19

And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil.

The phrase "light is come into the world" refers all the way back to the prologue to the gospel, in John 1:4-9, Jesus Christ is that light. Perfect tense: Once the light came into the world, the world would never be the same.

When the light falls upon man, man hides in the darkness. The aorist tense here look at a point in time in which truth is given. When truth is given by God man makes a decision to remain in darkness. That decision that a man makes, keeps him under condemnation.

The last phrase tells us why man makes that decision.

For their deeds were evil.

"Deeds" is the Greek word **ergon**, from which we get the English word "energy".

Evil includes sins but is much more than sin. Evil is the system of Satan, influencing man's sin nature, and opposing grace.

Now the gift of God, His Son, is grace - and yet man's sin nature opposes this grace.

Man rejects Christ because of what is in man, a system of thinking that is Evil, it may be sin, but it also may be good works, religion, ritual.

Evil includes any system of thinking that decides that there is no need for a Savior, that man can make it on his own, that he can do it his way, that God cannot save or any other

excuse that turn men from the light of Christ back to darkness.

We might read this and stand amazed that anyone would refuse the truly free gift of God. But the one who lives by a system of evil thinking hates the light.

John 3:20

For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

Here is a string of present tense verbs: they do evil, they hate the light, they do not come to the light.

The word "hate" is **miseo**, which can be used for a relative preference of one thing over another. Here the unbeliever prefers to live by some system of evil rather than come to that point of need, believing in Christ and being saved by faith.

And the reason for this rejection of the light: "lest his deeds should be exposed."

Light does a number of things.

- It exposes what is there
- It reveals the shabby
- It exposes that which is unsure
- It reveals that which is weak

Why would a man living by some evil system of thinking stay away from the light? Because the light will expose just how weak, and unsure, and shabby his way of thinking is.

Now, a contrast

John 3:21

But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.

There is a difference here. This man is the one who does the truth. "Does: is **poieo**, "to adopt a way of expressing thought or feeling.

This is not production, but a decision to do that which is true as opposed to that which is false or evil. This is the man or woman or

child who know that there is truth that is not subjectively set upon self, but a truth that is from God.

And this objectivity will bring him to the Savior; he will continue in the light that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.

This verse looks beyond salvation to the believer who continues in the light, letting the light expose and reveal the weak, the profane, the shabby, and bring his deeds in line with the motive, the influence, and the power of God.

John 12:36. While you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light.

Take any verse that mandates salvation and you will see it fall into one of those four categories, the expressing of a need, the means of faith, the method of God in Salvation, the promise of growth, sanctification of the believer.

Ephesians 2:8,9. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

John 20:31. These have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

John 8:24. I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins.

Matthew 28:19. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Acts 4:12. And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.

John 11:25-26. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies,

John 11:26. and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?

Acts 16:31. And they said, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.

Confusion, too often a state in which many of us find ourselves. Confusion is based upon not understanding what is going on. The only way out of confusion is to understand and the only way to understand is to seek the truth. If truth remains absent, confusion will lead to controversy, and controversy will lead to criticism, and criticism will lead to division.

The account before us could be entitled: Confusion in the Camp or more accurately Camps. At this time both John the Baptist and Jesus, with their disciples, are preaching in Judea.

We can only imagine what it was like to live at that time and hear the Word of truth proclaimed by two of the most powerful communicators who ever lived.

I am sure that Judea was alive with excitement because the Word of God was being put forth with such intensity and power.

BUT IN THE MIDST OF THIS we see that there is going to be some confusion. A confusion that comes from an inability to think beyond that which is familiar. A confusion that will only be resolved when individuals begin to look beyond the subjective self and to the objective grace of God.

John 3:22-24

These verses provide the background of these events.

After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He was spending time with them and baptizing.

And John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and they were coming and were being baptized.

For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

A few observations.

While it tells us here that Jesus was baptizing, John 4:2 tells us that it was actually his disciples who were baptizing.

John 4:2. Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were.

With both John and Jesus and their disciples in Judea there was an overlap of ministry. This, however, was a cooperative effort not a conflicting effort.

The message was the same. Both John and Jesus preached a message of the Kingdom and the King who had come from heaven to earth.

It is also interesting to see that John was at a specific place because there was much water. Baptism was by immersion. It doesn't take much water to sprinkle or pour.

This baptism was the baptism of the Kingdom: There are seven Baptisms mentioned in the Bible, and each one has to do with identification.

In the Baptism of the Kingdom, water represents the kingdom and the believer, being baptized, identifies with the promised Messianic Kingdom. In the case of those who were baptized by the disciples of Jesus, they were also identified with the King, Jesus himself.

Because of the different baptisms,, and because of the different ways water was used in purification rituals for Israel, some confusion developed.

John 3:25

There arose therefore a discussion on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purification.

The word DISCUSSION refers to a question or an inquiry that comes from being perplexed and can lead to debate.

In 2 Timothy 2:23 such questions are said to lead to arguments.

In Titus 3:9 they are said to be worthless

We are told here that the one who came to John's disciples was a Jew, with questions about purification.

Purification refers to the Jewish custom of purification that was mentioned in John 2:6. To the Jews, purification, which had a limited application in Old Testament Law, had become a very involved practice by the time of John and Jesus.

Although purification was practiced daily prior to eating and at weddings and other events, the most significant form of purification occurred when a Gentile became a religious Jew.

It is this Jewish conversion purification that brought up the issue of baptism.

Not only did this confusion result in a debate between this Jew and John's disciples, it brought confusion to the whole issue of what Jesus and His disciples were doing.

John 3:26

And they came to John and said to him, Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have borne witness, behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him.

Now from this statement we can determine a little more of what took place in verse 25 with the debate over baptism and purification.

- The debate centered on the meaning of baptism as it compares to the Jewish custom of conversion washings or purification.
- The debate brought up John's baptism and Jesus' baptism. Which led to some questions for John's disciples.
- The disciples of John then came to John and questioned him regarding what Jesus and His disciples were doing.

What is expressed in this verse is confusion, to be sure; but worse, it the beginning of division. The disciples of John are expressing

doubt and confusion at this time but could easily move to antagonism, disagreement, and division with Jesus and His disciples. The confusion is caused by subjectivity.

LET'S EXAMINE THAT FOR A MOMENT.

- The Jew who came questioning John's disciples did so trying to understand something that was new in light of something that was old.
- He was closed minded, locked into the ritual of Israel and could not see the point in baptism.
- For him, baptism was for the Gentiles, why would John and Jesus baptize Jews?
- So he combined his inability to understand something that was new with his inability to see the need for a Jew to be baptized and the result was subjective ignorance. But this did not end just with him.
- John's disciples understood baptism and why a Jew would be baptized, to be identified with the kingdom, but they became subjective regarding Jesus and Jesus' disciples.
- This led to the question of verse 26 which includes their subjective arrogance. But it doesn't end there.

Notice the last statement of verse 26 "And all men are coming to Him."

These disciples, having seen the popularity of John decrease, were on the edge of jealousy; and that is hinted at in their question.

All it would have taken was for John to say one negative thing about Jesus, and these disciples would have been on a campaign against the Lord and His disciples and a full division would have occurred.

Instead, this move toward division is going to be halted in its tracks by the teaching of truth.

Truth dispels the arrogance of ignorance but you have to listen to it, learn it, think it, and apply it.

This near disaster developed because of seven things.

- Ignorance that would not give way to enlightenment
- Tradition that would not give way to truth
- Subjectivity that would not give way to objectivity
- Doubt that would not give way to understanding
- Jealousy that would not give way to joy
- Competition that would not give way to cooperation
- And the present problem eclipsing what had already been taught and explained

John 3:27-30 contain John's answer to his disciples.

John gave four principles that should dispel the move towards further subjectivity and division on the part of his disciples - four principles that are as timely for us as they were for them.

1. Whatever you have, is grace.

John 3:27

John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, unless it has been given him from heaven.

John deals with the greater problem first. The accusation that all men are following Jesus rather than John and the jealousy that is expressed by that statement is a real problem.

John recognized that any popularity he may have enjoyed was grace, the ones who followed him were grace, the disciples he was speaking to were grace.

And we cannot be jealous over grace, God gives, God takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord.

2. Remember what we have been taught.

John 3:28

You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but, I have been sent before Him.

John had taught his disciples who he was what his purpose was. That was not the promised Messiah, and that his sole purpose was to prepare the way for the Lord Jesus Christ. This was basic to John's ministry and message.

His disciples had forgotten this. And so often we forget some basic doctrine and that opens the door for subjective ignorance.

He disciples spoke, complained, criticized, and expressed their jealousy before they thought and remember what they had been taught.

They needed to be slow to speak and quick to think, to remember basic doctrines.

3. The third principle is that joy can be found in others.

John 3:29

He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. And so this joy of mine has been made full.

While the analogy is exact, because Jesus is the bridegroom and those who are His are His bride, the principle is much broader and can be applied to us and others today.

What kind of a wedding day would it be if the best man walked around with a long face, complaining that the groom was marrying the bride. What would it be like if the best man was jealous! Instead the friend of the groom rejoices.

John takes this one step further.

Therefore, my joy has been fulfilled (to overflowing). As perfect tense, the meaning is

“fulfilled in the past and remains full in the present.”

Passive voice: He received this filling up of joy. Did not earn it or deserve it. The passive voice is the voice of grace.

We can find great joy when we see the plan of God revealed in the lives and ministries of others. And that joy removes jealousy.

4. We must put others first.

John 3:30

He must increase, but I must decrease.

John's disciples were upset that so many were following Jesus, but that was the way it should be. John was to decrease and Jesus was to increase, to increase in followers, in disciples, in influence, in ministry.

This is the challenge we have in Philippians 2.

Philippians 2:3. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself;

And we think of others, when we rejoice in the success of others, in their ministries, in their spiritual advance, when we see others increase, we can set aside subjectivity and jealousy and pettiness.

It is by means of truth: truth taught, truth learned, truth remembered, and truth applied, that division and jealousy is dispelled.

It is the truth that sets free, free from confusion and all that can follow in confusion's path.

Continuing now in John 3:31-36.

Jesus Christ came to earth to pay a debt he did not owe because we owed a debt we could not pay.

This paragraph of the divine record of Jesus Christ exalts the Lord Jesus and presents Him as the unique Son of God.

John the Baptist is responding to the statements of his disciples regarding Jesus. Their subjective arrogance almost pushed them over the edge of temptation into the valley of sin, the sin of jealousy.

John emphatically states that the Lord Jesus must increase and he (John) must decrease.

We never go wrong when we put Jesus Christ first, when we put the cause of Christ on earth first, even when we put others first.

The Christian is to be a servant, as Jesus Christ was God who came to serve. We serve by order of our Savior, we serve others according to His standard and within the frame work of service He sets for us.

And we can do that with confidence, we can decrease and He can increase. And we can see this increase of Christ in every area of life because He is God - this passage tells us why, in our lives, personally, we can be very secure as we decrease and He increases.

John says five things about Jesus Christ.

1. He is of heaven and above all
2. His testimony, His words, are heavenly in origin
3. He is sent by God and has the Spirit of God without measure (working together of the Trinity)
4. He has the love of the Father
5. All things are possessed by Him

But whenever we look at the Lord Jesus, and this is especially true when we look at His humanity, we see His superiority and also the glaring shortcomings of man.

One cannot look at, learn of, fellowship with the one who is perfect, without seeing the imperfection of man, without seeing how far man falls short of the righteousness of Christ.

In this paragraph John also says five things about mankind.

1. Man is of the earth

2. Man can only speak of earthly things
3. Man does not readily receive the testimony from heaven
4. To receive His words testifies that God is true
5. To believe in the Son gives eternal life, to not believe keeps man under the wrath of God.

John 3:31

The Lord Jesus Christ is from heaven but man is from earth.

He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.

The heavenly origin of Jesus Christ establishes that He is unique. Man is from the earth and bound to earthly things but because Jesus Christ is from heaven, He is not bound to earth and is above all, all men and all things.

Jesus Christ existed eternally in heaven before his existence on earth. He is unique in this pre-existence.

Man has a beginning. With man there is no pre-existence or transmigration of souls.

Jesus was the divine person who took on a human nature at the incarnation, the virgin birth. This makes Him the one who is superior, who is over all men and all things.

The word "above" is an improper preposition which translates the idea of being above, over, greater than, more than, superior.

It is a genitive of source indicating that the source of Jesus Christ, heaven, makes Him more than and greater than anyone or anything.

By contrast, man is of the earth and speaks of the earth.

The whole process by which man can speak is on the earth in content, in process, in manner, and in form.

John 3:32

What He has seen and heard, of that He bears witness; and no man receives His witness.

This verse examines the content, in contrast to man, of what Jesus can speak about.

Two truths are stated in this passage.

1. That Jesus bears witness on earth to what he has seen and heard in heaven. The message of Christ is heavenly in origin. It is given on earth but it is of heaven.
2. No man receives His witness. The word NO MAN is an adjective of no degree. Hence this is a general statement in which excepts, you and me, are allowed.

SEEN AND HEARD are both verbs: SEEN is a perfect tense whereas HEARD is an aorist tense.

1. What Jesus has seen is the whole of creation, in heaven, in earth, and continues to see in the present time.
2. What he has heard, however, is of heaven, his origin. It is not changed by what He has heard on earth.
3. He has seen heaven, He sees earth. He sees fallen man and He sees the outworking of the fall of man and yet what he says is not changed by what He sees.
4. His message is truth, and is from the Father and is given to fallen man.
5. In the same way we had heard the message of truth, aorist tense. We see and keep on seeing the world in its fallen state. Often more and more fallen, but the message that we hear and that we proclaim is eternal.

And yet men, for the most part, do not receive this message.

This really reflects back to

John 1:11-12. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But

as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.

John 3:33

He who has received His witness has set his seal to this, that God is true.

The man who believes in Christ receives His witness. And in that receiving set his seal on the witness as being God's truth.

Receiving is an aorist participle that looks at a decisive act whereby man decides by faith to receive Jesus and his witness, and sets his own seal on the truth of God.

The seal in the ancient world was used to authenticate a document as being from a particular person.

A seal, usually the imprint of a signet ring in wax, demonstrated four things.

1. **A clear message.** The seal could be understood even by the illiterate or the one speaking another language.
2. **Ownership:** The seal could be used like a brand to stamp articles that belong to a person.
3. **Authentication:** The seal would denote that a letter is authentic.
4. **A personal guarantee:** Guaranteed that the content of the document would be carried out.

By receiving Christ and His message the believer testifies that the message is clear, that he owns it (it was given to him), that it is authentic and guaranteed by God.

Martin Luther said of this verse: "Anyone who accepts the message of the Gospel resolutely sets his seal to it and says: This seal and document mean that I can stake life and limb and all I possess on this. His heart is certain and harbors no doubt."

I think of those who two hundred years ago set their seal, their signature, to the Declaration of Independence and to that

human document pledged their lives, their fortunes, their sacred honor to a cause that was only a dream.

We can set our seal on that which is eternal, from heaven, and was witnessed to by the Savior, Jesus Christ.

John 3:34

For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure.

This tells us why we can set our seal on what Jesus has seen and heard and declares to us, and tells us why we can put on seal on what Jesus Christ says - God sent Him.

Someone came up with a saying a few years ago that went something like this: "God said it, I believe it, and that settles it!"

But it should be changed somewhat, to: "God said it, that settles it, and I believe it."

The issue is that the Word of God is revealed by the Lord Jesus Christ and God sent Him, and that settles it.

In addition to the sending of the Son by the Father, the Father has also given the Son the Holy Spirit without measure.

This was new! In the Old Testament economy the Holy Spirit was given but given in a limited way. Less than 10% of the believers we read about even had the empowering of the Holy Spirit and then only for specific tasks.

But now, the humanity of Christ is given the Holy Spirit without measure, an unlimited power of God the Holy Spirit.

Before the end of the Gospel of John we will see that Jesus Christ gives the Holy Spirit to believers, without measure.

John 14:17,18 The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.

And as the Son bears witness of the Father, the Spirit bears witness of the Son in us and through us.

John 15:26. When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me.

Now verse 35 shows us the relationship between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 3:35

The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.

The LOVE of the Father is present tense, He keeps on loving the Son. And He gives all things into His hand: A perfect tense verb indicating that He has given and all things continue to be given to His whom He loves.

Now the one who has all thing, who is over all things, who has the love of the Father, the Holy Spirit without measure, is the one in whom we must believe.

John 3:36

He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

Believe have life eternal OR do not obey and not see life and instead remain under the wrath of God.

In the Old Testament Wisdom literature and in the Prophets the word wrath was always associated with destruction.

Proverbs 16:14. The wrath of a king is as messengers of death, But a wise man will appease it.

And David described as does John how to get out from under the wrath of God.

Psalms 2:12. Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

In order to know the mind of Christ, what His attitude was and what our attitude should be,

we must know Christ. We have preserved for us stories, like the one we are about to examine, to show us this attitude.

Chapter 4

This chapter really fulfills the theology we studied in Chapter 3. In that chapter we read about the Gospel, the need that man has, the way God sent His Son to fill that need, and the condition of faith in Christ.

Now we see all this theology applied by Jesus Christ as He witnesses to the Woman at the well. But first God is going to get Jesus to right place at the right time and He will do this through apparently adverse circumstances.

John 4:1-3

When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were),
He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

We see our Lord applying a number of good principles in these opening verses.

Throughout John 4 we will see ten characteristics of the humanity of Jesus Christ. Characteristics that we can have in our own lives.

But we are also going to see the negatives Jesus had to deal with as He ministered. Recognize that you and I will have to deal with negatives in our service. But just as Jesus was prepared and equipped to deal with the negatives of this situation, we too are prepared and equipped to deal with the negatives of our situations.

When therefore the Lord knew.

Jesus, in his humanity, was able to take information received, combine it with truth, and make decisions. This is called discernment.

Now just prior to this, from the other Gospels, we find that John the Baptist had been arrested and put into prison. Jesus knew that if John had been arrested, chances were very good that He would be next.

The Pharisees had already heard that Jesus made more disciples and baptized more disciples than John, although we are told that Jesus did not directly baptize anyone, but his disciples did the baptizing. So Judea was no longer a safe place to minister so Jesus left.

Even though He had the protection of God, He did not casually put Himself in danger. His time had not yet come, He knew that. And so he left the area.

Along with discernment, we see the second characteristic, he was wise. He was able to evaluate the current situation, set certain priorities, and make a decision based upon wisdom and current events.

Too often the believer get himself into a jam, into a dangerous situation, because he doesn't use discernment and wisdom.

Illustration

Between 1096 and 1248 there were seven attempts by the Christians of Europe to free the Holy Land from Muslim control. These seven attempts became known as the Crusades.

In 1212, Nicolas, a boy from Germany led 30,000 youths average age of 12 to liberate the Holy Land. At the same time in France, a young boy named Stephen led 20,000 children to the Holy Land. Of 50,000 children who left France and Germany, not one returned. They were killed enroute, shipwrecked, and those who did arrive in the Holy Land were captured and sold into slavery.

The impetus for this crusade was the idea that a supernatural conquest would be won by the children who were the pure in heart. Never mind that they were untrained, just send them forth to battle.

I use that example because it is so similar to the way Christians fight their battles today - no training, no equipping, just have a sincere heart and go to battle.

And the same things that happened to those children in 1212 happens today to the ill equipped and ill prepared Christian. Many believers trying to minister lack discernment and wisdom

Verses 1-3 also show us some of the negatives we have to deal with in ministry

The problem of Gossip: The Pharisees had received their information because someone was talking. Now what John and Jesus were doing was not a secret, but it had nothing to do with the religious leaders of Israel and they should have kept out of it, but gossip got them into it.

The second negative is the **problem of competition**. We already saw in John three that Jesus and John were not in competition, but others made them out to be to the point that someone was keeping score as to how many disciples each had and how many baptisms.

Competition has no place in the church today, We need cooperation, not competition.

John 4:4-6

And He had to pass through Samaria.

So He came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; and Jacob's well was there.

Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

Samaria lies between Judea and Galilee. Yet this was a road less traveled. The Jews despised the Samaritans and would often travel across the Jordan, then north though to Decapolis, then cutting back into southern Galilee just to avoid going through this area.

And that is the way the religious leaders would have thought he would go, so again we

see some discernment and wisdom on his part in taking this road less traveled. Remember, he talked his disciples into taking this route also so he probably convinced them that safety was more of an issue than the bigotry of the Jews against the Samaritans.

The valley in which the well of Jacob was found was three and half miles long and about a quarter mile wide. On one side was Mt. Gerizim, the mount of blessing. On the other side was Mt. Ebal, the mount of cursing

We are told that Jesus was weary from the hard mornings travel, so about the sixth hour, noon, he stopped and sat by the well.

Here is were we another characteristic of Christ; he paced himself.

John 4:7, 8

There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, Give Me a drink.

For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

The disciples are thinking of food, Jesus is thinking of an opportunity to minister. The disciples are thinking of themselves. In verse 33 there is embarrassment that not one of them thought to bring Him any food.

John 4:33. So the disciples were saying to one another, "No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?"

So while they think of themselves, Jesus is thinking of others.

The "sixth hour" is significant. In the ancient world the custom was for the women of the city to draw the well in the morning and again in the late afternoon. In Nigeria that custom is observed even today.

But this woman came at noon because she was an outcast. She had had numerous husbands, five total, and the man she lived with now was not her husband. As an outcast she came to the well when none of the other women were there.

And is to her that Jesus Christ, the Son of the most high God, the Messiah, the Lord of Lords and King of kings asks: "Give me a drink."

Now any well on a main road, as this was, would have had a cup and whatever else was needed for travelers to draw a drink of water. But Jesus ignored the provided cup and asks her for a drink of water.

He allowed himself to be dependent on others. He could have gotten his own drink of water, but he gave others the opportunity to minister to him.

So often we want to everything ourselves and we might be able to do a lot - but that is not giving others the chance, the opportunity for ministry.

There are always those who can not accept grace. Being grace-oriented is as much about receiving grace as it is giving grace.

The person who says: I don't want to be a burden, I don't want to have to depend upon others, I don't want to be dependant, is not allowing others to have the opportunity to minister to them. Jesus was dependant upon others.

This is also the principle behind teamwork. We allow others to do the job, sometimes better than we would do it, sometimes not, but it is more important that they do it.

The great thing that we are going to see in this chapter is revival. A whole Samaritan city will turn to the Savior and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Martin Luther said that if salvation could be earned by working hard then surly horses and mules would be in heaven.

But salvation is by grace, receiving the free gift of all that Jesus Christ did when He died on the Cross for you.

Profile of the Woman at the Well

The woman is cynical, she has a pessimistic attitude, she has a chip on her shoulder. And perhaps we can well understand this.

1. Verse 18 tells us that this woman had been married five times and was currently with a man to whom she was not married.
2. Often this woman is portrayed as a harlot, but that is not indicated. Rather, this is woman of poor judgment, and on who has been abused, used, and thrown away by men.
3. As a result she is cynical, not trusting others, especially men
4. Her current situation, living with a man to whom she is not married, has made her an outcast. The other women of Sychar censored her, so she goes to the well when they are not there
5. This woman has been hurt, she has been used, she has been rejected, and she has all her defense mechanisms in place - And it is from that that she responses to the request of our Lord Jesus Christ.
6. She came to the well to get water, a necessity of life, but what she will get is some more necessary, eternal life

John 4:9

The Samaritan woman therefore said to Him, How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

Either by His dress or His speech, Jesus was immediately identified as a Jew, one who was Judean or Galilean.

The woman understands the division that has existed for centuries between the Jews and the Samaritans.

Since the division of the kingdom in 930 BC and then the defeat of the Northern Kingdom in 722 BC and its repopulation with Gentiles, the Samaritans have been seen as inferior, half-breeds.

The Judean Rabbis taught that for a Jew to even talk to a Samaritan was the same as eating pig flesh. But the Jews were supposed

to be the light of the world, to evangelize other nations, so this attitude was nothing more than subjective bigotry and racial prejudice.

Racial prejudice has no place in the life of the child of God. Abraham Lincoln may have freed the slaves, but it was Jesus Christ who has set us free to love others, to have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts.

And Jesus was an example of this: Christ was not bigoted, His love was objective, His love was extended to everyone.

Believers follow the example of Christ and break the bonds of prejudice when they extend grace to others.

On her part, the woman could have refused to help a Jew, she had a choice to make. She could have concluded that this Jew did not deserve her help, but that is the way grace works. He did not deserve a drink of water, but she did not deserve the living water of eternal life.

The Conversation Continues

John 4:10,11

Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.

She said to Him, Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water?

Jesus does not use her statement about racial injustice to right a social wrong, He uses the statement to witness to her.

He draws her attention to the issue of the appreciation or response to grace. "If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you - you would have asked Him"

Furthermore, He states that her negative response is based upon a lack knowledge.

We see that proper response to grace will be based upon knowledge

Without knowledge the response to grace is material, temporal, limited, rather than eternal. She thinks in terms of literal water rather than living water

Without knowledge she gets subjective and compares this one she is talking with to Jacob. She knew of Jacob, she did not know of Christ.

The arrogance of ignorance and subjectivity resulted in her statement.

John 4:12

You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?

What is interesting in this question is that Jesus was the one who wrestled with Jacob and proved Himself even greater in the physical contest. Remember that Jacob walked with a limp after that contest as a reminder that the Lord was greater.

But even though Jesus was there, with Jacob, centuries ago, He does not get distracted by her question.

John 4:13,14

Jesus answered and said to her, Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.

Jesus did not answer her question regarding Jacob. That would have taken the conversation away from what she needed.

In evangelism we too often get sidetracked, we discuss things that are spiritual but not dealing with the need the person has. A good dialogue regarding Jacob would have been fine, at another time and another place.

He reduces the issue to what He has to give and whether or not she will receive it.

But she is still thinking of material needs, the need not to draw water, the need not to have to come to the well again.

John 4:15

The woman said to Him, Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty, nor come all the way here to draw.

She is being pragmatic, which is okay, but her pragmatism is limited to material things, to what this living water can do for her right now.

Here is a problem common to man and woman: thinking that is limited to the present needs, the present circumstances, what can something do for me right now.

She, in her cynicism, is avoiding the issue of the eternal life that she needs, Jesus is tenacious, and keeps drawing her back to the issue.

John 4:16

He said to her, Go, call your husband, and come here.

He asks her to call her husband; she responds.

John 4:17,18

The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said to her, You have well said, I have no husband;

for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.

Now let's recognize that He was establishing the credentials His authority - and He did so with compassion.

He did not condemn her. He did not call her a slut or a whore or a loose woman. He had compassion on her and is telling her that He knows what she has been through.

Her response to this is very typical, change the subject.

John 4:19,20

The woman said to Him, Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.

Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

In order to change the subject she is willing to get onto a controversial issue. She recognizes that Jesus has to at least be a prophet but then she brings in a controversial issue.

The Samaritans worshipped in a temple built on Mt. Gerizim which was in violation of the Old Testament Law. The Jews worshipped in Jerusalem at the Temple.

Jesus takes this opportunity to give her a quick six point message on evangelism.

The Requirements of Worship**John 4:21-24**

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

You worship what you do not know, we worship what we know, for salvation of from the Jews.

But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

We worship by faith, (verse 21)

We worship the Father (verse 21)

We worship with others (verse 21)

Hebrews 10:24,25. Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

We worship with understanding (verse 22)

Our worship is done through the filling of the Holy Spirit and through communicated truth (Bible study must be part of worship) (verse 23)

It is commanded of us (verse 24)

She is now beginning to get the point.

John 4:25

The woman said to Him, I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.

She knew the Messiah was promised to come and now she takes that knowledge and applies it.

And Jesus confirms her application.

John 4:26

Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am He.

Now this woman has a choice to make – To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the Samaritans believed that the Christ, the Messiah was coming. But they did not believe that He would be of the line of David. They only accepted part of the Old Testament, the Pentateuch or books of Moses. So they believed that the Messiah would be a Moses-like figure, a great prophet who would declare or explain to them all things.

Since this man, Jesus, had told her so much about herself, she now begins to consider, to think, to apply even the limited doctrine she had to the situation and she concludes that this just might be the Messiah.

She came to this conclusion even while rejecting the major portion of Scripture revealed and available at that time.

Too often in our witnessing we expect the person we are talking with to believe the Bible and do you know that believing the Bible is not a requirement of salvation, for growth, for the believer faith in the written Word of God is essential, but not a salvation.

v 27-28 We can see that while this statement, I AM, may be ambiguous in the English text, this woman got the point immediately.

John 4:27,28

And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He had been speaking with a woman; yet no one said, What do You seek? or, Why do You speak with her?

So the woman left her water pot, and went into the city.

They were surprised to see Jesus talking with this Samaritan woman. They wondered what He would want of her or why He, being a Judean, would even speak to her.

Remember, Jesus had initiated the conversation with the woman because He wanted her to have eternal life. Yet these disciples, twelve men, were not moved to even talk with her.

They did not say a thing - but now this woman has a lot to say. So she heads for the town.

Note: She left her water pot.

There was not a priority that had not been there before. In the ancient world water was very important a woman's day often revolved around the two trips to the well to get water. But now there is something more important, there is a priority to tell others about Jesus Christ.

When a priority in life is established, six things result.

1. Organize your life around that priority
2. Time is invested in that priority
3. Thinking is fixed on that priority
4. Relationships are made in light of that priority
5. Goals are set to seek that priority
6. Your greatest joy comes from that priority

This woman now had a new priority and as believers we should see Christ and His Word as our number 1 priority.

John 4:29

And said to the men, Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?

Here testimony is given to the men of the city. She knew that they were the leaders and their

response to Christ would effect the entire community.

She tells what she knows - not what she does not know. The Samaritan understanding of the Messiah was based upon his being a prophet, so this aspect of the ministry of the Messiah was the hook that land these people.

She testifies of Christ but does so as to peak interest in coming to the well. She asks a question that follows the invitation for them to come and see for themselves – “this is not the Christ, is it?”

This shows us some wisdom on her part, she knew the people would not respond favorably to a dogmatic assertion from a woman, especially one of her reputation.

She used wisdom in leading others to Christ.

John 4:30

They went out of the city, and were coming to Him.

While this is going on, there is further activity at the well.

John 4:31

In the meanwhile the disciples were requesting Him, saying, Rabbi, eat.

As usual, the disciples were thinking only in terms of material things and personal interests. They were thinking of food while the Lord had been talking about eternal life.

John 4:32

But He said to them, I have food to eat that you do not know about.

This statement is similar to Matthew 4:4 which quotes

Deuteronomy 8:3. Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

As important as food is there are some things, spiritual things, that are just more important.

The disciples now get on a guilt trip, thinking only in material terms, they feel shame

because they did not bring Jesus a happy meal.

John 4:33

The disciples therefore were saying to one another, No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?

Did they blow it, yes! But not regarding food. They blew it regarding service. Twelve disciples go to a city full of people and come back with hamburgers. Jesus remains alone at the well, talks to one woman, and now the whole town in pouring out to see Him.

Jesus begins to correct their problem by explaining what is important to Him, what His priority in life is.

John 4:34

Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.

Later He would be in prayer in the Garden and proclaim that the priority was not His will but that the will of His Father be done.

The disciples saw a priority of food, He saw the priority of service.

This is an example of service and submission and is the only way you and I will be able to invest our lives so that they will count.

There is nothing more tragic than a wasted life. Even a life full of human accomplishments if it means nothing in eternity.

How many of us will stand before the judgment seat of Christ where we should receive reward and be found lacking because of a wasted life.

What length will we go to in fulfilling the spiritual destiny God has for us? What will we set as the priority of our life? Will we find spiritual satisfaction as we accomplish God's work?

We have a perfect God with a perfect plan and it is foolish to being into it our imperfect plan. Just as there is great satisfaction to the

hungry man when he eats, there should be that same satisfaction when we accomplish.

The joy we can have as we accomplish God's will is expanded in the next verses.

Now Christ presents an analogy of sowing and reaping.

John 4:35-38

Do you not say, There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.

Already he who reaps is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

For in this case the saying is true, One sows, and another reaps.

I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.

In this analogy the Lord was looking at the barley fields and they were still green, four months until they would be ready for the harvest.

But then He tells his disciples to lift their eyes, and look at the fields white unto harvest.

Now He and the disciples were sitting at the well, a slight rise from the city. And out of the city were pouring a stream of people lead by the woman.

They would have been wearing white robes, common in that hot and arid climate, and they moved like the fields in the wind, and they came towards the well.

And that is the harvest, the people who will put their faith in Christ that day. The Lord is challenging the disciples to tell these people about salvation in Him.

And what does it take to reap the harvest. The sower has sown, the rain has fallen, the earth has given growth, and the harvest is now ready to be taken. Someone else has already done the work that makes the harvest ready.

Paul used this same analogy in:

1 Corinthians 3:6,7. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.

So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.

Both the sower and the reaper rejoice together. Normally, the one sowing is the one who works with no immediate sense of reward. He sows a seed and then has to wait, it may or may not take hold and grow.

But in spiritual sowing and reaping, both rejoice, they each played a part in accomplishing the will of God.

Harvest time was a time of great joy and celebration and the times of spiritual harvest are also times of great joy, for all who are involved.

We may be called upon to plant a seed, or we may be called upon to water, or to reap the harvest. But each plays a part, and each has cause to rejoice.

The Harvest of Souls in Samaria.

John 4:39-42

And from that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, He told me all the things that I have done.

So when the Samaritans came to Him, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.

Many more believed because of His word; and they were saying to the woman, It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world.

The testimony of the woman brought many to a personal confrontation with Christ, who then believed in Him as their Savior, as the Christ, the Messiah.

Their appreciation was expressed as they requested that He would stay with them.

And this was so others could hear about Him and they too could believe.

The last verse shows us the progress of faith. From one woman and what she had to say about the Lord, to others and then to a personal faith - no longer because of her testimony, but because they heard for themselves, each as individuals, that this is the Savior of the World.

One who harvest must point the new believer to a personal dependence on Christ, not dependant upon them, but dependant personally upon Him.

In this passage we have seen ten characteristics of Christ..

1. He was discerning, v 1-3
2. He was wise, v 1-3
3. He was able to pace himself, v 6
4. He allowed himself to be dependent on others, v 7
5. He was not prejudiced, v 9
6. He sought an open door for evangelism, v 10
7. He did not condemn the woman, v 18
8. He was able to exercise self control over his needs, v 31
9. He was committed to the plan of God, v 34
10. He was self-sacrificing to others, v 40. He had planned a straight trip to Galilee but sacrificed his plan in light of their needs.

Now, as Jesus and His disciples continue their journey to Galilee we go from attitude to action. As we do so we see an illustration of acceptance, rejection, and of superficial acceptance of Jesus Christ.

v 43-45 Jesus and His disciples arrive in Galilee:

John 4:43-45

And after the two days He went forth from there into Galilee.

For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.

So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves also went to the feast.

The "feast" referred to would have been the Passover mentioned in John 2:13.

In Jesus' stay in Sychar of Samaria there was great acceptance of Him as the Messiah.

The mention of *A prophet having no honor in His own country* looks at the rejection the Lord faced when He went to Nazareth. This is fully described in Luke 4:16-30.

The superficial acceptance of Christ is examined as Jesus came to Capernaum where the people followed Him but only because they were impressed with the miracles He did.

These reference are prediction of how the world would and continues to respond and react to Christ.

1. Some accept Him, believing in Him as the Messiah, as the Savior of the world. Those who do are saved, they pass from death to life in Christ.
2. Others reject, even when they have accurate information and knowledge of the Son of God, they chose their course of life rather than His way of salvation.
3. And then there are those who are superficial in their faith which is not faith in Christ but in what they, subjectively, think about Him. They want the spectacular without the substance. They may claim to know Him but they do not, they are attracted only by what they see, not what they believe by faith.

Today we have people who are attracted to the things that have to do with Christ, but without faith in Christ. They may like the fellowship of the church, the music, the youth groups, the ambiance of worship, or even the

personality of the pastor - but their belief is superficial and as such, will not be long lived.

The focus must be Christ, not only what He did, but who He is, and that focus must be expressed by faith in Him.

John 4:46,47

He came therefore again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain royal official, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and was imploring *Him* to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death.

Here we have the beginning of the record of the second miracle recorded in John's Gospel. This is one the seventeen healing miracles found in the Gospels.

As we consider the miracles of Christ, we need to examine what these miracles mean. Especially the miracles of healing. You see, Jesus did not heal everyone, His coming to earth did not rid man of infirmities and diseases.

What was the purpose of the miracles of healing? We are given a indication later in the Gospel of John in John, chapter 9.

John 9:1-3. And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.

And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?"

Jesus answered, It was neither, that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him.

The WORKS OF GOD are displayed in these miracles of healing. Not merely in the healing itself but in that we can see, in these miracles, what all of all on the inside.

Now back in John 4:46 we have a nobleman's son who sick in Capernaum while Jesus is about 20 miles away in Cana.

Now for some of you a twenty mile jaunt would be a warm up run, but for most of us it is a long way travel especially by foot.

The nobleman was a courtier, and very likely a Jew who was working for the Roman government. It was the Jews who wanted to see signs and wonders before they believed and Jesus responds to this man, including him in that same group.

As a Jew working for Rome, like the Samaritan woman, he would have been an outcast.

We have at this point in the account.

1. Jesus is far away, just as many today believe that He is far away. Even as Christians we can get wrapped up in the problems of life and our Lord can seem so distant.
2. A child is sick, close to death. But every member of the human race is sick, inside, separated from God and close, so very close to death and eternal separation from God. What this boy was on the outside the human race is in the soul.
3. And then we have a father, who loves his son, and yet he is in a helpless situation. Mankind is in a helpless situation, but never hopeless.

These ingredients, these apparently insurmountable problems, will find there solution in Jesus Christ. This nobleman's journey to Cana, his request of the Master, his desire to see his son well are all acts of urgency and desperation.

This man is in a helpless situation, yet it is so often only when we come to the end of our own ability that we get out of the way and see the power of our Lord.

In his desire to see his son made well he makes a request.

Come down, to Capernaum, and heal my son, if you do not he will die.

In his deprivation and urgency, he went beyond a request for help and ended up telling the Lord how he could help. He presented his plan for divine approval rather than ask for help in a time of need and then follow the plan of God.

He is ahead of God's plan rather than following God in God's plan. How often we do the same thing. We decide we need help and then we call upon God to help according to our plan rather than His.

Hebrews 4:16. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

All of us, at many times in our lives will need help, and with confidence we can go to the throne of grace and receive the help we need, not necessarily the help we want, or the help according to our plan, but a better and greater help that is according to God's plan

The response of Jesus to this man's request might seem rather insensitive. Jesus rebukes him not for his request but for presuming that he must do a certain thing to really help this man and his son.

John 4:48

Jesus therefore said to him, Unless you people [the Jews] see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe.

They had it backwards, if you want to see the power of God, not by mere miracles of healing but by the life that is changed, conformed to Christ, and under divine control, faith must come first.

Anyone who has been a Christian for any time can see the Lord working in his life, this is just a small part of the power of God that surrounds us. But that comes from the life of faith.

To the Christian He made this promise.

Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and

opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

Now you would think that this nobleman would have gotten the point, and he does but not yet.

John 4:49

The royal official said to Him, Sir, come down before my child dies.

In order to break this man of thinking that some sign or miracles must precede faith, He heals the man's son.

John 4:50

Jesus said to him, Go your way; your son lives. The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he started off.

This was a test - the man could not pull out his cellular phone and make a call and check on this, he could not in any way verify the statement of Jesus Christ. All he could do was either believe or not believe. No signs, no wonders, only the Word of Christ

And that is what He believes. And as he started off, every step he took was a step of faith founded on the Word of the Lord.

He came to Cana in desperation, and he left traveling by faith and armed with hope.

Now, the vindication of faith.

John 4:51-54

And as he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living.

So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. They said therefore to him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, Your son lives; and he himself believed, and his whole household.

This is again a second sign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

The fact of the recovery of his son was a vindication of his faith. He had believed the word of Christ and now see that his faith was correctly placed.

He believed and his whole household.

1. He was desperate and helpless, as we all are. And he turned to Jesus Christ although Jesus Christ seemed to be very far away
2. He was motivated by love, his love for his son. And we are motivated by love, our love for God's Son
3. He accepted rebuke, when Jesus talked about the foolishness of those who seek signs and wonders, he did not walk away in anger of scorn
4. He went from helplessness to faith and returned to his son armed with faith in the word of God

Now, let's look at four things about Christ.

1. Jesus ministered to those who were seeking the wrong thing, He did not allow their superficial acceptance of Him to distract Him and His mission
2. Jesus would not allow the man to continue with false faith, faith in signs rather than the Word
3. Jesus was compassionate, and was moved to heal the man's son as he saw the love the man had for his son
4. Jesus gave the man what he needed, not what the man wanted. He gave Him the Word of God

Chapter 5

It is very possible, considering the flow of chapters 4 through 9 that chapters 5 and 6 have been transposed. The events of chapter six appear to precede the events of chapter five. But when we consider that John is not giving us a chronological history of the incarnation, but a doctrinal history of Christ's

earthly ministry, the order of events become less important.

The only thing we can see if we transpose these chapters is that the feast referred to in John 5:1 would be the feast of Passover and would precede the feast of Tabernacles mentioned in John 7. But of course more important than chronology is truth.

John 5:1-4

After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes.

In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, waiting for the moving of the waters.

For an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in, was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.

This pool, located north of the Temple area near the sheep gate. This gate was so named because it was the gate by which the sacrificial animals were taken into the Temple. It is significant that Jesus would be at that gate because He was the innocent Lamb of God who would be a once and for all sacrifice for sins.

The POOL OF BETHESDA would be translated THE POOL OF THE HOUSE OF MERCY, and it is Jesus Christ who is the true house of mercy. And here he will extend mercy to a man who is there at the pool hoping to be healed.

Around the pool were five porches a large number of people gathered there. They are described according to their inabilities, blind, lame, and withered.

1. The Blind: Describe the world without Christ, unable to see, blinded to the things of the Spirit of God.

2. The Lame: Powerless to walk, unable to follow God in His plan, unable to walk in the Spirit, having no fellowship with God.
3. Withered: Atrophied muscles, powerless, cannot move or work and thus having no production.

The blind, the lame, and the withered describe man without the mercy of God, man without Christ. What these people were are on the outside we all are on the inside in the flesh, apart from Christ.

The moving of the waters was superstition that later found its way into the divine text. No early manuscript includes this statement or the false idea of some angel stirring up the water of the pool.

But it was a superstition that was prevalent at that time and it was a superstition that would have superseded the power and work of God.

Many people today are locked into superstition, some are rather funny and have to do with black cats, ladders, and knocking on wood.

But some take a more serious note and take even the believer away from true dependence upon the Lord.

In Jerusalem, these people were locked into a superstition that distracted them from Jesus Christ. Here the Lord himself is in their midst, and they are still going for the superstition of the pool rather than dependence upon the Lord.

SUPERSTITION DOES THREE THINGS.

1. Eliminates faith in Christ. Puts dependence upon chance, luck, mysticism, rather than upon Christ
2. Eliminates personal responsibility, allows a person to think that he can resolve problems with a stroke of luck rather than by taking responsibility
3. Eliminates rational thinking, allows a person to think that some lucky charm, or

set circumstances can resolve difficult situation

John 5:5-7

And a certain man was there, who had been thirty-eight years in his sickness.

When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He said to him, Do you wish to get well?

The sick man answered Him, Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me.

Perhaps Jesus had inquired about this man, He knew the man had been at the pool a long time, and in a debilitated condition for a long time.

Jesus asked what might seem to be an obvious question. "Do you wish to get well?"

But the question was designed to focus attention upon the need that the man had and to reveal the means by which this man thought his recovery could occur.

Notice, instead of a simple YES or NO, the man came up with an excuse. And in his excuse he blamed others who either got the waters before him or were unwilling to carry him down to the pool.

What this man is on the outside is what mankind is on the inside. And what this man said about his physical condition is what mankind is still saying about their spiritual condition.

God asks the human race: "Do you want to be saved from your spiritually fallen condition, do want eternal life?" Man comes up with excuses and blames others.

Jesus breaks the bondage of superstition.

John 5:8,9

Jesus said to him, Arise, take up your pallet, and walk. And immediately the man became well, and took up his pallet and began to walk.

Now it was the Sabbath on that day.
Jesus gave the man three commands.

Arise - take up your pallet – walk.

In verse nine we see that upon saying this the man was healed or made whole.

IMMEDIATELY is an adverb of positive degree indicating that the healing took place as Jesus spoke, not as the man responded. There was no faith involved in healing, the man did nothing, he was healed as he lay there on his pallet.

This miracle illustrates mercy, God holding back what man deserves. It illustrates what Jesus will do for man even if man does not obey. When Jesus went to the Cross He died for all sins, He now proclaims to the world that they are made whole, sins are forgiven, we can arise and walk.

But many stay of the pallet, looking more towards superstition and luck, they faith in Christ and obeying Him.

But now, having been healed or made whole, the man obeyed the command of Christ. He got up, took his bed or pallet, and walked.

IN THE SAME WAY once we have been made spiritually whole by the work of Christ, we can obey, we get up, and walk, no longer being in the bondage of spiritual death and no longer in the bondage of that which is false, like superstition, luck, and chance.

But there is a small problem: Now it was the Sabbath on that day.

While Jesus had freed this man from the bondage of superstition and from the bondage of his physical disability, there was another bondage much greater in Jerusalem, the bondage of legalism.

John 5:10

Therefore the Jews were saying to him who was cured, It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet.

The religious leaders of Jerusalem were not satisfied with the Old Testament Law that God gave them so they added a lot of other laws. One of these prohibited carrying burdens on the Sabbath.

At this point, they do not know why this man is breaking their petty laws, but they do not seek an explanation, but instead make an accusation.

It is the Sabbath and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet.

And they were there to enforce this law regardless of the reason this man was doing what he was doing.

That is the way legalism works. Legalism ignores people and puts the letter of the law above the spirit of the law.

Legalism ignores people, ignores mercy, ignores grace.

The now healed man appeals to the fact that he was commanded to do what he was doing.

John 5:11

But he answered them, He who made me well was the one who said to me, Take up your pallet and walk.

These leaders of Israel were not interested in the fact that the man once disabled was now well. They only wanted to know who gave him the command to carry his pallet on the Sabbath

Now the religious Jews carry out a small inquisition.

John 5:12,13

They asked him, Who is the man who said to you, Take up your pallet, and walk?

But he who was healed did not know who it was; for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in that place.

The man did not know who Jesus was, and I do not think that he was that concerned about who he was.

Now this verse alone would not mean much regarding the conclusion I draw from this situation. But coupled with the next verses when he finds out who Jesus is and goes running off to tell the religious leaders gives me an indication that this man is out for himself.

That perhaps he did not care who this man was only what he could do for him. After all, he was now healed and that is what is important, at least to him. Until the religious leaders get on his case, then the identity of the one who healed him matters.

John 5:14,15

Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse may befall you.

The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

He takes the knowledge he now has of who Jesus is and goes running back to the religious leaders.

He did not need to do that, but he did it anyway and as a result, gets himself off the hook but puts Jesus on it.

We can look at this man two ways.

1. We can see him as an unbeliever, who takes the grace of God that is common to all mankind and ignores the person of Christ.

Life itself is given by God, the world in which we live, the freedom we have, is all grace.

Yet few, only a few, ever bother to find out who gives them this grace.

Romans 1:20-22. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made,

so that they are without excuse.

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and

their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools.

2. But we could also see this man as an illustration of so many believers. Who receive the gift of grace, who are made whole by the power of Jesus Christ, who many even for a time obey the Lord of glory, but never really try to get know Him.

They may have put their faith in Christ but they never get on with the life of faith that would bring them into occupation and friendship with Jesus Christ.

And just like this man, instead of being an asset to furthering of Christ's work on earth, end up hindering the plan of God.

In the last half of John chapter five and through chapter six we have the most extensive discourse the Lord Jesus Christ gives on Himself. If we ever question who Jesus Christ is, we need only turn to these chapters to find out about His humanity, His deity, and His ministry.

Jesus is responding to an accusation made by the religious leaders of Jerusalem. They found out that He healed the infirmed man on the Sabbath telling him to rise, take up his bed, and walk. Which was a violation of their laws regarding the Sabbath.

So what we have is the attack of legalism and the defense of grace.

John 5:16-18

And for this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.

But He answered them, My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.

For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

We have an attack, an answer, and then an increase in the attack, followed by an extended discourse.

The first attack was because of what Jesus was doing on the Sabbath.

His answer was that God the Father works on the Sabbath, holding the universe together, putting forth His perfect plan, and the Son works also.

Jesus could have answered in many ways, but instead He uses this as an opportunity to put forth truth, the truth that He and the Father are one.

The reaction of the Jewish leaders shows us that there is not question that Jesus is claiming equality with the God. He called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

The Jews tried to use this claim of equality as a point of accusation. Paul used it in Philippians as a principle of confidence in Christ.

Philippians 2:7. Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.

Jesus Christ did not have to grasp, or attain to being God, He was God and these Jews understood that that was exactly what He was saying.

In the discourse that follows, Jesus Christ explains what we call His hypostatic union, the union of deity and humanity in one unique person.

John 5:19-30, The testimony of His humanity

John 5:31-47, The testimony of His Deity

John 5:19

Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.

This verse serves as a topic sentence to show the unique combination of humanity and deity in one person.

1. The Son can do nothing of Himself: The Lord Jesus in His humanity was obedient to the Father and fulfilled the Father's plan.
2. But what the Son does, His work, is done in like manner to demonstrate equality with God

Now He gives us the reason why the eternal God took on a human nature.

John 5:20

For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and greater works than these will He show Him, that you may marvel.

The Father loves the Son because of the obedience of the Son and the Son loves the Father because of His faithfulness.

This is a love that exists between the deity of the Father and the humanity of the Son.

The Father shows the Son what is to be done according to the Father's plan for salvation - and as part of that plan works that are greater than anything ever seen will be accomplished.

And when those works show forth, man will marvel.

The *greater works the Son will do* looks ahead to the resurrection and judgment. The authority to resurrect and to judge the world is given by the Father to the Son.

John 5:21

For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.

To make it clear that we are talking about the humanity of Christ look down to verse 26 and 27.

John 5:26,27. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him

authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.

Deity has eternal life which is not given, the humanity of Christ has everlasting life that was given at the virgin birth. Deity has sovereign authority to judge but here the Son, in His humanity, is given authority to judge.

You see, it is the humanity of Christ that has the authority to bring the dead to life, to command and to resurrect.

Because Jesus is the resurrected Savior, He alone has been given the authority to judge all men.

John 5:22

For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son.

SOME PRINCIPLES.

1. Jesus Christ, in His humanity, is the only one who has ever been resurrected. Others have been brought back from the dead but they went on to die again, that is resuscitation. But the resurrection saw Jesus raised from the dead to live for ever.

Romans 6:9. Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

1 Corinthians 15:20. But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.

2. When Jesus was raised from the dead, his humanity was invited to sit at the right hand of God.

Hebrews 12:2. fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Ephesians 1:20. Which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.

3. We anticipate our resurrection because Jesus Christ was resurrected first, and we are in Him.

1 Corinthians 6:14. Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power.

Romans 8:11. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

Romans 6:5. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.

4. The resurrection of believers will occur at the rapture of the Church, which is initiated by Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.

5. The judgment of believers will occur at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Romans 14:10. For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.

2 Corinthians 5:10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or useless.

The events of the Judgment Seat of Christ are given to us in 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 The bonfire, and reward for what remains.

Sin is not in the picture at the Judgment Seat of Christ. So as stated in John 5:24 this is not a judgment but an opportunity for eternal reward.

Romans 8:1. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

But for the unbeliever.

2 Peter 3:7. But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire,

kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

Jude 15. To execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.

So Christ as judge judges the production of the believer to determine if it was accomplished in the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word. If so it will be rewarded.

6. The resurrection of all unbeliever of all ages will occur after the end of the mill. reign.

Revelation 20:11-15. And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

There again, sins are not the issue, all sins were judged at the Cross so the judgment of the Lamb on His throne is a judgment on their works, which do not measure up to the Word of Christ.

7. As we share in His resurrection we will also share in His judgment.

Revelation 20:4. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them.

1 Corinthians 6:3. Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, matters of this life?

Revelation 20:6. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

In light of what we have seen regarding resurrection and judgment, we can now see that man has a choice, faith in Christ or rejection of Christ.

John 5:23,24

In order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

Notice: Hearing the Word precedes faith in the One who sent the Lord Jesus Christ.

Honor is given in exactly the same way, which again looks at the equality of the Son with the Father

Jesus drives this point home with these religious leaders, where are they going stand when Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life, calls forth all mankind?

John 5:25

Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live.

The ones who hear, live. This is the entire human race at this point, believers and unbeliever. This is accomplished by the power given to the glorified humanity of Jesus Christ.

John 5:26

For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;

As noted earlier, this is the humanity of Christ to whom the Father has given eternal life that we then, by faith in Christ, can also share.

John 5:27

and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.

The authority to judge is delegated to the humanity of Christ. Deity has sovereign authority to judge.

John 5:28,29

Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good [deeds] to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil [deeds] to a resurrection of judgment.

Those who come forth, the human race. will either be believers or unbelievers. If believers they will have accomplished the GOOD.

GOOD is **agathos** an absolute good according to God's plan.

EVIL is **phaulos** which would better be translated *worthless*. It is used six times in the New Testament, always with reference to the production of the unbeliever or the carnal believer. It can be sin or Hg, but is worthless in the estimation of God in His plan.

And then the Lord returns to His earlier answer to their accusation and attack. He is, in His humanity, obedient, to the Father.

John 5:30

I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

Jesus Christ in His humanity had been taught doctrine by the Father, He heard, and He thus can judge and His judgment is just because it is based upon doctrine and from doctrine resident in His soul He is obedient to the will of the Father.

Lesson to Learn

1. Legalism will attack grace and the defense of grace is truth. We can not fend off legalism without doctrine
2. The Lord Jesus Christ, who was fully God, set aside the use of His divine attributes and submitted to the Father. If He, the unique person in the universe, was obedient to the Father, how much more should we be challenged to be obedient to the Father.
3. As the Father has given the Son eternal life and the authority to judge, we have been given that same life and that same authority by Jesus Christ through faith in Him.
4. Mankind will live again, the grave is not the end, but after that for the unbeliever judgment but for the believer reward. As we fulfill the destiny God has for us, use the two spheres of power available to us (Spirit and the Word) we will reap eternal reward, that is God's plan for you.
5. The validation of the just judgment of Jesus is the Doctrine he heard from the Father. Our validation for all that we do is learning, thinking, and applying Bible Doctrine.
6. The Lord Jesus never calls us to do what He has not also done.

C.S. Lewis in his book *Christian Reflections*, compares himself to a sheep who is telling shepherds what only a sheep can tell. He states four bleating of the sheep regarding false views of Christ and His Word.

First Bleat: The critics ask me to believe they can read between the lines of Scripture, but it is obvious they cannot read the lines themselves.

Second Bleat: The critics ask me to believe that Christ's teachings were immediately misunderstood and misinterpreted by his followers but are now understood by those who read what his followers wrote.

Third Bleat: The critics ask me to believe that anything miraculous does not occur

Fourth Bleat: These critics tell me that the text must be reconstructed to be accurate and that they are the ones who must reconstruct it.

As a sheep, C.S. Lewis bleated because he believed the Word of God and believed that God revealed Christ to man. He did not believe the critics, he believed God

That is what we must do! We must go to the Word of God, that Word that both comes from God and belongs to God, to find out about Christ.

The Humanity of Christ Explained by Christ.

John 5:31

If I alone bear witness of Myself, My testimony is not true.

Jesus stated that he was under submission in his humanity to the Father.

1. He could do nothing of himself
2. He hears, he judges just judgments because he seeks the will of the Father. And He know the will of the Father because He knows B.D.
3. The Father has sent Him according to the Father's perfect plan
4. If he were to testify of Himself alone the witness could considered untrue.

Six Witness to the Authenticity of Christ, the Messiah.

1st Witness - The Holy Spirit

John 5:32

There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the testimony which He bears of Me is true.

The word ANOTHER is **allos** which is a demonstrative pronoun meaning "another of the same kind". This is a reference to the Holy Spirit.

The verb EIMI is present tense and indicates that the Holy Spirit keeps on bearing witness of the Son. That witness is a true statement as given in a court of law.

BUT ACCORDING TO JEWISH LAW one witness to the truth is not sufficient, so the Lord brings in not just another witness, but five additional witnesses.

2nd Witness - John the Baptist.

John 5:33-35

You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth.

But the witness which I receive is not from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.

He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.

For a while they believed John. They even sent a delegation to ask him questions and the delegation returned satisfied with the answers they received. But then they turned against Him as he proclaimed Jesus as the Lamb of God, the Messiah sent from God.

For a time John the Baptist was the big name in the faith, but as the message was burning in him and shinning forth to others, popular opinion turned against him. They ignored, they rejected.

Jesus states also when referring to John that the true witness of Christ as the Messiah is not man.

We know man can say anything, witness to any supposed fact or occurrence. Mankind has a problem at best with being able to identify the truth and at worse disregards the truth and changes it to a lie.

So Jesus uses the testimony of John not as conclusive evidence but as a witness they once believed and trusted. But they did not continue in that trust, they rejected John as he presented more and more truth and as he got specific with that truth and proclaimed Christ as the Messiah.

With John the Baptist they believed his message to a point and then became selective about what they would and would not hear. What they would and would not believe.

3rd Witness - Christ's Own Works

John 5:36

But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.

All they needed to do was compare the works and words of John with the works and words of Jesus and they would see that they were greater.

But they had become subjective and selective, so much so that when the truth hit them head on in the person, works, words of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, the Messiah, they rejected Him outright.

They had seen Jesus, they had heard Him. they were witnesses to His miracles. We might even say "how could they reject Him?" But in subjectivity and selectivity, man will do many strange things, things out without reason or even common sense.

John talked about Christ, the Lamb of God, the Messiah. But it was just a message. Jesus fulfilled the message. Christ was to FINISH the works of the Father which he would do on the cross and even proclaim: "It is finished" (John 19:30)

Subjectivity breeds selectivity and when a person, even a believer, becomes selective that selectivity will remove them from the truth.

Jesus advances this principle by telling them they would not even believe the Father.

4th Witness - God the Father.

4.Verses 37-38 The Testimony of God the Father.

John 5:37,38

And the Father who sent Me, He has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.

And you do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.

In God's plan, which is perfect because God is perfect, the Son is the revealed member of the Godhead.

This is the way they can tap into truth, through the Son. But they selected what they wanted to hear and to learn and to believe so they were divorced from the truth as God revealed it in Jesus. To reject the Son is to reject the Father.

APPLICATION: We have many today who want to believe in a supreme being, but when that supreme being is revealed by the Lord Jesus Christ, they reject Jesus Christ. So their selectivity brings on more subjectivity.

Why is selectivity such a threat to our very existence as believers? Because it doesn't end there - it goes on to more subjectivity and then that fuels more selectivity which fuels more subjectivity and on and on. It is a vicious circle of rejection and focusing upon self as the judge and jury in what is to be received and believed.

They would not believe this testimony because they believed not the Son who was sent by the Father.

They got subjective about John's message, they selected what they wanted to buy and wanted to reject, then along came Jesus, they rejected Him, which put them out of touch with God's eternal truth. But it gets even worse.

5th Witness – the Word of God.

John 5:39

You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me.

Can we imagine what it would be like to not have the Word of God as our standard for faith and practice in life?

I am constantly amazed at those who disregard the Bible as being God's Word. When people do that they immediately open themselves up to massive subjectivity and selectivity regarding God and His plan and purpose.

The Bible was not intended to be a supermarket where man picks and chooses what he likes and doesn't like (I am told supermarkets have lots of different brands of even the same things).

Now when you go to the supermarket you can be as subjective as you want to be. Pick your favorite foods and even your favorite bands.

But the word of God, the Bible, is to be received in its entirety.

In Paul's farewell address to the Ephesian Church he stated:

Acts 20:27. For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.

And in **2 Timothy 3:16** Paul declares:

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

But these religious leaders studied they Scripture but did so with selectivity and ended up using the Old Testament as an excuse for not believing in Christ - they took false pride in knowing the Scriptures. But they did not know them for the Scriptures point to Christ.

John 5:40-43

And you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life.

I do not receive glory from men;

but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.

I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another shall come in his own name, you will receive him.

This statement is not only descriptive of these detractors but is prophetic even unto today.

PROBLEM: Man is unwilling to come to Christ

REASON: They have no love for God and His plan. No desire to seek what God says, they are content to believe what they want to believe about God. They use the Scriptures but only selectively.

RESULT: They will believe and receive anyone else

The challenge, forget what men have to say and what they have to set honor upon, listen to and obey God

John 5:44

How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another, and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?

What is going to be the source of glory, man praising man? Or the glory of God?

6th Witness – Moses

John 5:45-47

Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope.

For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me.

But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?

They claimed that Moses was their Spiritual leader but he tells them that even Moses (his writings) accuse them before the Father because Moses wrote about Christ.

They set their hope in Moses but did not listen to the message of Moses.

Deuteronomy 18:15,18,19. The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.

I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.

Those are the Words of God spoken to Moses, not to John the Baptist, not even to Jesus, but to Moses whom they profess to believe and to accept.

But if they do not truly believe Moses, and thus they won't believe the word of the one Moses wrote about, Jesus Christ.

But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

They were selective even regarding the one they claimed to believe, and now, faced with one they doubt, there is not faith whatsoever. Only rejection of Jesus Christ.

Principles of Application

1. Subjectivity is very difficult to distinguish. We live much of our lives out of a legitimate subjectivity. Our favorite people, places, teams, food, cars, all of defined by subjectivity. Subjectivity in many things is not wrong. It is normal and based on taste, environment, upbringing, etc.

2. Subjectivity in spiritual things that are mandated in the Word of God is wrong. God is omniscient, He at all times knows what is right and is best for us. We must maintain objectivity in spiritual things.

3. Selectivity is a sign of subjectivity. Selectivity can easily be recognized.

When we start to reject truth, set aside portions of the Bible, disregard certain doctrines. When we make decisions that pull us away from the mandated mission of the Local Church.

When we start with the I like this pastor and not that one, syndrome. Or we stay away from a particular class because of the subject matter, or we refuse to be involved in the mandated ministries of the church. Or we find ourselves

complaining about how something is done even when we have chosen not to do it ourselves.

4. When selectivity is identified we must set it aside, we must do the work of God which cannot include subjectivity and selectivity.

And when we refuse, we are no better off than these religious leaders who would eventually find a way to put Jesus Christ to death.

Chapter 6

John 6:1

After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias).

We have mentioned before that these events may have occurred after chapter four with chapters five and six being reversed. If that is the case, Jesus started this chapter in Capernaum rather than Jerusalem.

In Mark 6 we learn that this followed the sending of the disciples out to minister and evangelize in the cities of Galilee. They were together going to have a time of rest and review.

So Jesus and His disciples went across the sea of Galilee. In Mark chapter six we read that this was for a time of rest - but the people would not allow Him to rest.

John 6:2

And a great multitude was following Him, because they were seeing the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.

The beginning of the earthly ministry of Christ is marked by people seeking Jesus for the wrong reasons. They want to see the spectacular, the signs and wonders, rather than hear the truth.

NOTE: Jesus in His humanity, along with His disciples, needed to get away for rest. But the people pursued Him even to the other side of the sea of Galilee.

Mark 6:32-34 tells us that while the people sought out Jesus for His miracles, intruding upon this time of much needed rest.

But Jesus' response to them was a response of compassion leading to the teaching of Bible Doctrine.

Mark 6:34. And when He went ashore, He saw a great multitude, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.

A FEW PRINCIPLES from John 6 and Mark 6.

1. The people came with their own expectations.
2. Jesus had compassion on them.
3. The thing that initiated His compassion was that they were sheep without a shepherd. There was no one to lead them, protect them, care for them.

This is the person outside the provision that God has made. This situation invoked compassion in Jesus yet today we have so many believers who chose not to be a part of God provision in this dispensation, the local church and its teaching ministry.

4. From compassion Jesus taught them. They came with their own expectation, but got something else. They were taught and that was what they needed.

In the same way today we have many people who come to Bible class with their own expectation, and what they get, and what they need is something else. We are all sheep, we need a Sheppard, we need to be taught the Word of God.

5. The greatest encouragement for someone gifted as a communicator is to encounter people who want to be taught Bible Doctrine. This will invoke compassion every time.

The sheer numbers of the people may cause some to doubt these events (v 10 tells us there were 5,000). But John tells us that the

Passover was near and many of these would have been traveling to Jerusalem from Galilee and places farther north.

John 6:3,4

Then Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples

Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.

So with that we have the people involved in this account.

- The multitudes who for the most part are there for the wrong reason
- the disciples, and
- Jesus.

We move on to the problem.

John 6:5-9

Jesus therefore lifting up His eyes, and seeing that a great multitude was coming to Him, said to Philip, Where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?

And this He was saying to test him; for He Himself knew what He was intending to do. Philip answered Him, Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little. One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?

The problem is quite simple, no food for the five thousand.

But what we see in this dialogue is that Jesus gives His disciples an opportunity to come up with a solution.

I imagine every disciple got into the act of making a suggestion.

Mark 6:36 tells us that some of the disciples wanted Jesus to stop teaching the people, send them away, so the people could travel to the villages and get food.

This was a suggestion of distraction. The disciples saw Jesus set the Word and Service

above His need for food. Man shall not live by bread alone but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

The need for food is a human limitation and we must never let normal human limitation, daily needs, come before the teaching of the Word.

Jesus asked Philip for a suggestion and Philip quickly checked with the treasurer, Judas. Found out they have two hundred denarii in the account (about \$40) and did some quick calculating and realized this was not enough even to buy bread much less 5,000 full meals.

Philip looked at the problem analytically, count the money, make the deductions, and come up with no solution. Philip, like many of us, looked at things very practically, but without faith. However, he was willing to empty the treasury in order to provide for others.

Then Andrew, brought to the Lord a young boy who was willing to give two fish and five loaves of bread.

What is Jesus going to do with this gift? He is going to multiply it to be a blessing, a benefit for many.

Bear in mind that very few of the 5000 would have ever known that their evening meal started with the gift, the small seemingly insignificant gift, from a young boy.

John 6:10

Jesus said, Have the people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

In Mark 6 we are told the people sat down in groups of 50 to 100 and sat in banquet style. Just like they were sitting down for a fine festive feast. And they did so by faith.

Put yourself for a moment in the place of one of the 5000. You have sought out Jesus Christ, traveled a distance to be with him. You have spent the day being taught by Him. Bible class

was so good that everyone forgot about the time.

The hour is late, there is no food, except for a few loaves and a couple fish. And now Jesus is telling you to sit down in banquet style on the ground?

This scene has always reminded me of the story of George Muller: as he cared for the orphans of England, he came to a point where he had no food for the children. He commanded his helpers to set the table, every plate and fork, call the children into be seated and then he had them bow in pray to thank God for what they were about to eat - without a morsel of food in the whole place. They prayed, the waited, a knock on the door. It seemed a milk wagon had broken an axel in front of the orphanage, had to give away the milk, butter, cheese, or it would spoil. Then a knock, a donation of bread, then other gifts came. By that night the children went to sleep on full stomachs.

They sat down and they prayed - nearly 2000 years earlier Jesus also prayed over an insignificant amount of food and the one who would make a dairy wagon break down in front of George Muller's orphanage did not need a dairy wagon, He though the power given Him by the Father, will provide a feast out of what would have been famine.

John 6:11-13

Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted.

And when they were filled, He said to His disciples, Gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost.

And so they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten.

The people were able to eat as much as they wanted. Mark tells in Mark 6:42 that they were all satisfied.

Just as there was enough food to fill everyone, the spiritual food God provides, Bible Doctrine, is sufficient to fill everyone, to satisfy completely.

Some critics tell us that they were all just play acting, but that idea falls apart because there is more left over than there was to begin with, this in a great miracle.

Grace does not diminish what originally existed, it adds to it, increases it. We can never use up or finish off the grace of God.

John 6:14

When therefore the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, This is of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world.

They saw the sign, and they concluded that this was the prophet spoken of by Moses who was promised to come into the World.

And this is correct, He the one spoken of by Moses, but He is much more. And their failure to recognize Christ as the Messiah, the Son of God, will eventuate in further problem.

SUMMARY AND LESSONS.

1. While it was rude to interrupt the Lord and His disciples during a time of much needed rest, it did show that the people had a desire for sound doctrine.
2. Because they were as sheep without a shepherd, Jesus would fill their need. He would teach them, providing for them spiritual food.
3. While taking in spiritual food their arose a potential distraction, the need for physical food.
4. From His humanity He had compassion of the people. And from the Father He had been given the power to provide for the people.

He took the problems, no shepherd to give them spiritual food, no one to give them physical food, and used them to bring the disciples and the people into

greater dependence on Him. Every problem in life is designed to bring you into dependence upon Jesus Christ.

5. Jesus took what seemed insignificant and made it of great significance. In the same way he takes what is overlooked by the world and uses it to advance his plan.
1 Corinthians 1:27,28. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong.
6. Our Lord is more than our Lord over the spiritual things of life. He is the Lord of everything in our life. He provides for us spiritually and he provides for us materially and physically.
7. Remember that the baskets came back just as full: The Lord's provision, his grace, never is diminished.

And by way of application, the best way to keep what you have is to give it away. When you extend grace to others, you always end up, if not with the same amount, even more.

Never can take too much grace, never can extend too much grace.

8. When you take what the Lord gives, you do so by faith. Remember they sat down in ranks and in order and waited upon him. When you take what the Lord offers you will be completely satisfied.
Matthew 5:6. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
9. Any miracle we read of in the Gospels reveals the power of Christ in our lives. As he provided bread and food for the five thousand. he provides spiritual bread for us. This miracle reminds us, as we will see in later lessons, that Jesus is the bread of life.

John 6:35. Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not

hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

John 6:51. I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.

Psalm 100:3. Know that the Lord Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

They were people who were not being taught and the analogy Jesus uses is that they were sheep. But we are all sheep aren't we.

1 Peter 2:25 (Quoting Isaiah 53:6). For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

Apart from Jesus Christ we are all sheep going astray.

The solution to the this problem and the action that resulted from the Lord's compassion was to teach them.

The analogy of sheep is used throughout the four gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all record the Lord's words in referring to those who seek Him as sheep.

Let's look at characteristics of sheep that also describe us as believers: There are seven areas of sheep helplessness.

1. Sheep cannot guide themselves: A cat or a dog can be blindfolded and still find his way home. But Sheep have no sense of direction and are totally dependent upon the shepherd. Sheep can get lost in their own pasture or meadow. By analogy, the communicator of doctrine guides through the teaching of the Word of God on a verse-by-verse, line upon line principle.
2. Sheep cannot clean themselves: A dog or a cat can lick himself or roll in the grass. But sheep remain filthy unless cleaned up by the shepherd. By analogy, the pastor must teach believers the confession-rebound technique, which is how they recover

fellowship with God and recover the filling of the Spirit.

3. Sheep are defenseless animals: Most animals have some form of defense, such as teeth, claws, speed, or camouflage. But the only protection the sheep has is the shepherd. By analogy, the pastor protects the sheep through the teaching of the mystery doctrine of the Church Age. The communicator presents to you your very own portfolio of invisible assets; he explains the plan of God and how it is executed. He teaches the problem solving doctrines and the significance of adversity and prosperity, both in the realm of discipline and blessing. Through the communication of the mystery doctrine of the Church Age, the plan of God is executed. In any congregation, some believers become invisible heroes and not only glorify God, but are the basis ministries that go out from the L.C. and effect the nation.
4. Sheep are helpless when injured: A dog or cat can lick his wounds, and the saliva is therapeutic and expressive of his love for another who is wounded. But the sheep is dependent upon the shepherd to care for his wounds. By analogy, when we as believers are injured and suffering for one reason or another, we are dependent upon the pastor to communicate pertinent information. The pastor communicates the grace policy and grace mechanics to the sheep so that they can recover through the use of the problem solving doctrines of the protocol plan: Confession, faith-rest drill, personal love for God the Father, impersonal love for all mankind, and any other principles and promises that are necessary.
5. Sheep cannot find food or water for themselves: Most animals can smell or detect water and find their own food. But Sheep must depend upon the shepherd for food and water. By analogy, the pastor communicates doctrine which is not only

food for spiritual momentum, but the water of logistical grace for life support while the believer lives on earth.

6. Sheep are easily frightened or panicked: In the time in which the Bible was written, the shepherd would calm the sheep by the use of his voice or with music (David playing the harp). By analogy, faithful Bible teaching by the pastor prepares the sheep for any and every emergency or disaster in life. Fear, worry, and shame are removed as one learns, thinks, and applies the principles of Bible doctrine.

The more ways you surrender to fear, the more things you fear.

To the extent that you surrender to fear, you increase the power of fear in your life.

The more things that acquire the power of fear in your life, the greater your capacity for fear, worry, and shame (fearing the past), so that eventually you become a loser without learning, thinking, and applying the pertinent Bible doctrine.

As a loser, fear destroys your capacity for life, love, and happiness. Add arrogance to this, and you have the profile of a loser.

Arrogance produces irrationality, self-deception, loss of personality identity, divorcement from reality, and mental illness.

God has designed His plan for winners. But the plan depends upon accurate communication of doctrine in the Local Church from gifted communicators of Bible Doctrine.

The loser does not lose his salvation, but he has the wrong priorities in life, and spends his time in punitive suffering, including self-induced misery and the three categories of divine discipline.

Arrogance, fear, panic, worry, shame, anxiety, or irrational emotionalism are contradictions to the perfect plan of God,

and are characteristic of the sheep who reject their shepherd.

7. Sheep produce wool as a result of the care of the shepherd: By analogy, as a result of faithful and consistent Bible teaching on the part of the pastor, the believers produce the equivalent of wool, which is glorification of God through the execution of the plan of God and fulfilling their spiritual destinies. This comes about as you learn, think, and apply Bible Doctrine and execute the ministries we all have in common and the specific ministries of your spiritual gifts.

How did Jesus resolve the helplessness of these sheep along the shores of the sea of Galilee? By teaching them and by feeding them. He taught them all day and then, as the hour grew late, he took a few loaves of bread and a few fish, and feed the five thousand.

John 6:14. When therefore the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, This is of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world.

But there is a problem with their conclusion. It is true, but it is not enough.

A FEW OBSERVATIONS.

1. Jesus had been teaching these people all day. The intensity of His teaching is the reason they went into the dinner hour and found themselves without food. So He had taught a lot of doctrine.
2. In Jesus ministry He presented Himself as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. That He was the promised Messiah.

There is no record of His teaching merely that He was the fulfillment of the prophecy that refers to a great prophet like unto Moses.

He taught them about His mission, to take away the sins of the World.

3. There conclusion, that He is the prophet Moses spoke of, comes following the

miracle of the loaves and fishes. After He feed them.

4. They had no response after He taught them and their conclusion that He was the promised prophet is only partially correct.
5. And this partial opinion, this part of the truth, leads them to an a further faulty conclusion.

John 6:15

Jesus therefore perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.

They had listened, but they did not learn, they did not think, and they misapplied what Jesus had taught them. They wanted to form an army and march on the Romans in Jerusalem. They wanted Jesus as their King but only according to their expectations.

Jesus - withdrew again to the mountains by Himself alone.

The people started that day as sheep without a shepherd, and in the end the shepherd withdrew from the sheep. They had been fed doctrine, they had been fed the food miraculously prepared by the Lord. They were the recipients of His teaching and His work, but they ended up just like they began - sheep without a shepherd.

This section of John describes one day in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ in which He was put under tremendous pressure. We have His compassion over the sheep without a shepherd, a whole of day of teaching (physically tiring), then misunderstanding and false conclusion. He withdraws to the mountain, alone, to pray. Mark tells us He was praying, what was He praying for? Remember that He had just been rejected. He saw that the 5,000 were not willing to accept Him as their Savior, they wanted a military king to lead them in revolt against Rome.

This chapter ends with many abandoning Him, the only ones who remain are the twelve disciples.

I think He was praying for them, that they do not also get distracted and want Jesus to be something He was not.

John 6:16-18

Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea,

and after getting into a boat, they *started to* cross the sea to Capernaum. It had already become dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.

The sea *began* to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing.

In this story of Jesus walking on the water, we see three things:

FIRST: Jesus praying for His disciples

SECOND: The disciples in the boat, tossed by the winds, and initially frightened when they see Jesus walking on the water and then calmed by His presence.

THIRD: We see Peter, on the water with Jesus Christ

We are going to look at parallel passages in Mark.

Mark 6:45,46. And immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the multitude away. And after bidding them farewell, He departed to the mountain to pray.

They had retreated to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee when the 5,000 hurried after him to be taught the Word.

Now Jesus sends his disciples, the twelve, back to Capernaum and its fishing village of Bethsaida.

After the 5000 come to the false conclusion that they want to make Him the King, He leaves then and goes into the mountain to pray.

A precedent is set for us by our Lord's actions.

1. In his humanity he saw the importance of prayer. Our ministries to people must be balanced with our prayer relationship with God.
2. Our time in prayer is easily distracted, so as the Lord sent the disciples away and the people away and then went to the mountain, we too must make time and arrange circumstances to take time to pray.
3. The Lord's actions were part of prayer preparation. Prayer includes three parts, preparation, prayer itself, and prayer pursuit.
4. The content of the prayer is not given, but in light of the misunderstanding on the part of the 5000 and the end of John 6, we can fairly well assume He was praying for His disciples, the twelve, who are now out in the boat.

Mark 6:47. And when it was evening, the boat was in the midst of the sea, and He was alone on the land.

At this point Christ is separated from his disciples, in much the same way he is currently separated from his church.

Mark 6:48. And seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them At about the fourth watch of the night, He came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them.

As Jesus prayed for the disciples he also would at points in time see them, check on how they were doing. Now he was in a mountain but in his omniscience he saw them, and in his omnipresence, he was already with them.

Straining at the oars refers to distress or torment. They were rowing and getting no where, as a matter of fact they were being blown off course and would end up in Gennesaret or Gadara, on the S.E. shore.

This distress was put upon them by the wind, not by their inability to handle a fishing boat. The present tense tells us that the distress continued.

THE HARDER THEY WORKED IN their own power, the less progress they made.

THIS IS A VERY TYPICAL SITUATION RELATING to us today. We are in the sea of the world, tossed about, straining at the oars of life and getting no where, often being blown off course.

BUT JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOR is praying for us and keeping an eye on us. We are never in the sea alone.

Just as the disciples were learning that the storm was great and they were unable to get anywhere, we also will be put into the storms of life to learn of our own inability.

Any problem that tosses us around, that causes distress, that makes us lose ground teaches us of our weakness and the Lord strength.

Problems bring us to depend upon Christ rather than ourselves.

John 6:19,20

When therefore they had rowed about three or four miles, they beheld Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened.

But He said to them, "It is I, do not be afraid."

Jesus gave them time, until the fourth watch (3 to 6 am) to become fully aware of their own inability to solve the problem. This was a test; Jesus is watching over them, but giving them time to become aware of their helplessness.

In the same way we do not experience immediate deliverance from the tests we face. The Lord gives us time in the turbulence to see that we need him.

He came to them walking on the water. The one who created water walks on the water.

This shows us that no matter where we are, Jesus will come to us once we realize we cannot do it ourselves

We are never out of sight nor out of help with the Lord. I don't care where you may end up, he will be there to help.

We also see that he was walking right by them, but they cried out. The Lord never forces himself upon his people, he waits for their cries of help.

Mark 6:49. But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out.

The rest of Jesus' prayer.

1. Prayer preparation: He sent the people away and went away himself to pray.
2. Prayer itself: He stayed in prayer until the early hours of the morning - praying for his disciples.
3. Prayer pursuit: Having prayed for the disciples he now go to them.

BUT THEY DID NOT RECOGNIZE HIM.

APPLICATION: How often in our own lives has the Lord been there to help in a time of need and we do not recognize him.

He pulls us out of the storms and we thank the weather man, or chalk it up to luck or good fortune.

We need to see the mighty hand of the Lord in our lives and we need to acknowledge his power in our lives.

When you start seeing how often the Lord is there to pull you up, stand you on your feet, you will begin to have a response of appreciation to his grace.

Mark 6:50. For they all saw Him and were frightened. But immediately He spoke with them and said to them, Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid.

When they cried out and were troubled, immediately the Lord spoke to them and they were calmed.

Jesus gave them a quick three point message of truth.

1. Take courage: An idiom that literally translates to be of good cheer. But goes beyond mere M.A. joy to M.A. of courage.

Courage is a result of the confidence you have in God. Confidence in God results in courage before man and nature.

2. It is I: This is the same thing Jesus said to Moses 1500 years earlier. I am who I am, the ever existing one, God himself.

Recognition of who Jesus is also means that you recognize what he can do.

3. Be not afraid: The result of applying confidence in God to courage, the result of know Christ and his power, is - no fear.

We know that the Lord will never put us through a test that he has not endured and now we see that he will never put us through a test for which he does not provide the way of victory, in himself, for us.

TURN TO MATTHEW 14:28 The Story of Peter. This is part of the story that neither Mark nor John record

Matthew 14:28. And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.

Peter always wanted to get into the act. His personality was that of an extrovert and he so often wanted to out do everyone else.

Jesus honors his request:

Matthew 14:29. And He said, Come! And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

When Jesus commands Peter to COME, we see three things.

1. Peter is out on the water: Place of maximum testing. Peter voluntarily place himself in a position of danger yet knew the Lord was there. Peter was not thinking of self.

2. He was being held up by faith in Christ alone: Nothing else, no ability of his own could keep him on top of the water.
3. Going towards Jesus keeping his eyes on Him: His focus, his priority, was Jesus Christ.

And that should be the situation for us all, not thinking of ourselves but of our Savior's command, being held up by faith alone without thought of our ability, and keeping our eyes upon Jesus Christ.

But, Peter took his eyes off the Lord and put them on the surrounding danger.

Matthew 14:30. But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me!

Let's give Peter some credit at this point, at least he did not try to swim to shore - he cried out to the Lord - save me.

We must always remember that we will fail, but even in our failures we can have a victory if that failure teaches us about our weaknesses and Jesus' strength.

Matthew 14:31. And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, O you of little faith, why did you doubt?

1. Jesus was immediately there to save
2. It was Peter's doubt in that caused him to sink, but Jesus did not abandon him. Even when we are faithless, the Lord is faithful.
3. The word for LITTLE FAITH means little of quality, not quantity. Peter's faith was small because it was taken off of Christ and placed in his own ability - and in his own ability he was sinking.
4. We all sink at times of misplaced faith, but Jesus is always there and he is the only one who can pull us out.

John 6:21

They were willing therefore to receive Him into the boat; and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

Jesus coming into the boat is an illustration of fellowship being restored. And as soon as fellowship is restored, the sea no longer holds any danger for them.

We see a contrast between the boat immediately coming to land and the hours the disciples spent rowing and only getting three or four miles.

During their struggle against the oars the Lord was watching and then - at the proper time He came and their problem was not only solved by Jesus calming the sea but then He did even more, He brought the boat and the disciples immediately to their destination.

When the proper time comes, the Lord's proper time, and He moves to come to our aid, His power is immediate and goes beyond our expectation.

LIFE IS A JOURNEY ACROSS A CHOPPY SEA, we spend so much time pulling against the oars getting no where. But in the presence of Jesus, our the sea becomes calm and we move, at His pace, to the destiny He has for us.

As a result of the feeding of the 5000 earlier in this chapter, many in the crowd follow Jesus to Capernaum where they begin to ask questions. These questions lead off to four messages of Jesus.

John 6:22-40 - His message to the seeking crowd

John 6:41-51 - His message to the angry crowd

John 6:52-59 - His message to the disputing crowd

John 6:60-71 - His message to those who left and those who stayed

John 6:22-24

The next day the crowd that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other small boat there, except one, and that Jesus had not entered with His disciples into the boat, but *that* His disciples had gone away alone.

There came other small boats from Tiberias near to the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks.

So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they themselves got into the small boats, and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus.

We are given the details of how the people left behind from the feeding of the 5000 now were seeking Jesus. Finding that He was not there they boarded ships and went on to Capernaum. It was there, probably in the synagogue, that they found Jesus. And it is there that they begin to question Him.

From verse 25 to verse 40 they ask four questions and this becomes the basis for Jesus' first message in the synagogue.

John 6:25

And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, Rabbi, when did You get here?

His disciples knew, and we know, that He came to the ship the disciples were in by walking on the water. And that He immediately brought the ship to land.

But this was a sign, a miracle, for the disciples only. It was private, it was to prove that regardless of how natural elements may indicate that the Lord is not near, He is present. Wherever, and in whatever circumstances you might find yourself.

THIS PRINCIPLE is for the believer who is positive, not for the crowd who is seeking, but doubting. Who at this time had not even believed in as the Messiah, the Christ.

There are many things that are for you, the advancing, positive believer, and are not for the unbeliever or for the carnal, negative believer.

He does not answer them (typical of His messages), but instead teaches them.

John 6:26

Jesus answered them and said, Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves, and were filled.

TRULY, TRULY translates the words AMEN, AMEN and are used as a preface to the declaration of Bible Doctrine. "I am speaking truth."

He then gives them a compliment: "You seek Me not because you saw signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled."

THE MIRACLE of the multiplying of the loaves and fish was a miracle designed to teach that Jesus is the source of nourishment that can never be used up.

There is an interplay between literal food and spiritual food (doctrine) in many of the messages of Jesus.

Matthew 4:4. Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Look back at verse 2: Then the crowd sought Jesus for signs, but they are now here for answers.

This is good, they are taking a step towards understanding that there was more to the feeding of the 5000 than a full stomach.

John 6:27

Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the Father, even God, has set His seal.

There are actually two warnings in this verse. **First**, the obvious warning not to put all your efforts into seeking that which perishes. Do not work (present tense) for food which perishes. This is a warning of perspective, what is going to be important to you in life?

But **the other warning** is a warning of means: Do not WORK but instead RECEIVE that which the Son of Man shall give to you.

This crowd, just like people today, wanted the wrong things, they wanted and sought and worked for the things that perish.

They had been more impressed with the GIFT OF FOOD of that the GIVER OF THAT FOOD.

This is the mind set of the MATERIALISTIC PERSON, whether believer or unbeliever.

And a materialistic viewpoint makes us lose sight of what is truly important and it makes us lose our perspective which should be set on the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

SO THE FIRST QUESTION is not answered, but the answer given tells them to re-think their attitude.

Verses 28 and 29 have the second question and second answer.

John 6:28

They said therefore to Him, What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?

DID THEY MISS THE POINT OR WHAT - Jesus just told them not to work to have that which He freely gives.

They concluded that God had a requirement they must meet, but then incorrectly concluded they had to do something, some work and work the works of God and everything would be fine with them and God.

The answer to their question is not found in their works but in the work God has done.

John 6:29

Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.

The requirement that is set by God for them, for man today, for us, is not a requirement of works, but of faith.

BELIEVE IN Him whom he has sent.

Legalism is born in the attitude that man can do few works and God will be impressed.

John 6:30-33 has the third round of question and answer.

John 6:30,31

They said therefore to Him, What then do You do for a sign, that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written (Exodus 16:4), He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.

REMEMBER VERSE 26: Jesus complimented them because they did not seek a sign - well now they want a sign.

They were seeking a 40-year meal ticket. They compare the feeding of one meal for the 5000 to what Moses did in providing the manna in the wilderness for 40 years for 2.5 million people.

They were looking for the same thing. And like many today, they were selfish, self-centered, looking to Jesus for what could satisfy their supposed needs.

They were thinking in terms of 40 years, Jesus was thinking in terms of all eternity.

Jesus' Answer.

John 6:32,33

Jesus therefore said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven.

For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.

Jesus tells them that as the manna was a gift from God, so is He. That as the manna came from heaven, so has He. As the manna supplied the needs for life for 40 years, He can supply the real need, eternal life, life forever.

They wanted to fulfill their supposed needs. But they could only look ahead for 40 years. Jesus was looking into eternity and asking them to consider what their real need was, the need for eternal life.

We are so much like those who questioned Jesus. We think we know what we need, what

will fill us, but we don't. Our Lord does and the things He will supply will last forever.

In the next question we see they are just not getting the point.

John 6:34-40 has the fourth question and answer.

John 6:34

They said therefore to Him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

Here they get demanding: GIVE is an aorist imperative. They were demanding that Jesus give them that bread right now.

A demanding attitude is one of the four psychological sins that man uses to cover up dysfunctional life styles. The others are protection, pretense, and denial.

Here these people think they know what they need, they are not listening to Jesus. When He doesn't come through for them the way they think He should, they demand that He gives them more bread, right now.

In His tremendous patience, He teaches them.

John 6:35-40

Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

But I said to you, that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe.

All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.

He given them SEVEN principles of truth.

1. He is the bread of life (eternal life)
2. If you come to Him you never hunger or thirst.

Later on in Jerusalem He talks about those who have a true hunger and thirst only God can fill, a hunger and thirst for righteousness,

3. They see Jesus, yet even then they do not believe.

It is a mistake to think that man would automatically believe if they saw God. These did and did not.

4. The Father draws men to Jesus Christ, this is also the work of the Holy Spirit, and when men come to Christ He will never reject them.

Others will reject you because of what you have done or who you are or are not. Jesus never rejects you when you come to Him.

5. Jesus has come from heaven to do the will of the Father. There is agreement in the Godhead, the Trinity, regarding what Jesus is doing and saying.
6. The ones who come to Christ will be raised up in the last days. Raised up to eternal life. Physical death may be a problem, but there is a promise, you will be raised up to eternal life.
7. And this is the will of the Father: Behold the Son, believe in Him, and have eternal life.

NOW IN THESE FOUR ROUNDS OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS we see four lessons for us.

1. Life's true purpose is to receive what God gives and what He gives will last forever.
2. We cannot add our works, our legalism, to the perfect plan of God.
3. We cannot suppose that we know what we need. We are too often short sighted, myopic, looking only at time and not

eternity. God sees us in time but also sees us in eternity and that is forever.

4. The issue in all of life is always the same, Jesus Christ. For the unbeliever to believe in Christ His person and His work. For the believer, to believe in the Word of Christ, Bible Doctrine.

On the day prior to the four messages in the synagogue of Capernaum, Jesus took bread and broke it and fed 5000.

This was the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophecy of

Psalm 72:16-17. May there be abundance of grain in the earth on top of the mountains; Its fruit will wave like the cedars of Lebanon; And may those from the city flourish like vegetation of the earth. May his name endure forever; May his name increase as long as the sun shines; And let men bless themselves by him; Let all nations call him blessed.

Like many prophecies this one finds its ultimate fulfillment in the millennial age. But it is Jesus Christ who brings this about and often His miracles during His incarnation were like promises that He would eventually do the same thing for the whole world.

Some of the people followed Him across the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum and started asking questions. But they were not listening to the answers.

John 6:41

The Jews therefore were grumbling about Him, because He said, I am the bread that came down out of heaven.

The word GRUMBLING means to speak in low tones. Without the DIA prefix, as here, it means to speak low but loud enough for others to hear.

The were complaining among themselves but with the intent that He would hear of their dissatisfaction.

And their issue: That "He said I am the bread that comes out of heaven". They could not understand this, so they rejected it.

You only advance in doctrine by hearing things you have never heard before. Some of these, you will not understand. Put them on the back burner. Let the Holy Spirit bring in additional information that will enlighten.

John 6:42

And they were saying, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, I have come down out of heaven?

This is their argument. They know his parents, they know where He came from, from His mothers womb. How can He say He came down out of heaven?

This certainly argues against the idea of a pre-existence of souls in the mind of these Jews. They understood as we that the soul is not pre-existing in some form and then assigned to a baby.

But more importantly, we see that their familiarity breed a contempt for what Jesus was saying.

The complaining by these Jews then becomes the occasion for Jesus' second message.

He issues a command, expresses His relaxed mental attitude, uses an analogy, teaches a principle, makes a declaration, issues a warning, gives them a promise, and then offers an explanation.

The command: Stop complaining among yourselves. He invites them to come to Him face to face and ask rather than grumble in low cowardly voices.

John 6:43

Jesus answered and said to them, "Do not grumble among yourselves."

Jesus knows that it is not His job to win friends and influence people. That only those who are drawn by the common grace of God that goes is extended to all mankind.

So some will respond and others will not but it is the Father's job, not His, and certainly not ours, to draw men to that point of decision.

We make ourselves available.

The analogy: They were saying that the statement of Jesus regarding His coming down from heaven did not make sense.

So He gives them a picture of a future time, predicted by Isaiah, when man will be taught by God. To be taught by God, God must come from heaven.

Isaiah 54:13. And all your sons will be taught of the Lord; And the well-being of your sons will be great.

Now the analogy is this, if that can occur in the future to all mankind, why not now.

Since Jesus was from heaven, He alone has seen God. No man has seen the Father but Jesus has and was now on earth.

John 6:44-46

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

“It is written in the prophets, ‘AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.

“Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father.

Jesus Christ alone had first hand information from the Father.

Then a Declaration:

John 6:47,48

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.

I am the bread of life.

Here the object of belief is stated last. It is Jesus who is the bread of life and when man believes in Him he will have eternal life.

HAVE is a present tense, keep on having eternal life. That is the declaration, Jesus is

the bread of life, of life eternal. If you believe that, you have eternal life.

Next we have a Warning:

John 6:49

Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.

The temporal gifts of God are great, but they are temporal. The manna in the wilderness was provided by God. It tasted great, probably even less filling. It was a grace gift, but a grace gift designed for temporal life not life eternal.

We have many grace gifts, the beauty of nature, the bond of the family, the blessings of friends. We have good food, good health, good weather, a good environment. But those gifts are designed for temporal life not eternal life.

There is only one gift designed for eternal life and that is the gift of God's only begotten Son. Yet how many people, even believers, have an appreciation for the temporal gifts but not the most important gift.

Here is where we see the importance of focusing on the giver rather than the gift. Many of God's temporal gifts are also tangible, we can see the sunsets, taste the food, hold our families. These are good, these are to be appreciated, but they are not what brings eternal life.

The giver gives eternal life. And without the giver, all die, there is no eternal life.

This was a warning to these who listened to Jesus that they needed to focus on the giver, not the gift.

Next a Promise:

John 6:50,51

This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.

I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever.

The promise is very clear. Jesus is the bread that comes down out of heaven, there is no other. Believe, receive, accept, eat of that bread and live forever.

The people of the Old Testament wanderings eat of the gift of God, but they died. If we eat of the gift of God which is the giver himself, we will not die, we will enjoy forever life with God.

And then Jesus draws for them a picture, an explanation: And the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.

How many of us read this and remember

John 1:14. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The word FLESH tells us of the humanity of Christ. He is the bread of life, the one who sustains life, eternal life, because He alone is the divine person who took on a human nature.

Jesus Christ was flesh, He was man, He became one of us.

Hebrews 2:17 to 3:1. Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.

The problem is that these who questioned Jesus did not consider Him.

John 6:52

The Jews therefore began to argue with one another, saying, How can this man give us His flesh to eat?

Now get this picture. A group of Jews questioning among themselves. Knowing full well that this Jesus is not talking about cannibalism. Yet they would rather argue

among themselves than just turn to Him and ask: What do you mean by that - ???

But isn't that the way man is, they would rather argue about what they don't know than seek the answers from one who does know.

Even though they do not ask Jesus any questions, in grace He is going to give them answers.

John 6:53

Jesus therefore said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.

Nearly ten Old Testament passages prohibited the drinking of blood. Such as **Leviticus 7:26**

And you are not to eat any blood, either of bird or animal, in any of your dwellings.

These people knew the Old Testament, they knew these passages, yet not one of them brings these Old Testament commandments into the dialogue. Because they knew the Lord was using an analogy.

EATING was used as an analogy for consuming, taking something in, possessing something as your own.

Jeremiah 15:16. Thy words were found and I ate them, And Thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; For I have been called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts.

Ezekiel 3:1,2. Then He said to me, Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and He fed me this scroll.

We talk about feasting on the Word, metabolizing Bible Doctrine, and we understand that we are using an analogy and the people of John six understood that this was an analogy - but they did not understand the analogy.

We can understand it.

1. The flesh refers to His humanity that lived for us
2. The blood refers to His death, His spiritual death that He died for us

The person and the work of Jesus Christ

In John 6:54-58 Jesus explains the importance of His person and Work.

John 6:54-58

He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.

He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.

As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate, and died, he who eats this bread shall live forever.

If you partake of Christ you have eternal life and will be raised up in glory in the last day

The true food and drink is the person and work of Jesus Christ, it is true because it lasts forever

If you partake of Christ you abide in Him and He is in you

Life, true life, eternal life is in Jesus Christ.

John 1:4. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

But the one who eats this bread shall live forever, and that is a promise.

That is also a condition! You have to eat the bread. You could starve to death staring at a steak. Looking at, even appreciating it, telling others how good steak is, will not nourish you, You have to eat the steak. In the same way man can spend a lifetime looking at Jesus, admiring Him, and apart from taking hold of Him and eating the bread of life, there will be spiritual starvation.

I pray that everyone here today has eaten that bread of life which is Jesus Christ, and you are saved. And that you continue to partake of Jesus Christ, by believing in Him and you are having the life of faith, the abundant life, He has reserved for you.

INTRODUCTION.

One of the most difficult tests we will ever face is the test of rejection. We want to belong, we want to be accepted and approved but in life we learn that the acceptance we seek will not always be there.

Sometimes this rejection begins with us not being understood. Others thinking we means one thing when we really mean another.

It is them that we try so hard to make ourselves clear to others. But often that just leads to more frustration as we struggle to make ourselves more understood, just to be even more rejected.

The religious leaders of Jesus' day had already rejected the Savior. But many of the people of Galilee were still following Him. Many for the wrong reason, they wanted a miracle, a sign, a leader, a political zealot. They wanted more food, they wanted physical comforts and temporal relief from distress.

BUT JESUS OFFERED THEM MORE, He offered them eternal life.

John 6:59,60

These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard this said, This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?

The statement that gave rise to this reaction is found in verse 58.

This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate, and died, he who eats this bread shall live forever.

So while the people were looking for a temporal meal ticket, Jesus offered them something eternal, He offered them Himself.

Not a meal, not a loaf of bread, not even something as special and wonderful as the manna of the wilderness. He offered them Himself and in Him, eternal life.

But in verse 60 we see that many of His disciples seem to react as if they do not understand. But I don't think that is the case at all, I think they do understand, but they do not want to understand.

POINT OF REFERENCE: Have you ever struggled to make your position, your point, clear to someone only to have them feign ignorance as a cover, a pretense, for their rejection.

How about the child who pretends to not understand when really they just do not what to do what you are telling them to do.

Or the person who tries to plead ignorance as an excuse for breaking the Law.

Even in relationships we use the pretense of ignorance to conceal our rejection of another.

We are quick to say I don't understand when really we mean I do not what to understand.

The last two statements of verse 60 are the ones that reveals their rejection.

The word *difficult* is SKLEROS and when used to describe a statement such as here and in Jude 15 it refers to a statement that is harsh, or hard to follow, or obey.

So they first say it is *difficult* to follow or accept, then in the next breath say that no one can understand it.

But listen people, it is not that hard to understand. But if you are rejecting the one who says it, if you want Him to be something He is not, if you want faith to be according to your ideas rather than His, well then, I guess it is hard to understand.

Notice Jesus' response to their pretense of ignorance.

John 6:61

But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, Does this cause you to stumble?

He was conscious because of the grumbling, the murmuring that was loud enough for Him to hear.

So He turns to them and asks, "Does this (His teaching) cause you to stumble?"

This is just three words in the Greek: "This you offends?"

OFFEND is a word you know, SKANDALIZW. Jesus is asking them if they are scandalized by what He is saying. Often translated STUMBLINGBLOCK.

It refers to something that will cause them to fall, something that will halt progress towards a goal.

And isn't that what a SCANDAL does. We are familiar with political scandals, scandals involving well known people, even church leaders. Scandals stop progress, halt advance.

To be scandalized or to be offended or to stumble and fall and thus not progress towards the truth.

Jesus hears their complaint and declares that they have trip over the truth, they have fallen on their faces in the face of the truth, they are down and out for the count.

BECAUSE THEY HAVE REJECTED HIM, they have stumbled over the truth, the Word of God.

But that is not too unlike what we see today.

1. People with false expectation of what Christianity should be reject.
2. The Word of God that should draw them closer to the Savior, causes them to stumble.

3. They fall down, they are scandalized by the truth, they pretend ignorance, they reject by claiming they do not understand.
4. They end of seeking what they want and go from church to church attempting to find a comfortable climate with which they can agree.

BUT THAT IS NOT REALITY: True reality is in Jesus Christ

v 62-63 And Jesus bring reality before them.

John 6:62,63

What then if you should behold the Son of Man ascending where He was before?

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

For Jesus to ascend to heaven, which He will do, will be a vindication of all that He has said. His resurrection and ascension will be an evidence of the truth.

Another truth: It is the Spirit who gives life, the flesh profits nothing in the estimation or plan of God.

This statement reminds us our man's natural state of total depravity - we need a Savior.

Then Jesus adds: The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

What is He saying, that His words are the truth, they are reality, superior to any imagination of man.

But here is the problem.

John 6:64

But there are some of you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who is was that would betray Him.

Jesus nails them, so to speak. It is not that what He says is hard or harsh or difficult to accept. It is not that what He says is complex.

The real problem is that they DO NOT BELIEVE.

Jesus Christ was not surprised by this then, He knew from the beginning, the beginning of His ministry those who followed Him for the wrong reasons. He knew who it was that would betray Him. He knew the prophecies of Old and He had a perception of others based on the doctrine He knew and used.

He was not surprised by unbelief, and we should not be surprised by unbelief either.

Yet there are Christians today who stumble over those who stumble.

Like the multi-car pile ups we see on the freeways during inclement weather, the church today is too often surprised and stumbles when society rejects the reality of the Word of God.

Jesus then takes this opportunity to again tell them again as He did in verse 37 and as John the Baptist did in John 3:27 that it is the work of the Father that draws men to Christ. He enables man to believe.

John 6:65

And He was saying, For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father.

The condition however is not an arbitrary choice by God, it is positive volition, our objectivity. To be able to say as did the man whose son was torn by the demons, I believe, help my unbelief.

NOT AS many said then and today: I believe, now conform to my beliefs.

John 6:66

As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore.

As a result of teaching the TRUTH many of His disciples walked away, no longer enjoying fellowship with the Son of God.

How tragic, how sad. But this same story has been repeated over and over again through the centuries.

Man stumbles over the truth and turns away for Jesus Christ.

John 6:67

Jesus said therefore to the twelve, You do not want to go away also, do you?

We cannot read this verse without seeing a note of sadness. Jesus has offered Himself to the World, offered Himself to those who stumbled, got up and walked away.

So He frames this question to encourage the weak and give the twelve an opportunity to make a decision of faith.

v 68-69 Why do expect Peter to be the one who would speak up.

John 6:68,69

Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.

And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.

Peter says important things.

1. There is no one else to go to: Jesus Christ is the only name given under heaven by which man must be saved
2. The words of Christ that reveal the plan of God lead to eternal life. Not man's ideas, not man's expectations, but the reality of the Word of God
3. Peter adds that the twelve (we) believe this
4. And that they have come to know that Jesus is the Holy One of God, the Messiah.

But as Peter spoke for the twelve, he assumed one thing in error. One of the twelve was not a believer, one would betray Jesus Christ.

John 6:70

Jesus answered them, Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?

Jesus' choosing of the twelve was not to salvation but to service and yet in this

choosing, He chose Judas, the one He knew would betray Him.

John gives his readers further information by adding:

John 6:71

Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.

Perhaps a better translation would be: Who was even then intending to betray Him.

Sin had an early start in the mind of Judas. Satan was already at work in Judas. Yet Jesus Christ was in control.

The disciples would remember this, that even as He chose Judas to follow Him He knew he would betray Him.

Yet as the Lord states in Matthew 26:54 that even the evil work of Judas, filled by Satan himself, was accomplished to fulfill the Scriptures.

1. A Savior whose words are truth, the greatest reality we can ever grasp
2. A Savior whose words are the words of eternal life that we can have
3. A Savior who is rejected, and shows us how to handle rejection with grace and faith
4. A Savior who was not surprised at unbelief as we must not be surprised when someone rejects the gift of God
5. And a Savior who is in control, in control then and now. Who chose even the one who would betray Him.
6. A Savior who shows us we do not need to fear our circumstances, not fear rejection, even betrayal, because we have a Savior who will never leave us nor forsake us.

Chapter 7

John 7:1

And after these things Jesus was walking in Galilee; for He was unwilling to walk in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.

“These things” are the events of John 6, when Jesus presented Himself as the bread of eternal life, and yet that bread was passed by many.

This verse begins three chapters, John 7, 8, and 9 in which we see Jesus presenting Himself as the light of the World.

These chapters reveal the conflict between light and darkness.

John 8:12 serves as climax of this section: Jesus declared.

I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Jesus presented Himself as the light of the World to the people of Galilee, yet so many rejected, so many sought the miracles rather than the light.

But He remained in Galilee because it was dangerous for Him in Judea. Religion, the Jews were seeking to kill him.

John uses the term JEWS to refer to religious Israel. The religious leaders who saw Christ as an intrusion into their religious system, their comfort zone.

Religion is the worse thing that has ever happened on earth. It is man's attempt to please God, man trying to work to get to God and since this is impossible, man soon settles for a god or gods after his own frail image. And when that is intruded upon watch out. More people have died in senseless wars and persecutions over religion than any political differences.

Jesus was staying away from religion. He was presenting a relationship that man could have

with God through Him and in the power of the Spirit.

Verse 1 also shows us that God has his right timing. In verse 6 Jesus states that His time is not yet at hand.

Several times in the Gospel of John we see Jesus having to tell others that His time had not yet come.

People will pressure you into wrong timing, but God has His proper and perfect time for everything in your life.

We also see in this verse the common sense Jesus has. He was not about to rush head long into Judea.

TOO OFTEN WELL MEANING AND SINCERE believers leap before they even look with faith. They rush in where angels fear to tread.

Jesus Christ give us an example of using common sense.

John 7:2

Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was at hand.

With this statement we are able to get a fix on the time of the year. The feast mentioned at the beginning of John 6 which the 5,000 were traveling to was the feast of Passover. Here we have the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles. Passover is in the Spring and Tabernacles is in the Fall. So the gap between John 6 and John 7 is about six months.

NOW THE FEAST OF TABLENACLES had both a prophetic and a personal application. It was to be a happy time for Israel. In the scheme of prophecy it looked ahead to the millennial reign of Jesus Christ. Yet here was Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, being rejected. His life in jeopardy.

Also the Feast of Tabernacles had a personal application. The people would live outdoors in booth, lean tos made of palm branches, for seven days.

This was to remind them of their total dependence upon the Lord. Yet the Lord was

there, in Galilee. They could have depended upon Him personally, but they were more involved with the feast than the reality.

The Old Testament feast were SHADOWS of things to come, shadows of Jesus Christ, yet the people wanted the shadows and ignored the reality.

DO PEOPLE, EVEN BELIEVERS DO THAT TODAY? Everything we do, or everything we should be doing as a local assembly should proclaim Jesus Christ - yet how many Christians today are more involved with the shadows, the form, the ritual, the legalisms than the person of Christ.

If Jesus Christ was come into our midst, would we know Him, or would we bury our heads in the shadows, maybe even the shadows of our churches.

We have seen in verse 1 the hatred of the Jews, and now in verse three we see the ridicule of some who were very close to Him.

John 7:3-5

His brothers therefore said to Him, Depart from here, and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may behold Your works which You are doing.

For no one does anything in secret, when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.

For not even His brothers were believing Him.

These are the half-brothers of Jesus Christ, sons of Mary and Joseph. We are given their names in Matthew 13:55, James, Joses, Simon, and Jude.

Later they would believe in Jesus in as their Savior but now jealousy has blinded their eyes. They ridicule Jesus, attack Him with sarcasm.

We see in this that closeness to Jesus Christ counts for very little without faith in Him. Their advantage of physical birth, a human relationship, did not provide salvation. Only faith in Christ can do that.

Your disciples - may behold your works.

Yet how often had Jesus taught that He worked the works of God. Yet they did not listen nor did they hear.

They did not even understand the ministry of Christ. They were mocking Jesus, telling Him to promote Himself.

Apart from faith in Christ there is no advantage in life. Physical birth, human relationships, without faith are nothing.

Timing is everything.

John 7:6-9

Jesus therefore said to them, My time is not yet at hand, but your time is always opportune.

The world cannot hate you; but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil.

Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come.

And having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.

For Jesus His timing was directed by the will of God. And God's timing is always perfect. God may make you wait, but He is never late.

His bothers, lacking faith, also lacked timing. The opportunity they had was to believe in Christ, something they should have done long ago, but did not.

In their unbelief they were part of the world, the world did not hate them but the world hated Jesus Christ because He revealed the evil of the world.

The evil of the world includes its HATRED and RIDICULE

Again He repeats that His time, the time for His once and for all sacrifice. Later in

Luke 9:51. And it came about, when the days were approaching for His ascension, that He resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem;

So He stayed in Jerusalem and did not attend the first days of the feast.

While Jesus' family went to the feast openly, in a caravan, Jesus went privately a few days later.

John 7:10

But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as it were, in secret.

The Jews therefore were seeking Him at the feast, and were saying, Where is He?

And there was much grumbling among the multitudes concerning Him; some were saying, He is a good man; others were saying, No, on the contrary, He leads the multitude astray.

Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

John 7:11

So the Jews were seeking Him at the feast and were saying, Where is He?

The Jews, religious Israel who hated Jesus and were seeking to kill Him, sought Him at the feast.

Here we see that the caution Jesus exercised in verse 1, staying away from Jerusalem, was well founded. Evil men, religious men, wanted to kill Him.

John 7:12

There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him; some were saying, "He is a good man"; others were saying, "No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray."

Some said this, others said that, some that He was a good man, others said that He led the people astray.

What is said about a person by others does not change the integrity of that person. Some of the greatest men of integrity have been slandered, lied about, maligned by others.

v 13 Antagonism and Conflict gave rise to fear.

John 7:13

Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

These verses show us what happens when light collides with darkness.

There is HATRED -- RIDICULE -- CONFLICT -- FEAR

Jesus Christ, in His incarnation, was the light of the world.

But now we, according to Philippians 2:14 we see that we are to shine as lights.

Phil. 2:14. Prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.

Jesus taught that we are to shine brightly in this world of darkness.

Matthew 5:14-16. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

The believer in Jesus Christ is now the light of the world and when believers, you and I, collide with darkness, when grace confronts legalism, religion and law, we will be hated, we will be ridiculed, we will encounter conflict, and even those who may speak the truth will fear.

NOW THE ISSUE IS not what happens to you in life but how are you going to respond to it?

- Jesus Christ was hated but He did not hate
- He was ridiculed but He did not ridicule
- Conflict surrounded Him but he did not enter into it
- And He did not fear to proclaim the truth

We do not respond in kind, we respond as Jesus Christ, our example, our precedent responded.

These attitudes can be ours as we grow in Christ and are transformed in the renewing of our minds, conformed to Christ, by the Word of God in us

INTRODUCTION:

Cicero, the Roman lawyer and orator, said: It is the peculiar quality of a fool to perceive faults in others and to forget his own.

An old Welsh proverb stated: You cannot cleat the rocks on your own field if you are counting the rocks on your neighbors.

These and many other pithy statements all remind us of what we are going to see in our passage today. The ones who complained the loudest about Jesus Christ and His ministry were the ones who refused to take an objective look at themselves.

But now, mid-way through the week of celebration, Jesus reveals himself at the Temple.

John 7:14

But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and began to teach.

He would have gone to a place before the altar that was called the court of Israel. He was presenting Himself to Israel as their King, but a king who would be rejected.

He did that which was the primary characteristic of His earthly ministry - He taught the Word of God.

The world teach is DIDASKW an imperative verb.

This word means to teach in such a way that prepared material is presented to bring about a change in attitudes and then in actions.

We get our word DOCTRINE from this word.

John 7:15

The Jews therefore were marveling, saying, How has this man become learned, having never been educated?

The Jews in John's gospel refer to the religious leaders. They marveled which means to be surprised at something they did not know or did not understand.

Now a person can be pleasantly surprised or critically surprised. They were surprised at the depth, the accuracy, the significance of His teaching.

HIS TEACHING WAS line upon line and precept upon precept from the Scriptures. But they did not like him, they could not accept what He had to say but they were hard pressed to refute the contents of the truth.

SO THEY REFUTED HIM. Where did He go to school. How could He become a learned man.

Now Jesus had gone to school in Nazareth until He was fifteen. So their question really deals more with His lack of seminary training.

Jesus had not attended either of the two theological schools in Jerusalem, the Hillel school or the Shammai school.

He was not one of them, and so they rejected Him and His teaching.

If someone has already made up their mind to reject what you have to say, even if you present verse upon verse of Scripture, they will find a way to reject. Even if they have to attack your credibility and the schools you attended or did not attend.

Jesus responds to their first reaction: Here is light meeting darkness in the area of attitude and approach.

John 7:16,17

Jesus therefore answered them, and said, My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.

If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself.

NOTICE: Jesus does not defend Himself, He does not emphasize self, He doesn't hand out His resume. He points to the Father.

Jesus tells them that the things He is teaching are not His, but the Father's. Jesus is the messenger.

The ancient Greek had a parable about killing the bearer of bad news.

This is an amazing thing we can learn from Him. When we are attacked and rejected we so often want to defend ourselves, but Jesus shows us that we need to focus on the Father.

And then in verse 17 He provides the mechanics for this focus.

If any man is willing to do God's will.

If is EAV a 3rd class conditional conjunction

This is a potential for ANY MAN. Not just a few but any man.

NOW HERE IS SOMETHING I WANT YOU TO SEE.

Any decision of will is also, to some measure, an act of faith.

1. When we will to do something we move to do it on faith. Faith that we can carry out our plans.
2. If you willed this morning to come to Church, you exercised to some measure some faith. Faith that the alarm clock would go off, that your car would start. No one called me this morning and verified that we would have church at 9:30 and 11:00. You acted out your will by faith.
3. You might will to do a great work, it takes faith.
4. Now some decisions of your will take more faith than others, but all decisions of the human will take some measure of faith.

So Jesus is questioning them about their will and also about their faith.

NOW NOTICE THAT OUR WILL AND OUR FAITH PRECEED SOMETHING.

He (the one who wills with faith) shall know of the doctrine (where it is from), whether it is of God or I speak from myself.

Principles.

God never intrudes upon human will. He doesn't reach down a flip any volition switches in our brains. He waits upon man to be willing.

God waits until the unbeliever wants to know Him, then God will meet him where he is with doctrine regarding salvation.

Man wills and expresses faith in that which is unknown and unseen.

Hebrews 11:1. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

1 Peter 1:8-9. and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

So then FAITH must precede UNDERSTANDING - not the other way around.

We might say we have faith but need more faith.

Like the man who spoke to Christ: I believe, help my unbelief. But we are told where more faith comes from, Faith comes from hearing and hearing from the word of God.

Therefore faith is not blind faith, but is faith that gets stretched, as we learn the Word by faith we have more to understanding, and that understanding stretches our faith in to new areas, outside our comfort zones.

Jesus then brings up the reason they are having this problem and are not willing to believe.

John 7:18

He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

The word GLORY could be translated HONOR. Jesus states clearly that He is not seeking HONOR or GLORY for himself.

While He personalizes the statement, it was also a response to these religious leaders. They were seeking HONOR and GLORY for themselves and that is why they shut their minds to Christ's doctrine.

The true goal of man is: TO KNOW AND TO GLORIFY GOD AND ENJOY HIM FOREVER.

To fulfill that Goal man must be willing, must have faith, and must have understanding.

But they failed at the first step, THEY WERE NOT WILLING.

These religious leaders were supposed to men of the Word who obeyed the Old Testament Law. But even in that they were not willing.

John 7:19

Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law? Why do you seek to kill Me?

These guys would have argued up and down that their faith was in the Old Testament Law of Moses but their willingness to accept the Law was absent and thus they had no faith and they were void of understanding.

Faith has to be objective and has to have an object that is to be believed.

They had what James would later call DEAD FAITH.

James 2:17. Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

Dead because it has no application.

They are saying they believe and uphold the Law yet are seeking to kill Jesus Christ.

Lack of objectivity will result in inconsistency
Now the people chime in.

John 7:20

The multitude answered, You have a demon! Who seeks to kill You?

Here we see a lack of objectivity on the part of the people regarding their leaders.

My dad used to use a term: HOOD-WINKED. It meant to be fooled by someone. Well, the people were being hood-winked by their leaders.

They could not imagine that their religious leaders would want to kill someone.

This is really rather sad, the people were blinded, they had faith, but it was truly blind faith. Blind faith in their leaders who were not leaders at all but users or people.

Jesus goes back now to the cause for the evil intent of the religious leaders.

John 7:21

Jesus answered and said to them, I did one deed, and you all marvel.

He is referring to the miracle of the healing of the infirmed man that is recorded in John, chapter 5. You may remember that the problem that the Jewish leaders had was that this miracle occurred on the Sabbath.

They attacked Jesus because they believed He broke the Sabbath Law. Now these Sabbath Laws were laws of the Talmud, not the Old Testament Law.

So He is going to give them a parallel. The true Old Testament Law regarding circumcision.

John 7:22,23

On this account Moses has given you circumcision (not because it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and on the Sabbath you circumcise a man.

If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath that the Law of Moses may not be

broken, are you angry with Me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath?

Circumcision was practiced since even before the time of Moses, all the way back to the time of the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

It was to be done as a token of the covenant God had with His people. A distinctive sign that they were a people unto God and to marry and raise up children after that covenant agreement with God.

It was done on the eighth day after the birth of a male child. Even if the eighth day was the Sabbath.

If they were to do this on the Sabbath and it was considered good, how much better it was for Jesus to heal a man on the Sabbath making him entirely well.

HERE AGAIN WE SEE THE inconsistency of no faith, no understanding, and a lot of subjectivity.

The conclusion Jesus draws from this.

John 7:24

Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.

But that righteous judgment can only come from one who seeks the glory of God. Look back to verse 18.

He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

BUT THE LEADERS ARE IN DARKNESS, AND DARKNESS CANNOT COMPREHEND THE LIGHT.

As we see another round in which darkness and light collide we see the light that is Jesus Christ exposing the approach that darkness takes to understanding, an approach that does not lead from will, to faith, to understanding but an approach that goes from rejection, to subjectivity, to inconsistency.

WE SEE IN THIS PASSAGE THE LORD JESUS MAKING AN ISSUE OF OBJECTIVITY BY ASKING THREE QUESTIONS.

This passage asks those same questions to us - do have the objectivity and teachability

- To know God's doctrine
- To seek to glorify Him and not ourselves
- To judge according to His righteous judgment

If we are willing - if we have faith - if we are objective and allow Him to teach us.

The people ponder and are perplexed.

John 7:25-31

Therefore some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill?

And look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they?

However, we know where this man is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from.

Then Jesus cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, "You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know.

I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me."

So they were seeking to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.

But many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, "When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?"

We see in the words spoken confusion.

THER IS A LOT OF CONFUSION in this chapter, but not in its outline or structure, but because the people Jesus teaches are so confused.

Confusion is often based on incorrect preconceived ideals of what should be or what might happen.

Confusion is not so much a problem itself as it is a symptom of a problem. Preconceived ideas that are wrong, uncertainty, doubt, lack of authority orientation, lack of courage in the area of conviction, all lead to confusion.

There are three reasons for the confusion shown in these verses.

1. The **Rejection of God's Authority**: We observed that last week.

This confusion came because of the spiritual blindness of the religious leaders.

And we saw that this spiritual blindness came from their unwillingness to obey God not their inability to understand.

They had a problem with their will and their faith and they rejected God's authority and they were confused.

Verse 17 If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself.

2. From **moral cowardice**: Jesus taught openly even though the authorities had conspired to kill Him.

The people were confused because their leaders would not confront Christ. Had they, they would have been meet by the full force of the truth that Jesus was teaching.

The leaders had threatened to arrest Christ should He show up at the feast. He did, they did not.

We can see the confusion as the people respond in verse 25 and 26.

Therefore some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill? And look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they?

3. **Increasing Uncertainty**: Rather than listen to the words of Christ, the people came to conclusions based upon wrong information.

Verse 27 However, we know where this man is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from.

But now look at verse 41 and 42: Others were saying, This is the Christ. Still others were saying, Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?

THAT IS CONTRADICTION THAT has arisen out of confusion

Notice also the number of questions asked in this passage.

Verse 26 - Do the rulers know something we do not?

Verse 31 - Will the Messiah perform more miracles than this man?

Verse 35 - What did Jesus mean when He said you will seek Me and not kind Me?

Verse 41 - Will the Messiah come from Galilee?

Verse 47 - The Pharisees questioned the Temple guards if they had been lead astray by Jesus.

Verse 52 - When Nicodemus tries to defend Christ he is attacked by the other Pharisees who question if he too is from Galilee.

Uncertainty, doubt, confusion, contradiction, questions.

AND YET IT IS INTO THE MIDST OF THIS MESS that Jesus Christ brings the truth of His resurrection and the promise of the Holy Spirit.

The Promise of the Resurrection and Ascension.

John 7:32

The Pharisees heard the multitude muttering these things about Him; and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him.

So this is said to the Temple Guards:

John 7:33-35

Jesus therefore said, For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me.

You shall seek Me, and shall not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come.

The Jews therefore said to one another, Where does this man intend to go that we shall not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He?

AS Jesus foretells of His resurrection and ascension he does do in terms of time.

1. He will yet be with them for a little while. It is about year and a half prior to the crucifixion.
2. Then, He will return to the Father who sent Him. This is His ascension which presumes His resurrection from the dead.
3. Then, they will seek Him and not find Him. Where He is going, to the right hand of the Father, they cannot go.

There is both a literal interpretation to the promise of His ascension and a figurative application.

LITERALLY: The time was short for these Jews, they had Jesus with them and they should have used the time to listen, to learn, to think, and to apply His doctrine.

After He goes to the Cross, is resurrected from the dead, and ascends to the Father, the Jews will seek Him, to learn from Him. But He will be gone.

BUT BY WAY OF APPLICATION: Man today and in every age must redeem the time.

We may not have another chance. The unbeliever may not have another day to

believe in Christ and as Christians we may not have another day to take in Bible Doctrine.

The New Testament abounds with mandates to consider and use wisely the time we have.

Romans 13:11,12. And this do [love one another], knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation [ultimate sanctification] is nearer to us than when we believed.

The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Ephesians 5:16. Making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

Colossians 4:5. Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.

James 4:14. You [your lives] are a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

Revelation 22:10. Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

AT THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST the resounding chorus will be if I had only used the time the Lord gave me to seek Him.

AND AT THE GREAT WHITE THONE JUDGMENT (all unbeliever of all the ages) will be saying the same thing - why did I not seek the Lord when I had the TIME.

In Luke 13 the Lord gives us a parable regarding time.

Luke 13:23-26. And someone said to Him, Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?

And He said to them, Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, Lord, open up to us! then He will answer and say to you, I do not know where you are from.

Then you will begin to say, We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.

The ones who heard this prophecy of resurrection and ascension refused to understand.

The Jews therefore said to one another, Where does this man intend to go that we shall not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He?

John 7:36

What is this statement that He said, You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come?

While they answered with scorn and sarcasm they made a very correct statement - Israel will reject her King and even before the crucifixion we will see Gentiles, Greeks coming to seek Jesus.

The designation GREEK was used by the Jews for all Gentiles so we are the ones these rejecters were talking about and YES, they rejected so His word, His light went out to the Gentiles.

In Acts 26:23 Paul probably had in mind this statement when he said.

That the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He should be the first to proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.

NOW AT VERES 37 we move ahead to the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

John 7:37,38

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.

He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.

The feast of Tabernacles lasted for eight days. During the first seven days the major activity was outside the Temple. The high priest would go to the southern part of the city, the part called the city of David, and go to the well of Siloam with a golden cup, then followed by

thousands of people, would return to the Temple and pour the water over the altar.

On the eighth day the priest would stand at the altar and teach of the meaning of the water, the believer who has been washed of his sins and now has the power of the Spirit of God on Him.

BUT THAT WAS A SHADOW AND the shadow is now passed in the presence of Jesus Christ.

So Jesus Christ speaks out, He cried out saying, If any man thirst let him come to Me and drink.

Now this is interesting because all men in their fallen condition have a need that only God can fill but the 3cc is used because all men do not recognize this need.

Some live in denial and pretend to have it all together.

In the Old Testament, God warned Israel in

Jeremiah 2:13. My people, have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns, That can hold no water.

Coming to Christ recognizes that we have needs and that only Christ can fulfill our needs

Drinking of Christ fulfills our needs

An insertion by John the writer of this Gospel, which tells us how our needs will be met by Christ although He is now risen.

Can you imagine the frustration that this portion of Scripture would cause if this verse was not there. The reader would think that now that Christ has ascended, he would thirst and yet go thirsty, he would desire a relationship with Christ and yet He is gone - So John adds.

John 7:39

But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

And on the day of Pentecost, a year and a half after Jesus spoke this promise, He was at the right hand of the Father, He had ascended, and the Holy Spirit descended.

And since that day, when a person believes in Christ, when they come to Him because they are thirsty and cannot quench that thirst, they are indwelt with God the Holy Spirit.

And it is the Holy Spirit who comforts us, who encourages us, who guides us, who leads us, who teaches us, who empowers us, and brings us to greater dependence, greater faith, and greater friendship with Jesus Christ.

CHRIST HAS ASCENDED BUT HE HAS SENT THE HOLY SPIRIT.

John 16:7. But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

BUT AS WE CLOSE THIS MORNING let's remember where we began. We began in the midst of confusion.

And that confusion would be dispelled by the presence of Jesus Christ.

He will ascend, but the Spirit will descend.

Seek Him while there is still time - come to Him with your thirst, your need that only He can fill - come to Him and from your innermost being will flow rivers of living water.

In another passage, Matthew 11:28, Jesus said: Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden,

Heavy laden with confusion, with uncertainty, with burden and with needs that go unmet.

... and I will give you rest.

John 7:40-53

Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, "This certainly is the Prophet."

Others were saying, "This is the Christ." Still others were saying, "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He?"

"Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"

So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him.

Some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?"

The officers answered, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks."

The Pharisees then answered them, "You have not also been led astray, have you?"

"No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he?"

"But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed."

Nicodemus (he who came to Him before, being one of them) said to them,

"Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?"

They answered him, "You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee."

Everyone went to his home.

Chapter 8

We should not be surprised that in the midst of these chapters that show our Lord confronting the religious legalistic leaders of Jerusalem, that we see a case of attempted entrapment.

Remember from John 7:1 that many of the Pharisees in Jerusalem had already decided that Jesus had to be eliminated.

He posed a threat to them, to their religious establishment, to their control over the people, to the comfort zone they hiding behind which was made up of their

interpretation of the Old Testament Law and the addition of Rabbinic regulations.

As we noted last week, this story, which found its way into the later manuscripts, is best set at the end of John eight. Occurring the day following the close of the Feast of Tabernacles.

John 8:1

But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

The intensity of the interrogation, the constant rounds of argumentation that demanded the presentation of truth to those few who were positive and the many who had already rejected Christ, was tiring.

Jesus, in His humanity, needed rest, but more so He needed some time alone in prayer with the Father.

The Mt. of Olives, near to the Temple mount, and yet quiet and secluded, was the ideal place to retire.

The next verse moves us to the next day. We assume that the Lord spent the night on the Mt. of Olives. The fall weather would have permitted this and the many olive orchards and gardens would have provided a restful retreat.

The humanity of Christ needed to have rest and be refreshed, just as we do. Many times we see our Lord taking time alone, to rest, to pray, to be refreshed. The Lord paced Himself and so must we. We do not need a church of burned out, over worked, over tired believers. We may be stretched at times, so rest when appropriate, and endure when appropriate.

John 8:2

And early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began to teach them.

Our Lord's earthly ministry included miracles, parables, and teaching. Of these the one that had the greatest impact was His teaching of Bible doctrine. More believed in

Him as a result of this and more rejected because of this.

Our Lord was an outstanding communicator and teacher. And as people came He saw the importance of teaching them.

POSITIVE PEOPLE need to be taught Bible doctrine!

BUT THIS TEACHING will challenge and some will remain others will leave and some may even become antagonistic.

v 3 While the people came to learn, others came to entrap.

John 8:3

And the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the midst,

With this verse we have the setting of a confrontation between one group and two individuals. There are three factors in the dynamics of this situation.

The scribes and the Pharisees: We have examined the Pharisees and found them to be the most powerful of the Jewish religious groups in Jesus' day. They were set on obedience but necessarily to God and His Law. For the most part their rules and regulation preceded the Law and the Grace of God.

The scribes refer to a mixed group of men. Some were recorders and note takers. But many would be parallel to our lawyers. In this conspiracy and confrontation, the Pharisees sought out the best legal minds they could find among the scribes to join with them in their attempt to entrap this Jesus of Nazareth.

Secondly, we have this unnamed **woman who has been caught in the act of adultery.** Certainly an act of sin and a sin that was also a crime according to current legislation.

We know little about her but we can conclude that she was married. The Old Testament Law prescribed the death penalty for married partners in an adulterous situation.

Deuteronomy 22:22. If a man is found lying with a married woman, then both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel.

She had been caught in the very act of adultery.

John 8:4

They said to Him, Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act.

She was a sinner, caught in her sin, now surrounded, by a group of powerful religious figures.

And **then we have Jesus:** He has been teaching the Word of God and revealing to the people the grace, love, and compassion of God.

His teaching has challenged the restrictive, narrow, and inflexible regulations of the legalistic religious leaders.

The teaching of GRACE will confront HUMAN VIEW POINT at every turn. Man attempts to control, to restrict, to regulate, to enslave - Grace sets us free in Christ.

But Jesus Christ had not compromised in His teaching. For at least three days these leaders had been hearing about Grace, they had argued against Him, they gave it their best shot, and were shot down time and time again by the truth that was in Jesus.

Now they try their entrapment

John 8:4,5

Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act.

Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?

They called Jesus TEACHER. Now on five occasions in the Gospel of John people came to Jesus and addressed Him as Rabbi. But not the negative religious crowd. They would not give Him that title. To do so would give Him more credibility than they were willing to offer.

So the title TEACHER actually becomes in itself, somewhat of a subtle insult.

They tell him of the situation: This woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act.

Now how this happened is left to speculation. Some suppose that she was set up and the man she was involved with he was part of the scheme. Illicit lovers are usually more discrete. But somehow they caught her in the very act of adultery.

THEN THEY ASK THEIR QUESTION.

Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?

A QUESTION asked to entrap: A question can be asked for a number of reasons. Ideally a question is asked to seek truth, but often a question is asked in disagreement; to condemn, to censure, to denounce, to criticize, to entrap.

Verse 6 tells us very clearly what their intention is.

John 8:6a

And they were saying this, testing Him, in order that they might have grounds for accusing Him.

Two words are important in this scheme of the Pharisees.

TESTING HIM: This is PEI-RA-ZW and is most often translated tempt or temptation.

It was used of Satan tempting Christ in Matthew 4, of the Pharisees here in our passage and in Matthew 16:1.

In I Thessalonians 3:5 Satan personifies this word and is given the title, the tempter who tempts believers.

In James we are told this is something God never uses.

James 1:3. Let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

God may test you, may put you through a trial of faith, but He will never tempt you to sin.

He allows you to be tempted to prove to yourself your strength in doctrine, you advance in the word.

Here these religious leaders are tempting to entrap.

The word ACCUSE is a compound of a preposition and a noun.

KATA + AGORA The AGORA was the public market place and KATA means against.

This word referred to a public denunciation which was included as part of a judicial procedure.

They were not merely trying to trip up Christ in His words, they were attempting by temptation to get Him to contradict Himself so they could begin legal procedure against Him.

Nearly ten times in the Gospels we see the religious leaders attempting to accuse Christ.

In Revelation 12:10 this word is used as a title for Satan as was the word tempter.

For the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night.

That is what the Pharisees were trying to do with Christ and that is what Satan does, night and day, against us right now.

THESE TWO WORDS SHOW THAT THESE religious leaders were fulfilling Satan's evil plan that opposes Christ and now opposes Christians.

Their scheme was to tempt and accuse. It was a pretty well devised scheme:

- If Jesus refused to condemn the woman they would accuse Him of opposing the Law of Moses.
- If He said that she should be stoned to death, it would nullify His teaching of grace and compassion and they would accuse Him of being a fake.

But God is not to be tempted or trapped!

v 6b How did the Lord respond to this evil?

John 8:6b

But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground.

Some suppose that Jesus wrote Deuteronomy 22:22 which condemns to death both the man and the woman who are caught in adultery.

What Jesus wrote on the ground has become the question of two thousand years of speculation. If God wanted us to know, he would have told us.

Whatever He wrote, it was truth, it was the Word of God.

MORE IMPORTANT THAT WHAT WAS WRITTEN WAS WHAT HE DID.

HE STOOPED DOWN.

He actually stooped down twice. Look at verse 8, there he stooped down a second time.

The first time He stooped down he did so to make a point, the second time, because the point had been made.

John 8:7

But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, He who is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone.

This statement which is so well known today, is an indictment against judging others.

We have even modified this statement in our own language as an idiom - Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

When we recognize that we are sinners why do we persist in throwing stones at other sinners.

Matthew 7:1-3. Do not judge lest you be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's

eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

Romans 14:4,10. Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand - .

But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.

1 Corinthians 4:5. Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

How did these scribes and Pharisees react?

John 8:9

And when they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the midst.

They could not handle grace and compassion, they had become so accustomed to judging, condemning, accusing, maligning, that they could not stand in the presence of one who in whom there was no attitude of putting others down.

They had lived so long putting others down in order to put themselves up that they could not handle any other manner of life - they left one by one.

I WANT TO WARN YOU IN THIS: If you live by grace be prepared for those whose manner of life opposes grace to abandon you, one by one.

If you start living unto the Lord and put others in His hands, and stop putting people down, and start living by faith in a God who loves others just as much as He loves you, you will end up with a small circle of friends.

But what is lost in quantity is well made up for in quality.

After the religious crowd left, Jesus stood up. He now standing with one sinner, a woman who knew she was a sinner, who had been condemned by many, but would be saved by the ONE in whose presence she stood.

His eyes had been to the ground and now he stands.

John 8:10

And straightening up, Jesus said to her, Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?

No one was left to judge or condemn. They has silently stolen away. She was there the sinner with her Savior.

Jesus words were very simple and straight forward.

John 8:11

And she said, No one, Lord. And Jesus said, Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on sin no more.

She addressed Jesus as LORD and accepted the fact that He could forgive her. Jesus told her: Go and sin no more. She was brought to Jesus a sinner, she left saved.

She now had the power of this new relationship to set aside her sinful relationships. She now belonged to God through Jesus Christ.

Here slate was clean, her life was new. And in this newness of life she would now live.

Jesus Christ really says to each one of us, Go and sin no more, but we do sin, we do fail and fall.

But now we look to Jesus Christ, the one who can forgive sins.

John 3:17. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.

Jesus is in Jerusalem, it is the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Jewish religious leaders have rejected Him and continue to attack Him.

In this conflict with the Pharisees, we see four contrasts.

Light and Darkness

Life and Death

Freedom and Bondage

And Honor and Dishonor

Here begins the first round of these four conflicts.

John 8:12

Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.

What a wonderful promise. Jesus is at the Temple and on the last day of the feast the great the large lamps that has been lit during the feast were to be extinguished.

These lamps had lit the Temple mount during the feast. They were to remind the people of the presence of the Lord as their ancestors in the Exodus had been reminded of his presence by the pillar of fire.

The wicks were made of the robes the priests had worn for the prior year. This is a demonstration of the putting away of the old and the taking up of the new.

NOW THESE FIGURES POINTED TO Jesus Christ.

Perhaps it was as the great lamps were being extinguished that Jesus turned to the people and said.

I am the light of the world, he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

In the Psalms the Lord Himself was often described as LIGHT.

Psalm 27:1. The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread?

Psalm 36:9. For with Thee is the fountain of life; In Thy light we see light.

Psalm 89:15. How blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! O Lord, they walk in the light of Thy countenance.

BUT THESE ANTAGONISTS DID NOT SEE THE LIGHT AND IN the next verse they argue against the claim that Jesus is the light of the life.

John 8:13

The Pharisees therefore said to Him, You are bearing witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.

Light bears witness of itself: Have you ever flow in plane over the vast expanse of darkness. Then looking out the window you begin to see lights - the light bears witness of itself.

Just as Christ, the light of the world, bears witness of Himself.

In verse 14 He tells them:

John 8:14-20

Even if I bear witness of myself my witness is true because I know where I came from and where I am going.

You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone.

But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone *in it*, but I and the Father who sent Me.

Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true.

I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me."

So they were saying to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also."

These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.

BUT THEY SHOUTED BACK: *Your witness is not true!*

AND HERE WE SEE OUR FIRST Mankind, rejecting God and His grace, chooses darkness over the light.

Light can guide the path, it can make the way clear. But light also exposes what is there in the darkness.

Have you ever gone into a room, a dark room at night, and tried to look into a mirror. Doesn't work does it.

APPLICATION: In the same way, if man lives in denial of himself, he will avoid the light, because in the light he will see what he truly is.

We can, in the light of life, Jesus Christ, look at ourselves in the mirror of the Word and we can see what we really are, but more importantly what we are becoming in Jesus Christ.

It is in the light that we also see clearly our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here the conflict shifts to Life and Death.

John 8:21-27

He said therefore again to them, I go away, and you shall seek Me, and shall die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come.

So the Jews were saying, "Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come?'"

And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world.

Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

So they were saying to Him, "Who are You?" Jesus said to them, "What have I been saying to you *from* the beginning?

I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world."

They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father.

In verse 24 He twice tells them they will *Die in their sins* (plural).

In verse 21 the singular SIN sees their unregenerate state in Adam. Man is born a sinner. He is born into sin.

In verse 24 this state of sin is personalized by their acts of sins. They are locked into their sins and will die in their sin.

But there is a way out. *For if you believe that I am.*

He gives them an invitation to believe that He is the ever existing one.

The I AM title refers to Jesus as the ever existing one.

Isaiah 43:11. I, even I, am the Lord; And there is no savior besides Me.

But they continued to reject and argue;

In verse 28 He tells them there is coming a time when they will know.

John 8:28-30

Jesus therefore said, When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.

And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.

As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.

He looked ahead to the Cross, the reason He came. And said then you will know that I AM who I AM.

He was offering them a way out. A way to avoid the death that sin brings.

And we are told in verse 30 that many did believe but we also see that many did not.

They chose DEATH over LIFE.

Mankind, rejecting Christ, chooses death over life. Unbelieving man is like the living dead, they progress day by day until they die in their sin.

BUT JESUS CHRIST OFFERS LIFE:

John 20:31. But these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

AT VERSE 31 THE CONFLICT MOVES TO FREEDOM AND BONDAGE.

The description of a true disciple and its results.

John 8:31,32

Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

The true disciple of Jesus Christ is one who abides in His Word.

IF YOU ABIDE is a verb, an aorist, active, subjunctive.

This is a potential, an invitation for them to continue, to abide, to rest, to find comfort and peace in His word.

That is the way you follow Jesus Christ. Not by what is said or what is done, but by having a relationship with the Word of God. Resting, abiding in the Word.

And the result of that rest is FREEDOM.

Galatians 5:1. It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

REGARDLESS OF POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT, OF ECONOMIC STATUS, of class or citizenship, you can have a freedom in Christ that no one can take away.

Their reaction in verse 33 is very interesting.

John 8:33

They answered Him, We are Abraham's offspring, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, You shall become free?

We have to assume they were either very ignorant of their history as well as their

present political state of being or living in denial.

Many times God's people had been in bondage to other nations. To the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, the Persians, the Greeks, and even now, the Romans.

John 19:15. Pilate said to them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

They were not free, yet they lived in denial thinking themselves to have freedom, when in reality they were a nation in bondage.

But the freedom that Christ had to offer was not political freedom but a freedom from the bondage of sin.

John 8:34-36

Jesus answered them, Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.

The slave does not remain in the house forever, the son does remain forever.

If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

Man is in bondage to sin yet still refuses the freedom Christ offers.

Just like the prisoner who fears the real, outside world, so many live in the comfort of the bondage of sin and refuse the freedom they can have in Christ.

Romans 6 is the great chapter on our freedom from sin.

Romans 6:18 and 22. Having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness –

But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

But man would rather stay behind the bars of bondage then venture out into the reality of freedom in Christ.

Prisoners do not live in the real world, and prisoners do not have the abundant life they could have on the outside.

John 8:37-47

I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.

I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from *your* father."

They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham.

But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do.

"You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God."

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.

Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is* because you cannot hear My word.

You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.

Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?

He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear *them*, because you are not of God."

Now since these religious leaders could not refute the Lord's teaching they chose to attack Him personally.

John 8:48,49

The Jews answered and said to Him, Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?

Jesus answered, I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.

To call a Jew a Samaritan was a term of abuse and dishonor. The Samaritans were considered apostate by the Jews.

When a messenger or emissary is dishonored, the one who sent him is also dishonored.

Their insults were not defended by Jesus Christ, He did not counter attack.

But he tells them that He honors the Father.

John 8:50

But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges.

Back in verse 23 Jesus had made it clear that it was impossible to honor the Father without honoring the Son.

These religious leaders were seeking honor for themselves and glory for themselves.

Their tradition centered religion, without Christ, made them into a mutual admiration society for those who wanted, even demanded the praise of men.

And in their demands, they had no care or concern who they dishonored so long as they honored themselves.

SO THE FOURTH Man in rejecting Christ will dishonor God. Man cannot honor God without honoring Jesus Christ. Religion wants to only honor itself.

NOW AT THE END OF JOHN 8 THE LORD REPEATS again His invitation to these hardened antagonists.

John 8:51

Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.

The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the

prophets also; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.'

Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?"

Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God';

and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word.

And in verse 56 He clearly declares that He is God, the ever existing God

John 8:56

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.

And did they respond with joy in the presence of God their Savior, did they believe in Him, NO.

John 8:57-59

The Jews therefore said to Him, You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?

Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.

Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple.

One writer, looking at this chapter, makes an accurate observation.

The most difficult people to win to the Savior are those who do not realize they have a need. They are under the condemnation of God, yet they trust in their religion to save them. They are walking in darkness, and do not follow the light of life. They are sharing in a living death, because of their bondage to sin, and in spite of all their religious deeds, they are dishonoring the Father and the Son. These are the people who crucified Christ, these are the people who Jesus called the children of the devil.

Chapter 9

In the prophecies of Christ, Isaiah declared that when Christ would come that He would.

Isaiah 42:7. ".open the blind eyes."

Isaiah 29:18. " And that in that day shall - the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness."

Isaiah 35:5. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened."

In John 8:12 Jesus Christ revealed Himself as the "light of the world."

And now, as a public demonstration of that truth, he will restore sight to a man who was blind from birth.

In Jewish religion of Jesus' day, the false idea that sickness was a result of sin was very commonly held by the two major Rabbinical school (Hillel and Shammai).

This of course is not unlike some today who attempt to blame all ill health on a lack of faith or an activity of sin. The Rabbis went one step further as evidenced by the question the disciples asked of the Lord.

The location here is near the pool of Siloam which is about as far away as you can get from the Temple and still be in Jerusalem proper.

If you remember John 8:58-59, you know why Jesus was at the other end of town.

ALSO it was the Sabbath (John 9:14) and most of the religious antagonists were at the Temple - so Jesus was not, he was far away.

The disciples ask Jesus a question.

John 9:1,2

And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.

And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

In that question we see that the Rabbinical Schools have added considerable false doctrine to the way in which God deals with sinful man. The disciples did not ask if the blindness was or was not a result of sin but asked who sinned and cause the blindness.

Two part multiple choice.

1. "Did his parents sin:" Now while we know that certain pre natal activities can cause physical abnormalities and some of those activities can be classified as sin, that was not what these men were asking. They saw the sins of parents resulting in these physical handicaps, such as blindness.
2. Then they asked: "Did this man sin" - in order that he was born blind?"

NOTICE: He was born blind. When could he have sinned?

Jesus, very emphatically, puts an end to their faulty thinking.

John 9:3

NEITHER hath this man sinned nor his parents: He was born blind in order that the works of God might be manifested in him.

Now he is speaking in terms of their question. The man and his parents were sinner, but there was no sin of the parents or any sin in the womb that caused this physical problem.

The word MIGHT BE MANIFESTED It is an aorist, passive, subjunctive verb.

Aorist tense is a point in time. This blindness is in a specific point in time going to manifest the works of God.

The passive voice indicates that the man is not going to manifest the works of God but others will be caused to see the works of God in him and his condition.

The subjunctive mood shows that this may or may not occur. The potential is with others who see this man.

What this means is that the "Works of God" that Christ is speaking of is not the subsequent healing of the man and his telling others about it.

SO THE MAN IS BLIND not so Christ can heal him. If that was the case all persons born blind or all blindness in at least the time of Christ would have to be healed by Jesus.

SO THEN - WHY IS THE MAN BLIND?

Well, let's next look at the word itself: **phanairoo**.

It means "to make visible, apparent, to make clear, to make known, or to lay bare".

JOHN, our human author, uses it more frequently than any other writer.

At the first miracle of Jesus he wrote:

John 2:11. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

When speaking of the fallen condition of man, Jesus said in

John 3:21-22. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

SO THEN: The miracles were preformed to manifest forth Christ Glory and when we come to the light (who is Jesus Christ) our deed are manifested.

The closer we examine the works of Christ and come closer to him we think more of his glory and less of our deeds.

BUT REMEBER, we are still looking at this man born blind and asking ourselves why?

PAUL ALSO USED this word frequently.

Romans 1:16-20. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

This man was made blind, God allowed him to be born blind, and he was set among us, in order that we might come to a conclusion about ourselves and the power of God.

HE WAS PART OF GOD'S revelation in nature. Natural revelation can do two things.

- Bring us to a consciousness about God
- Or in this case: Make us realize that we are all blind on the inside.

God's work is manifested every time we look at someone who is blind and realize we are blind on the soul and we too need the touch of our Savior's hand.

Jesus, in His miracles, did not intent to eliminate human suffering but showed forth the power of God to everyone.

1. He restored sight to the blind: For we too are blind spiritually and He can give us sight to see the world through divine viewpoint.
2. He cured the lepers, and we are all lepers, shunned of the world, but befriended by the Savior.
3. He caused the deaf to hear: And we are all in need of hearing spiritual truth that comes from the mind of Christ.
4. He cured a woman who had an issue of blood which meant that there was no chance of production from her body. And

in the same way it is only because of Christ that we can have Divine production in us.

5. He caused the lame to walk as he causes us to walk in the Spirit, to walk in the Light, and to walk by means of faith.
6. He even raised the dead to life as he has raised us, who were spiritually dead in trespasses and sins and given us eternal life.

What God has set among us, in the physical world of pain, suffering, and sorrow, is a picture of what we are without the touch of master's hand.

In the prophecies of Christ, Isaiah declared that when Christ would come that He would.

Isaiah 42:7. open the blind eyes.

Isaiah 29:18. And that in that day shall - the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

Isaiah 35:5. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened.

In John 8:12 Jesus Christ revealed Himself as the light of the world.

And now, as a public demonstration of that truth, he has restored sight to a man who was blind from birth.

Jesus sets an urgency for the work He had to do and for the disciples also.

John 9:4,5

We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work.

While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

When Jesus goes to the Cross the night will come, blackness will enshroud the place of the Cross. The work of Christ on earth will be complete.

When He goes to the Cross He goes alone. The disciples cannot help Him. Now they to can minister now, but not them.

APPLICATION: We must sense an urgency regarding spiritual things. The time is now, not later. Later too often never comes.

Jesus then does a very normal thing in a very unusual way. he heals the blind man.

THIS IS A MIRACLE.

Getting excited about a miracle is like getting excited about book and never opening the cover.

MIRACLES, such as the one we have here are designed to focus attention on the power of God, to focus attention on the person of that power, the Lord Jesus Christ.

To often today Christians are excited about the miracle itself without ever looking to what the miracle is designed to do - focus our attention on Christ.

John 9:6

When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes,

John 9:7

and said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam which is translated, Sent. And so he went away and washed, and came back seeing.

Jesus heals the man in a very unusual way. he heals the blind man.

When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, and said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is translated, Sent). And so he went away and washed, and came back seeing.

Part of the activity of the feast of Tabernacle was this process in which the High Priest would go to a pool, draw water out of it and pour it on the altar, cleansing it? That pool was this pool, the pool of Siloam.

Water is often used a symbol of the Holy Spirit. And as this water was drawn from this pool and used to cleanse the altar, a place of

atonement or covering for sins, we see a picture of the Holy Spirit, washing the believing sinner from his sins and from the curse of the world.

BUT THERE IS A POINT I WANT TO GO BACK TO IN these two verses. I want to go back to the point at which Jesus took the ground and His spit and applied it to the eyes of this blind man.

IF A BLIND MAN COULD BE MORE BLIND HE WAS. He eyes were covered with mud, the dust and spit. He eye were covered with the curse of the earth but there was also the presence of the Word of God.

And ever since God first spoke to Adam, all the way through to the completion of the canon of Scripture, God's full counsel of Truth, to our present day, the Word has been in the World.

But the world is cursed. And yet that cursed world uses the Word. We see Bible verses inscribed on public building, we see men who do not know Christ as Savior use the Word. We even see those who use just the parts they like to promote their platform. The Word is HERE it is PRESENT but more often than not it just results in more blindness.

Just like that blind man, who even if he could see could not see, the world needs something more.

Just like that blind man the world needs to make it to the pool and there they will find the power of the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 10:22. Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS four ministry to the unbeliever who comes to Christ in Faith.

Regeneration: Titus 3:5 reminds us that God saved us:

not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His

mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit: At the moment of salvation the Baptism of the Holy Spirit places the believing sinner IN CHRIST where he shares in all Christ is and all Christ has.

The Indwelling of the Spirit: At the moment of Salvation the Holy Spirit indwells the believer breaking the power of the OSN and providing a place of residence for the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Sealing of the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit seals the new believer for ultimate sanctification, forever sealed by the Spirit.

Ephesians 4:30. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

BUT WHILE WE SEE THAT THE UNBELIEVER OF THE WORLD LIVES IN THE FALLEN WORLD with the Word but never making the decision of obedience to come Christ, to be washed in the pool, a lot of believers are in the same place.

WE TOO ARE IN THE WORLD, but we are not of the world. WE TOO HAVE THE WORLD, in abundance as we learn B.D. But are we too often not depending on the power of the Holy Spirit.

THE HOLY SPIRIT MINISTERS TO THE BELIEVER giving him or her the power to live the Spiritual Life.

IF YOU GO TO THE POOL YOU WILL FIND God. He will meet you there and there are six ministries the Spirit has towards us.

MINISTRIES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THE BELIEVER.

1. Comforting: John 15:26
2. Assuring: Romans 8:16
3. Teaching: John 16:12-15
4. Anointing: I John 2:20 and 27 (sent on a mission)
5. Guiding: Romans 8:14

6. Interceding: Romans 8:26

THE FALLEN WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE IS A REALITY THAT WE CANNOT ESCAPE, but God gives us His Word, from the very mouth of God, to be in the world but not of the world. We can have spiritual love, joy, and peace in a world of pain, heartache, and injustice. But not without the Spirit, not until we go and keep going back to the pool.

John 9:8,9

The neighbors therefore, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?

Others were saying, This is he, still others were saying, No, but he is like him. He kept saying, I am the one.

The illumination led to a problem of identification. The neighbors are asking who he is, rather than who is He who did this.

The neighbors had know him as a blind beggar, they knew who he was and what he did. Blind beggars beg.

But now he is not blind, and now he can contribute to society rather than just beg and be dependant upon society. He is not the same person, Jesus Christ has made him different than what he had been.

The neighbors see this difference, the beggar can now see, but they do not want to accept this difference. They cannot deny the fact that the one who was blind now sees but they will try to deny the reality, some how, some way.

Isn't it amazing the lengths people will go to in denying the power of God?

This man, who they have known for most of their lives, is now unknown to some and doubted by others.

WE BEGIN TO SEE THE WAY OF THE WORLD IN DENYING the power of God.

Questioning: Now questions are good, when they are asked to seek information. But the World does not want information. The world

is merely fascinated with their ability to ask questions.

Doubt: Is this the one who used to sit and beg? When the answers to the questions are refused and rejected, the World remains in doubt.

Doubt is not wrong, just like questions are not wrong. But when the answers are given, and then refused, we move to the third way the world denies the power of God.

Ignorance: This the attitude that denies the power of God by pretending ignorance. Thinking that if something is not believed by mere man it is not true. Ignorance, some say is bliss. But we are too often told in the Bible that ignorance must seek enlightenment. That we are not to be ignorant and when we are and we refuse the answers, we are denying the power of God.

Romans 10:2,3. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

For not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

Denial of Reality: Here this man was right in front of them. A man who had been blind. They knew him, yet some were denying that reality.

He had to keep on saying this because no one would listen to him, they were divorced from reality.

Debate: When the world gets the reality of the power of God thrown right in their faces, and the answers to their questions are given, and their comfort zone of ignorance is shaken, they ARGUE and DEBATE.

Ask enough questions, debate that which is established as real and true, argue loud enough, and you can deny almost anything.

This method of denial is referred to by one writer when he stated: Don't engage in arguments. But if cornered, ask an irrelevant

question and lean back with a satisfied grin while your opponent tries to figure out what is going on--then quickly change the subject.

And that is the sixth way the world will try to deny the power of God – **side-stepping**. Get off the real issue and on to some side issue.

The neighbors did this by asking HOW rather than WHO.

And the Pharisees get involved with Sabbath laws and whether or not Jesus was a sinner. They side stepped the issue of Jesus Christ.

The neighbors continue to question.

John 9:10-12

Therefore they were saying to him, How then were your eyes opened?

He answered, The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, Go to Siloam, and wash; so I went away and washed, and I received sight.

They said to him, Where is He? He said, I do not know.

With this we begin to see the approach the once blind man is taking to all this denial and debate: He tells them what he knows, and nothing more.

He does not suppose, he does not invent, he does nothing more than state what happened to him.

AND THIS APPROACH to the critics will become even more important, because he is going to end up in front of some very powerful people

John 9:13

They brought to the Pharisees him who was formerly blind.

The neighbors had questioned and the once blind man had given answers. But they did not like the answers. So they brought him before the Pharisees.

The word for BROUGHT is interesting in what it is not. We might conjure up a picture of the neighbors hauling this man, even by force, off

to the Temple to be examined by the Pharisees. But that is not the picture we are to have from the Greek text. A simple word, not even intensified, they brought him and he willingly went with them to the Temple.

HERE IS A MAN WHO WAS ONCE A BEGGAR, HANDICAPPED, REJECTED, SCORNED. And now even doubted and questioned. Going into the presence of the most powerful men, religiously and politically, of his day - and he is bold in his testimony.

AUGUSTINE noted of this man how interesting it was that he immediately spoke out so clearly: See, he preached the Gospel, endowed with sight he becomes a confessor. That blind man makes confession, and the heart of the wicked was troubled for they had not in their heart what he now had in his countenance.

Truth can be very disturbing if you do not want to hear or receive the truth.

This man's testimony is going to upset the most powerful men in Jerusalem.

This is not some seasoned seminary graduate who had walked with the Lord for decades. This is a once blind beggar who was willing to tell others what he knew and it shook the foundations of Jerusalem.

Truth is powerful, and the truth you have from the Word in you is like an atom ready to be split. Any truth you have in Jesus is more than the World has. We can proclaim, as Augustine said, confess what we know of Christ.

This inquiry became an inquisition. There are three rounds of inquiry with the Pharisees.

1. John 9:13-17: They question the man's position. What did he have to say about this Jesus?
2. John 9:18-23: They question the man's parents.
3. John 9:24-34: They question the man's proclamation.

John 9:14

Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

Just as soon as John mentions the Sabbath, you can see it coming. These Pharisees are going to get more involved in what tiny infraction of the Sabbath law might have occurred that with what really happened.

The man is master of concise statements of truth.

John 9:15

Again, therefore, the Pharisees also were asking him how he received his sight. And he said to them, He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see.

He doesn't use a lot of words but he gets truth across. This is what happened, this is what he knows, and he tells them what he knows.

But the Pharisees do not like what they hear.

John 9:16

Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath. But others were saying, How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs? And there was a division among them.

The Pharisees were divided in their common disagreement. Some opposed what had happened because the miracle was done on the Sabbath. Their Sabbath laws had been violated, Jesus, after all, had made clay on the Sabbath.

Others took a more simplistic line of opposition. How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs. Notice the plural, they were looking at the other signs Jesus performed as well as this one.

One group opposed the truth on a technicality, He violated their Sabbath laws.

But Jesus was offering them something greater than their Sabbath rest, a true spiritual rest in God that comes through Christ.

The other group opposed the truth by way of presumption and selective thinking. Man is a sinner, Jesus is a man, and sinner cannot do these signs.

Very faulty reasoning: What about Moses, Elijah, Elisha. Were they not sinners?

WE MUST NOT BE SURPRISED AT THEIR REJECTION. NOR should we be surprised at rejection of truth in our day.

More than 500 years before this day in Jerusalem, God spoke to Ezekiel and warned the prophet of the people who would reject truth.

Ezekiel 12:2. Son of man, you live in the midst of the rebellious house, who have eyes to see but do not see, ears to hear but do not hear; for they are a rebellious house.

In his final instructions to his disciples Jesus warned them and us of the World that would do all it could to oppose the truth we speak.

John 15:18-19. If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

When John, at the end of his life wrote his epistles, it was the many times he saw the world reject the truth that was in Jesus that prompted him to write.

1 John 3:13. Do not marvel, brethren, if the world hates you.

1 John 4:4,5. You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them.

In our Lord's prayer for us He said.

John 17:16-19. They [believers] are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth. As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

SO WE ARE NOT SURPRISED THAT THE WORLD, THE unbeliever PHARISEES refused to listen, to learn, to apply the truth that this once blind man was speaking.

They were masters of denial, they were skilled in side stepping, they were the chiefs of conflict, and experts in rejecting reality.

THEY ARE THE WORLD without Christ and without Christ they will not believe or listen to the Christian.

Paul wrote about this in 1 Corinthians

READ 1 Corinthians 2:9-16

In 1938 a Long Island man ordered for himself a long-desired barometer from Abercrombie and Fitch. The Barometer arrived the morning of September 21st and the proud owner took the high priced instrument and hung it on his back porch. An hour later he checked it and the needle was firmly stuck on Hurricane.

The man was irritated that this precision instrument had malfunctioned and quickly wrote a letter of complaint to the Abercrombie and Fitch demanding his money back. When he returned from the post office after posting the letter, the barometer was gone, so was his back porch and his whole house. You see, September 21st was the day a very small but powerful hurricane cut a path across Long Island destroying everything in its path.

The barometer was right - the man just lacked faith in the precision instrument. Just as we do today. We lack faith in that which is truth - the precision instrument of Faith, the Word of God.

The lines of division and dispute are being drawn. The once blind beggar now knows that he can see and tells them very simply, He applied clay to my eyes, I washed, I see.

And this brief and accurate statement of truth threw the Pharisees into a panic.

Some said this could not happen because it was the Sabbath and others said it could not

happen because Jesus was a man, a sinner, and sinners cannot perform miracles.

They majored in the minors, they side stepped the issue, they used selective thinking, wrong thinking.

All to avoid faith in Jesus Christ.

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE and why are they going to such extremes to discount the work of Christ and discredit the person of Christ?

At the time of Christ there were five religious political groups that competed for power in Judea. The largest by far, as high as 5% of the male population, was the Pharisees

SADDUCEES: A strong political party composed of the aristocracy of Israel. Rejected the resurrection and attempted to simplify their religion by adhering to only the books of Moses.

ESSENES: The people who wrote and preserved the Dead Sea Scrolls. A very closed and rigid society. Highly separatist and legalistic.

HERODIANS: Supporters of Herod. These Jews wanted peace with Rome and were willing to sacrifice Jewish tradition and Old Testament Truth to achieve it.

ZEALOTS: These were the right wing extremists who used the teaching of the Bible to validate their revolution and hatred of Rome. They were an underground, secret movement.

PHARISEES: These were the Jews who disdained political involvement with Rome but were not separatists in their community activity and involvement. They relied heavily on the tradition of the Rabbis as taught in the Talmud. Saw the written Old Testament as not being sufficient in dealing with current situations. Hence, the oral tradition of the Rabbis became equal in weight to the written Word of God.

IT WOULD BE VERY EASY FOR US, AND COMFORTABLE for us to look at these groups

and see Christians today who are very much like the Sadducees, Essenes, Herodians, Zealots, and Pharisees. But we are not here to be made comfortable and we are not here to point the finger at others who fail in the grace of God.

We are here to look into the mirror of the Word of God and see ourselves. To be made uncomfortable, if that is what it will take to allow us to share in the highest and best God our Father has for us.

CAN WE OURSELVES in these descriptions?

SADDUCEES: Do we involve ourselves in politics to the point of distraction from the Lord and His Word? Do we attempt to simplify our faith by setting aside or ignoring portions of Scripture? Do we reject what cannot be understood? Do we see ourselves as a church of the spiritual elite? A false aristocracy?

The Sadducees thought themselves to be better by birth, and we may fail the grace of God by seeing ourselves to be better, superior compared to others because we are born again.

ESSENES: Do we fellowship only with those who agree with us in every detail. And in doing so separate ourselves from others not because of major truths but minor differences. Are we more ridged than the Lord, and do we define ourselves by our legalistic standards.

Are we so busy condemning others and looking down at fellow believers that we can not look up into the face of Jesus our Lord?

HERODIANS: Are we so eager to make peace with society that we let slide the truths of our faith? Are we trying to fit in to the point that we are distracted by the world, and diluted by sin?

We may even be this way thinking we are making inroads for evangelism in our community, but as we set aside truth and

sacrifice our heritage we become like the world.

ZEALOTS: Any right wing extremists here. We have had them in the body of Christ. Those who take what they want of the Word and use it to validate hatred and violence. And as we have recently seen in Florida and Texas, even murder - in the name of Christ?

I have been in Churches where people have been so busy going to political rallies and meetings that they put that as a priority above the learning of the Word of God.

And then the **PHARISEES:** With numbers of 5% of the population, we can see this as the popular movement. Popular but not founded in the Word. Listening more to tradition, or to what they esteem as being right rather than consistent teaching of the Word.

Do we have tendencies towards Pharisaism? Do we identify with Christ because it is the popular thing to do in some circles? Do we, for the sake of popularity, trust more in tradition than the teaching of the Word?

In Matthew 15:3 Jesus asked these men who were so distracted:

And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?

NOW IN OUR PASSAGE we see what happens when we are distracted and into ourselves rather than into the Lord as were these Pharisees.

The once blind beggar come to the Pharisees with something they do not possess - TRUTH.

John 9:17

They said therefore to the blind man again, What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes? And he said, He is a prophet.

Here we see that this man has been thinking. He has had time now to consider what happened to him and to, more importantly, consider the Scriptures that he knew.

Back in verse 11 he called Jesus The Man.

But now in verse 17 he calls Jesus The Prophet.

The passage uses the conjunction OTI following the verb HE SIAD. Which makes this an affirmation of a truth, a very strong statement.

The Scripture that this man knew was the prophecy of Isaiah 42:15-20 that foretold that the Messiah, Jehovah's servant, would bring sight to the blind.

Now look at the words of this once blind beggar over in John 9:32 Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.

But it is back at verse 17 that he puts experience to Scripture and comes up with this conclusion: He is a prophet - the one promised by Isaiah.

NOW NOTICE THE CONTRAST: He came up with this and these learned Pharisees did not. He was thinking, they were merely reacting against what they did not want to believe in the first place.

John 9:18

The Jews, the Pharisees, did not believe Jesus was a prophet and they did not even believe that this man had been born blind.

In their negative volition they sought to discredit the work of Christ and the person of Christ.

Negative volition will always find a way, some way to get around the truth.

Once truth is presented, at salvation or in the C.C.L., and man comes by the Holy Spirit to a point of understanding he can either believe, reject, or doubt.

NOW IF YOU WERE TO ASK THESE PHARISEES if they believed in the Scriptures they would probably fall over themselves telling you they did. But they were negative as seen in our passage.

And that brings up an interesting observation. Negative volition can express itself in sometimes subtle ways.

Negative volition is always self justifying. That is, it must justify some excuse for rejecting truth.

A not very subtle way negative volition rejects the truth is by way of sin. This is placing the pleasures of sin above the serving the Savior.

Moses was faced with this choice as he made the decision to abandon Pharaoh's house and lead God's people.

Hebrews 11:24-25. By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.

What he did he did by faith, positive volition and trusting in the plan of God.

Much more subtle than sin is negative volition that justifies itself by rejecting the Bible itself. This is what we normally think of when we think of negative volition.

Too many people today think the Bible comes with a computer program that allows them to cut and paste as they chose. But we are called to learn, think, and apply the whole counsel of God's word.

People today play games with the Word that allows them to treat it like a supermarket, taking what they want and setting the rest aside.

But others speak highly of the Bible and yet are negative by their rejection of God's plan.

For the church age God established the church, first the universal church, the body of Christ, and then the local church. Believers gathered together to fellowship in the Word.

Now the local church is not perfect. It has too many sin natures in it. Too many people in it. But it is what God gave us and it is the only

institution that is divinely established for this age.

Negative volition wants to go it alone, worship under a tree or on a mountain top. Rejecting the Local Church because it is not good enough for them.

Some say the church is full of hypocrites, that is right, and there is always room for one more.

Some say they love the Bible, and love the Church, but can still be in the trap of negative volition by rejecting the form of communication God has established for this age.

In the age of Israel it was the prophets, and the people rejected them. In the first century of the church it was the Apostles, and people rejected them. And now it is the Pastor-Teacher, and people reject the whole concept of one person teaching in a church.

Instead we want to share, we want to be self taught, we want God to directly teach us. We so much want to be independent that we fail in being dependant upon what God has established. The forum that see a gifted communicator teaching the word PROS, face to face.

People come up with excuses about Pastor's not being perfect, being hypocrites, not teaching what they need at the time. But people, God has gifted some to teach and that was His divine plan for this age.

These Pharisees did not like the divine plan. They refused to believe and justified their negative volition by rejecting what this once blind beggar who was giving them truth had to say.

Negative volition will always find a way around the truth that is in Jesus.

When only a few are willing to study the Word of God, to pray with others, and accept leadership responsibilities, the result is comparable to a recent description of life in the United States by the Gannett News

Service. It released this commentary: America is rapidly turning into a class mass society, comprised of an elite that reads, votes, and runs the community and a mass that vegetates in front of the TV set.

The Christian community must be careful not to let itself become like a society with an elite that does the work and a mass that vegetates in front of the pulpit. The race to be run cannot be won by spectators. IN JESUS' DAY THE PHARISEES had assumed the position of being the spiritual leaders of Israel. As a result they were the ones who read and studied, who were involved, and they expected - even demanded that the masses follow them.

But Jesus did not conform to their plan, to their Rabbinical rules and regulations. They could not figure Jesus out. They could not control him. As a result they hated him. They hated what He did, and they hated those who followed Him.

They had failed in their interrogation of the man so now they decide that if they can prove that he was not blind to begin with or at least not born blind they can dismiss the man, the miracle, and the Messiah all in one fell swoop.

These Pharisees are exerting a great deal of effort in their attempt to disprove what happened. They are demonstrating a great deal of discomfort with this man who was blind and now sees.

This miracle, this man, this one who claims to be the Messiah of Israel has moved them out of their comfort zone and they do not like it - man does not like intrusions into his comfort zones.

They knew, as did this once blind beggar, that Isaiah taught that the Messiah would heal the blind and no one has done that, until now.

They had expected the Messiah to come from their ranks or at least conform to their ideas as to what the Messiah should be like and what He should act like.

To admit that this miracle actually occurred would also attest that this Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah.

Now remember that during the previous week at the feast of Tabernacles, Jesus taught and refuted the legalism and religion of the Pharisees.

Even prior to that Jesus had been the object of a conspiracy by the Pharisees to eliminate Him, even if it meant killing Him (John 7:1).

This put them between the proverbial rock and hard place but that is not bad - if the hard place that you created gives way to the Rock, who is Jesus Christ.

But they dug in, they held on to their convictions like a pit bull and will not stop at disproving the truth.

Sydney Harris, the writer, once said of convictions such as these Pharisees had: "I am tired of hearing of public men with the courage of their convictions; Nero and Caligula and Attila and Hitler had the courage of their convictions but they were wrong - and not one of them had the courage to examine his convictions or change them, which is the true test of something greater, character."

Today we see people with convictions but their convictions are wrong. As they were with these Pharisees.

When we are between the rock and the hard place we should rejoice because truth stand at the door.

THESE GUYS DID NOT LIKE TRUTH, THEY wanted to change it. They wanted to employ revisionist history and dismiss this man's blindness. So off to his parents they go.

John 9:19

And questioned them, saying, Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?

Notice the sarcasm, Who you say was born blind.

These parents had had a lot deal with over the years. A mother having a child, born blind. A father, having to care for a son who would never be able in that economy to do more than beg. For years they had lived with the heartbreak of a child unable to see.

And now he sees!!!

But the joy of the moment is taken away by the arrogant interrogation of the Pharisees, their religious leaders.

Religion will rob you of the joy the Lord wants you to have.

NOW THESE PARENTS WERE NOT a part of the miracle. But they become the object of interrogation by the Pharisees.

Where once they were rejoicing not they are being grilled by these powerful religious leaders who are trying to justify their own negative volition.

WE SEE IN THIS A WARNING: Watch out when negative volition goes on the offensive. No one is immune to its attack. These parents were by-standers at best and now are put to the test. Their joy has been robbed and now are in danger.

Very carefully they answer.

John 9:20,21

His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind.

But how he now sees, we do not know, or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself.

We see where our blind beggar learned to tell what he knows and nothing more. His parents were also people of truth, no more and no less.

They were not present when Jesus healed their son. They do not add nor subtract, they relate the facts they have first hand knowledge of.

This is our son - he was born blind.

Their lack of elaboration was a result of two things.

John 9:22,23

His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed, that if anyone should confess Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

For this reason his parents said, He is of age, ask him.

FEAR was a motive. The parents feared excommunication.

Three kinds of excommunication existed in the synagogue system.

Rebuke: Lasting from seven to thirty days during which time the person was ignored.

Thrusting Out: lasted for 30 days and could be renewed for 30 days. Forbidden to be with others even in prayer meetings. People were to treat him as a leper. If he died during this time, mourning was forbidden and stones would be thrown at the coffin.

Excommunication: The final stage which was until death. Total separation from synagogue and society. No one could eat with you, give you directions, or engage in any social activity. Did continue to have the right to buy food and clothing but was an outcast in all other areas of life.

It is most likely that the parents feared the second type of excommunication rather than the more severe form.

We also see the fear of excommunication mentioned in other situations in the Gospels.

John 12:42. Among the chief rulers also many believed on Christ; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

Secret believers (Like Nicodemus in John 7:50-51 defends Christ) but later very public as he asked Pilate for the body of our Lord and embalmed the body with myrrh and aloes (John 19:38-39) which made him ceremonially unclean for Passover.

ALSO NOTE: The parents were not wrong in their fear. Remember, there are legitimate fears and here they rightly fear the harsh actions of the Jewish leaders.

LATER ON Jesus would tell his disciples there is coming a time, after the cross and the beginning of the C.A. when they will be thrown out of the synagogues.

John 16:2-4. They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. And these things they will do, because they have not known the Father, or Me. But these things I have spoken to you, that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

A SECOND REASON THEY WERE BRIEF IN THEIR STATEMENT is found in verse 21: But how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he shall speak for himself.

They wisely use the word OIDA for KNOW. This would refer to perfect, first hand knowledge which they did not have. They are testifying as if in court and are not willing to give second hand information or hearsay.

They then make the statement: Ask him; he is of age, he shall speak for himself. In the ancient Jewish culture this meant that the man was past the age of 13 or 14 when he would have assumed the responsibilities of an adult (but without all the privileges until he was 30 years old).

His parents, who had had to care for him in his blindness since birth recognize he is an adult and can answer for himself. They recognized it was no longer their place to answer for him.

These were good parents who had done a good job of raising their son in spite of his disability.

Although they had had to care even more for him as a child and in his youth, they were now willing to let go and treat him as an adult.

We can be impressed with these parents in what they did not do more than with what they did.

The parents of this once blind man did not have to speak for him, they did not have to hover and rescue. They knew he would speak the truth and that would be his defense.

A while back, when we studied the doctrine of rejection we noted the principle that rejection says a lot more about those who reject you than it does about you. In our passage today we are going to see the religious leaders of Israel reject a man who had been healed by Christ, and in doing so they reject Christ. This says a lot about them.

John 9:24

So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner.

The Pharisees want the man to give the praise of this miracle to God rather than Jesus because they determined that Jesus is a sinner.

Here we have some pitifully confused people who are doing everything they can to discredit Jesus Christ.

The phrase: *Give glory to God*, is an aorist imperative.

This phrase, as seen in Joshua 7:19 and I Samuel 6:5 means to give the praise or glory to God so as to negate a previous act or word that would dishonor God.

They are not merely saying, *Praise God*, but saying that what this man has said so far dishonors God and now he must appeal to God by speaking the truth.

Common in the Near East to say a phrase like this if you have said something that is terribly out of place.

But the man doesn't see himself as having said anything inappropriate or out of place, so he will not acquiesce to the demands of the Pharisees.

John 9:25

He therefore answered, Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

Again, he tells them what he knows. He is still not sure about who Christ is. He has identified Him as a prophet but a more complete and effective understanding will come later in the chapter. But for now.

He doesn't get side tracked into some distracting theological discussion - says he doesn't know something and that is just fine, even for Pastors.

Start interrogating the poor guy all over again.

John 9:26

They said therefore to him, What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?

Again we go back to the ways men will express negative volition. Endless, useless questions repeated over and over again. Not to seek truth but to distract from truth.

Here is a classic response to negative volition.

John 9:27

I told you already and you did not hear, why do you wish to hear again (since you will not hear this time either), do you want to become his disciples?

When he says *Do you want to become his disciples*, he uses a aorist, middle, infinitive.

For their benefit, at a point in time, as a result of hearing they would be caused to become a disciple of Jesus Christ.

This is not sarcasm but an invitation to become a follower of Jesus Christ.

The reaction of negative volition.

John 9:28,29

They reviled Him and said, Thou art his disciple but we are the disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses, but for this man we do not know where he comes from.

John Calvin studied this word in as it appears in I Corinthians 4:12 and said that.

"Reviling" is a harsh railing which not only rebukes but sharply bites into a man and stamps him with contempt. This is to verbally wound a man in the most severe way. This is loud and very abusive accusations.

Whereas Jesus healed the man, religion wounds the man. True then and true today.

When negative volition runs up against the truth it has no where to turn but to its own ranting and ravings. It in its ranting and raving it does not care who is hurt.

Go back to John 7:28. Prior to that verse, the leaders and the people are talking about who Jesus is. The people conclude that He is the Christ but the leaders were rejecting him.

John 7:28. Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.

John 7:41. Others were saying, This is the Christ. Still others were saying, Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He?

BUT NOW, in our passage of John 9:29 the Jewish leaders are saying they do not know from whence Jesus comes.

So in their verbal attack of this man, they refuse to admit to any knowledge of Jesus whatsoever.

Negative volition will reject what is even common knowledge to justify its negative volition. This is defense by denial, feigning ignorance as if that will remove the responsibility to the truth.

In witnessing I have seen people reject the fact that they sin, reject the fact that God exists, even reject that they are part of the human race.

NEGATIVE VOLITION is irrational, illogical, but worst of all, it is abusive and insensitive in its self justification.

We also see in their reaction to the man's invitation that they appealed to their association with Moses and that they were disciples of Moses.

You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.

The word DISCIPLE refers to one who learns from another. But they have not learned from Moses what this once blind beggar had learned. He knew that this Man had to be a prophet, like unto Moses.

In John 9:30-33 the man gets a chance to respond.

John 9:30

The man answered and said to them, Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes.

This man is putting more thought into what happened every time he opens his mouth. Now he brings up the fact that the Messiah was prophetically said to open the eyes of the blind (Prophecy of Isaiah).

The word MARVELLOUS means something that needs to be closely looked into. Thus, means to be astonished but with the result of looking into the situation which the Pharisees refused to do.

Negative volition refuses to investigate.

In the Gospels we see this word and its related words from the same root used as people marveled or were astonished by Christ's words and deeds.

But we also see what made the Pharisees marvel.

In Luke 11:38, we see what great theological issues and matters of spiritual life moved this learned leaders of Israel to astonishment. Jesus had been invited to dinner and as he sat down to eat.

Luke 11:38. And when the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal.

So while the world marveled at Christ's work and words the Pharisees were astonished by unwashed hands.

So it is today with legalism. More time spent with the do's and the don'ts than with the living and written word of God.

John 9:31

We know that God does not hear sinners, but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.

In this verse the formerly blind man begins to teach the Pharisees a few principles of truth.

We know that God.

This is a very bold way to address these leaders. Telling them something that they should know. The man states that which is, or should be, commonly understood by all.

Does not hear sinful men But if any one is god-fearing and does His will, God hears him.

This man is very clearly attributing his ability to now see to God and recognizing that it was Jesus Christ who was the channel for this divine miracle.

He states that God does not respond in power to a sinful man (one OOF) but will listen to one who is.

NOTICE WHAT HE HAS DONE: He has trapped the Pharisees. They have to either say they are not sinners, which they know would be blasphemous, or that even they cannot fulfill the will of God.

He now will draw a conclusion regarding the man, the prophet who restored his sight.

John 9:32,33

Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.

If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.

A very strong statement of numerous negatives, each one driving home the point that for Jesus to do what he did meant that he was from God.

The man is recalling the prophecies of Isaiah that tell us that only the Messiah, when He comes, will open the eyes of the blind.

That is one miracle that no one had ever done as they were used of God. That miracle, which parallels and teaches that we all are blind and we all need our a miracle to see spiritually would be accomplished by the Christ.

While we see this man convinced that Jesus is from God, the Pharisees are set in their negative volition and refuse to hear anything further.

John 9:34

They answered and said to him, You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us? And they put him out.

The word CAST OUT is EX-BALLW: Threw him out.

Negative volition will come to a point where it will refuse to even listen to the truth.

So where are these religious leaders now? No better off than where they began. They refuse to move out of their negative volition and to faith in Christ.

THREE PRINCIPLES ABOUT THE MAN.

1. This formerly blind beggar was without portfolio. He was a theological scholar, not even a teacher. His only claim to fame was not even in himself, but in the Master, Jesus Christ. Yet he was mightily used of God as God can use ever one of us. Are you blind, do you think you are too young, too

old. God has a plan for you and that plan includes service.

2. The man spoke the truth. He declares what he knows not what he does not know. We are called to communicate Christ. Every believer is a teacher, tell the world what you know.
3. As he spoke the truth, more truth came. He connected truth with truth, precept upon precept. And he stood not his ground, but the Holy ground of the Lord against this entire assembly of religious leaders. We take our stand in Christ's strength, not our strength. When we are weak, then His strength is revealed.

THREE PRINCIPLES ABOUT THE PHARISEES.

1. Religion and legalism is more concerned with proving its position than seeking the truth.
2. Religion wounds those who get in its way. There is compassion in Christ, in religion there is only contempt.
3. When religion is unable to get its way, it will discard the ones who do not agree with them.

They threw out the man - but who was there to catch him? The Lord Jesus Christ:

John 9:35

Jesus heard that they had put the man out and He found him. He said, Do you believe in the Son of Man?

Do not be surprised when the world, religion, legalism throws you out, rejects you, ignores you. But neither be surprised at Who is there to catch you.

Jesus Christ will come and find you also and then, with Him, you have rest.

Confidence in God produces Courage in the face of men.

1. When his neighbors questioned him he told them what the man called Jesus did in healing him.

2. When questioned by the Pharisees, he proclaimed that this man Jesus was a Prophet.
3. As the questioning continued he even invited these Pharisees to become disciples of Jesus Christ.
4. And before it was all over he stood solidly upon the Old Testament Scriptures that this miracle was unique, unheard of in the prior age.

Courage in life can only come from confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ which is available through His Word

This man had been through a great deal and now had endured being verbally attacked and physically removed from the presence of the Pharisees.

He had held up well, showing fantastic courage, but now he needs to be encouraged - when your courage reaches its limit you need to be encouraged.

I cannot read this passage without wondering what this once blind beggar was thinking about his gift of sight. Ever since he was healed, he has had nothing but trouble. Friends and neighbors asking critical questions, the religious leaders interrogating him not once but twice. His parents pulled into the arena of argumentation. And now, he has been harshly criticized, openly accused of sin, and thrown out of the meeting of the Pharisees.

He might be thinking that it was better when he did not see. When all he was an insignificant blind beggar, easily overlooked, more easily forgotten.

FOR THESE FEW MOMENTS, what ever the breath of time, from when he was thrown out and until Jesus found him - he was alone. He could see! He now had what he had perhaps always dreamed of, sight! But he was alone. A lonely man who now can see even more clearly his loneliness.

GOD HAD GIVEN HIM THE GIFT of sight. But that was really not enough was it? It meet a need, a physical need. But now, alone at the Temple, surrounded by people, he was alone. His deeper, crucial needs were not met by being able to see.

At one time, I am sure that if you would have approached this blind beggar, but a few coins in his tin cup, asked him what he needed most in life, he would have responded without hesitation - to SEE.

But now he sees, and now he sees that seeing is not everything he thought it would be. He is alone and the darkness of loneliness will bring a pain to the soul that goes far beyond physical disability.

C.S. Lewis said: We are born helpless and as soon as we are fully conscious we discover loneliness. We need others physically, emotionally, intellectually. We need them if we are to know anything, even ourselves.

We might think that having lots of friends, knowing many people and being known by many might cure our loneliness. But it was Albert Einstein who said. "It is a strange thing to be so universally known and yet be so lonely."

The cure for loneliness is not keeping busy, not new faces and places, they may ease the pain, temporarily, but the cure is in Christ.

How comforting is the promise: I will never leave you nor forsake you.

And it is the One who makes that promise who seeks out and finds the man who was once blind.

A Few Observations.

- Throughout this chapter, the man held onto the few things that he knew about Jesus' work and person.
- During the miracle itself we see the elements of the Word of God, the inability of man under the curse, and the power of the Holy Spirit all effecting this man who was born blind.

- Once he sees, physically and spiritually, he comes under attack.
- Every attack is, however, an attack against the work and person of Christ.

Matthew 25:40. Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

- His understanding of the work of God, howbeit very little, resulted in a confidence in God and a courage before men.
- Here is a beggar, facing the most powerful men in Jerusalem, asking them if they wish to be Jesus' disciples and then teaching them principles of Old Testament prophecy.
- As soon as he runs out of specific doctrine to apply to the situation, the Lord is there to encourage.

The Lord will never leave you nor forsake you. You may come to the end of your strong rope of doctrine in your soul, but the Lord will always be there with more to encourage.

In verse 35, Jesus asks him a question: Do you believe in the Son of Man?

Jesus uses the title Son of Man not only to emphasize his humanity but also to emphasize his authority.

1. In John 9:33, the man who had been healed had come to the point of realizing that Jesus was from God:

If (and it is not true that) he was not from God, he could do nothing.

Thus, Jesus uses the title Son of Man to place emphasis upon his humanity.

2. This title is also Prophetic. In Daniel 7:13-14:

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a

kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

3. In that Prophetic title we see six aspects of Jesus' Ministry.

- a. He is the one who receives divine prerogative and authority
- b. He is the one who receives the Glory of God's plan
- c. He is the God-man, from heaven (John 3:13).
- d. His mission is to redeem mankind
- e. He is to be served by all mankind (Savior or Judge)
- f. His kingdom is eternal

4. In using this title, therefore, Jesus identifies himself as the promised Messiah.

v 36 The man wants to know the Son of Man:

John 9:36

Sir, tell me who he is in order that I may believe in him.

Information must precede faith. Faith must have a direction.

John 9:37

And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him (perfect tense, seen in the past see now), and it is he who is speaking with thee.

THE MAN'S RESPONSE:

John 9:38

And he said, Sir, I believe and he worshipped him.

Once he knew that Jesus, the man, the prophet, who was from God - was the Messiah, he believed in him and worshipped him.

Probably got on his knees or bowed his head in the presence of the Son of Man, the Messiah of Israel.

JOHN 9:39-40

Apparently there were a few Pharisees around so now Jesus directs his comments to them.

v 39 And Jesus said: For Judgment I came into this world.

This may appear to contradict Jesus statement in John 12:47 but it does not.

And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.

In John 12:47 Jesus is saying that he came at the first advent not in order to judge, but provide salvation. Now at the second advent he will judge the earth.

Here in John 9:39 he concurs, saying that any judgment is for the same purpose - salvation.

In order that the ones who do not see might see and the ones seeing might become blind (so that they can see spiritually).

TURN WITH ME to Isaiah 42:19-20

Who is blind but My servant, Or so deaf as My messenger whom I send? Who is so blind as he that is at peace with Me, Or so blind as the servant of the Lord? You have seen many things, but you do not observe them; Your ears are open, but none hears.

v 40 Typically with the Pharisees that can not get past the literal to the spiritual. They think only in secular, material terms.

They really are blind, so blind that they cannot see that they are blind.

And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?

v 41 Jesus answers their inability to perceive or hear the truth.

Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, We see, your sin remains.

IF (a 2nd cc. EI with the indicative + AN)

We could call this the second cc of arrogance

EXPANDED: If you were blind (helpless) you would not have the sin of disbelief but now you say we see (no helplessness or dependency) the sin of disbelief remains.

This whole chapter and the story of the healing of the man who was born blind demonstrates that God, in His Son Jesus Christ, provides his power, confidence, and courage to us when we are the most helpless.

Paul would, a few decades later, proclaim that in his weakness he is made strong by the power of God.

II Corinthians 12:9-10 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

LET US REMEMBER THAT WE TOO WERE BLIND, SPIRITUALLY UNABLE TO SEE, UNTIL WE MEET JESUS CHRIST.

LET US USE THE FREEDOM WE HAVE TO BE WEAK BEFORE GOD AND THEN HAVE HIS STRENGTH. INTRODUCTION:

Some of you will remember when the T.V. program Candid Camera first was produced. They would go to great lengths to pull their gags on unsuspecting people. One I recall was when they went to a very exclusive Prep School and posed as career counselors. After putting a group of young men through a battery of tests they held personal interviews to give these students the results. Now these students were anticipating going to Harvard, Yale, Stanford, majoring in prestigious programs, seeking prestigious degrees. You

can imagine the looks on their faces when one by one they were told that their test had been scored and interviews reviewed and the career choice they were best suited for was to be Shepherd - sheep herders. You can also imagine their relief in hearing smile you're on candid camera.

Today in our study we are going to see Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

Chapter 10

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER TEN, VERSE ONE (vv 1-16).

In this passage, in which Jesus presents Himself as the Good Shepherd, we have three separate analogies used.

The shepherd in the Morning: Coming to the sheep fold to retrieve his sheep (vv 1-5).

Secondly, the shepherd with the sheep in the pasture during the day (vv 6-10).

Thirdly, we see the shepherd in the evening: The shepherd protecting his flock from danger (vv 11-16)

v 1-5 THE FIRST ANALOGY: The shepherd comes to gather his flock.

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. And a stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.

Coming on the heels of the former blind beggar's expulsion from the Pharisees, we can see that Jesus begins with the conclusion in this first analogy.

Anyone one not properly entering into the sheep fold is a thief and a robber. He refers to the Pharisees.

It is a shame that this verse is taken out of context and so often used to describe our entrance into heaven. Heaven is not in view in these analogies, but the abundant life we can have in Christ is in view.

Israel is the sheep fold, the Old Testament prophets, and kings, and priests represent the porter.

IN THE ANCIENT WORLD the shepherd would take his flock to a sheep fold for the night. There was only one entrance into this low walled arena. A porter would sit in the opening, he was called the door. His job was to protect the flocks.

In the morning the shepherds would come and the porter would let them in, they would call to their sheep and their sheep would follow them out of the sheep fold.

v 3-4 Describe the calling forth of the Sheep.

To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.

1. The doorkeeper, the porter, opens only to the Shepherd. The prophets of the Old Testament, including John the Baptist, opened their fold only to the Messiah.

2. The shepherd calls his own sheep by name. The Lord Jesus knows who are his intimately.

3. The Shepherd leads the sheep, the butcher drives the sheep. The sheep follow the shepherd.

4. They follow Him because they know His voice. The voice is used to communicate the Word and the one who follows Christ follows the Word.

In this first analogy there are two others present: The thief and the stranger.

v 1 Looks at the thief who would scale the wall of the sheep fold by night and attempt to steal the sheep.

This is an indictment against the Pharisees who attempted to steal the once blind beggar away from Christ and the power of Christ that he experienced

v 5 Looks at the stranger who comes to the sheep fold, calls the sheep, but they do not follow.

This is a reference to any stranger who comes along and attempts to call God's sheep to himself. He is trying to build a flock by calling the sheep who belong to another.

SOME APPLICATIONS FROM THIS FIRST ANALOGY.

1. There is only one Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one who calls us out of the fold, to be a part of His flock.

2. As He sits in present session at the right hand of God, He has appointed under-shepherds to shepherd His flock.

This is the PASTOR who is a gifted communicator of doctrine who holds the office of Pastor-teacher in a local assembly.

His office and his work is described in I Peter 5:1-4 and in Ephesians 4:11 and following.

3. The sheep, the believer is to identify their pastor and listen to his voice.

4. The believer-sheep is to be wary of strangers, who call but not with words that are consistent with sound doctrine.

Hebrews 13:9 Do not be carried away by varied and strange doctrine.

II Timothy 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.

v 6 The disciples and others who were with Jesus did not understand what He was saying:

This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them.

But rather than explain the illustration, which was intended to indict the Pharisees, He moved on to another sheep analogy that was pertinent to his followers.

v 7-10 The analogy of the Shepherds care for his sheep in the pasture.

Jesus therefore said to them again, Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.

The shepherd would retrieve his sheep from the sheep fold and then take them to the pasture to graze.

In the pasture the shepherd would erect a small enclosure for his sheep. The shepherd was the DOOR to this enclosure.

The sheep of his flock could go out to the pasture or, if frightened, return to the enclosure where the shepherd protected them.

v 8 All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.

Even while in the pasture the sheep must not listen to the thieves and robbers. These who came before are the false prophets, the religious leaders, who are out for themselves with no regard for the health of the flock.

Like the sheep ranchers in Australia, no shepherds. They let the wolves take their toll on the sheep but because there are so many sheep, there is still a profit. No protection, no care, of the sheep. Only profit.

v 9 I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

The sheep are already a part of the shepherd's flock so this is not salvation.

The word SAVED can refer to initial salvation, when we were born again. Or to ultimate sanctification, when we will through death or rapture be with the Lord in heaven forever. Or to the deliverance we experience in the Christ Centered Life in time.

That last use is the use we see here. To the believer, we are delivered from the dangers of life, by the shepherd.

SHEEP are defenseless, and we as Christians are also defenseless in the devil's world.

Our responsibility is not self-protection. Our responsibility is to let the shepherd protect us. He is the door, He has given us the freedom to go out and to come in, we are free as believers to depend upon Him.

And when we do, verse 10 becomes a reality.

v 10 The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.

The thief comes to feed himself, to destroy the flock. He is there for self interest and not to give to the sheep but to take from them.

But the good shepherd came - that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.

The Greek test reads: I came (aorist tense) in order that life they may have and abundantly they may have it.

Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, gives eternal life. But that life is to have a quality not only in eternity but right now. It is to be an abundant life that lasts forever.

ABUNDANT is PERISSOS and is a comparative noun used to translate the idea of more, superabundant, great, more than enough, and exceeding a certain measure. Excellent or better.

THAT IS WHAT A LIFE IN CHRIST, a life in which He delivers us is all about. Look around, is your life more excellent than the unbeliever, is it better, is a life that is super abounding.

Not in fame or fortune, but in a quality of life that goes beyond human understanding. An abundance of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, long-suffering - all from the one who is your shepherd, the door, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Your relationship with Christ is what will determine abundance or destitution in your quality of life.

And your relationship to the Savior, the Shepherd is determined as you listen to His voice.

Bible Doctrine, the very words of Christ, is the only way to have the abundance of life He desires you to have.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION if you have been separated from the shepherd. You're a sheep on your own, not having the abundant life?

Mark 6:34 And when He went ashore, He saw a great multitude, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.

Jesus solution then was the same as His solution now, teach the sheep. We let the shepherd be our door or protection, our abundance for life, when we listen to His teaching.

C. H. Spurgeon once said, I have all things and abound; not because I have a good store of money in the bank, not because I have a good skill and wit with which to win my bread, but because The Lord is My Shepherd.

SOME APPLICATIONS FROM THIS SECOND ANALOGY.

1. Our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, is the one who protects us. He is the door that stands

between us and the dangers of the Devil's world.

2. Our Good Shepherd is the one who delivers us as believers from danger.

3. Because of our Good Shepherd we have the freedom to go out and come in and find green pastures of peace and security in Him.

4. Our relationship to our Good Shepherd is the key to our abundant life in Christ.

5. Our relationship to the Good Shepherd is through our listening to His voice, learning his word.

We will deal with the third analogy next week but let's not forget that what the Good Shepherd knows is good for the sheep is not always what the sheep thinks is good for them.

A lady visiting Switzerland came upon a sheepfold located high on a mountainside. Her attention was drawn to one poor sheep lying by the side of the road bleating in pain. Looking more closely, she discovered that its leg was injured. She asked the shepherd how it happened. I had to break it myself, he answered sadly. It was the only way I could keep that wayward creature from straying into unsafe places. From past experience I have found that a sheep will follow me once I have nursed it back to health. Because of the loving relationship that will be established as I care for her, in the future she will come instantly at my beck and call.

WITH OUR HEADS BOWED AND OUR EYES CLOSED.

We have a Good Shepherd and we pray that as He does what is best for us we will listen to his voice, and follow Him. But for some of us He may have to break our legs to establish his loving relationship with us.

We are all sheep who have gone astray. Let us listen to the words of our Shepherd, and return to fold. He is calling and His sheep hear His voice.

Maybe you are here this morning as a sheep without a shepherd. You have never believed in Christ as your Savior. If that is the case you can become a Christian right now. The choice is yours to believe, have faith in Christ, trust in Him, as your Savior. v 11 But be warned, just as there are wolves in sheep's clothing there are also hirelings who wear the garments of the shepherd.

The third analogy then looks at the reason Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd.

Wolves commonly feed in the late of the day. This analogy looks at the shepherd in the evening, protecting his sheep.

I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. He who is a hireling, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf snatches them, and scatters them. He flees because he is a hireling, and is not concerned about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me.

The religious leaders of Israel and of any day are the hirelings.

When I was in Seminary there were some who would not even consider taking a church if the salary was not high enough. They set money as a standard for service.

Pastors have quit churches because they did not feel they were well enough paid.

That is a hireling and a hireling will never be a good shepherd.

Notice in this analogy the Lord tells us four things about a Good Shepherd.

1. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep
2. The Good Shepherd is the one who owns the sheep
3. The Good Shepherd knows intimately his sheep

4. The Good Shepherd brings other sheep into the fold INTRODUCTION:

The brilliant historian H. G. Wells in his book *First and Last Things* said that he was repelled by Jesus, whom he called "this image of virtue, this terrible and incomprehensible Galilean." Wells said he was far more attracted to Oliver Goldsmith, a charming, witty literary genius whose conduct was often immoral, deceptive, and dishonest. Always in debt, Goldsmith once tried to raise money by posing as a doctor. When he died at age 44 from a misuse of drugs, his last words were a pathetic admission that he had no inner peace. Yet Wells favored Goldsmith over Jesus!

Faith in Christ, is a choice, a decision man makes of his own free will. In our passage today we will see some who refuse to believe in the Savior.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER TEN, VERSE 19 (vv 19-30).

The PRINCIPLE we see in these verse is that TRUTH causes CONTROVERSY.

When the truth is God is presented to mankind it is not presented as a mere other option. Truth is truth and is absolute, it is final, and it in itself is an authority.

When men here the truth spoken, they are left with a decision to make - do I believe it or not?

Some believe the truth that Jesus spoke and others did not.

v 19 There arose a division again among the Jews because of these words.

THESE WORDS refer to the three analogies Jesus used to present himself as the Good Shepherd of His sheep.

The word DIVISION is SCISMA from which we get the English word schism.

This word looks at a division, a tearing apart, to move from being one into factions. In the LXX it also is used to refer to a violent of

forceful tearing apart. It is used for splitting wood and rocks.

Paul, in I Corinthians, condemned the believers who were dividing into various groups and used the same word in I Corinthians 1:18, 11:18, and 12:35.

v 20-21 Define the two factions.

And many of them were saying, He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him? Others were saying, These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?

The majority of the Jews, John's term for the religious leaders, were saying that Jesus was demon possessed and that He was insane. Others, a minority, were saying that that was not possible because of his miracle of giving sight to man born blind.

This division was later echoed by C.S. Lewis, a professor at Cambridge who was at one time an agnostic when he said.

I am trying to prevent anyone from saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God. That is one thing we can never say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would be either a lunatic-on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg-or else he would be the devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse.

And that is what truth, when properly taught, as Jesus taught it will do. It will force man to make a choice. Either Jesus is the Lord, or a lunatic, or a liar.

Either the Bible is truly God's Word to man, it is truth, or it must be discarded as having any basis in reality.

NOW SOME OF THE JEWS were thinking. They put some doctrine that they had together. They knew that the promised

Messiah was predicted to do one miracle no one else had ever done, give sight to a man born into darkness.

They knew that Jesus had done this the previous day to a man they knew was a blind beggar.

They applied the doctrine they had to the situation they were in and made a decision. This Jesus of Nazareth could not be demon possessed, nor could he be insane. But instead, is the promised Messiah.

SO THE TRUTH WILL DIVIDE BELIEVERS FROM unbeliever

IN JOHN'S GOSPEL SEVEN THINGS ARE SAID ABOUT TRUTH.

1. John 1:14 and 17: Jesus Christ is the possessor and the revealer of grace and truth.

2. John 4:23: The true worship of God must be done in the Spirit and in Truth

3. John 8:32: If we know the truth we can be free from the bondage of sin. Know the truth and the truth shall set you free.

4. The truth can be rejected and disbelieved by those who have negative volition. Truth alone cannot bring faith, faith must be added to truth.

5. John 14:6: Jesus Christ said He was the way, the truth, and the life. And that apart from Him, His way, the truth, eternal life, no one comes to the Father.

6. John 17:17: Truth is found in the Word of God

7. John 17:19: The believer is sanctified in time in the truth.

The last mention of truth in the Gospel of John is not found on the lips of the Savior but is spoken by Pilate and very well summarizes the attitude of the world towards the truth that is Jesus Christ.

John 18:38 Pilate said to Him, What is truth?

BACK TO JOHN 10:22

v 22-23 We move ahead about three months to the Feast of Dedication. This feast is also called Hanukkah and occurs in our month of December.

It was a feast that developed in the inter-testamental period and celebrated the victory of 164 BC when Judas Maccabaeus drove Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria out of Jerusalem.

At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon.

The portico of Solomon was an interior area of the Temple. It was winter and cold so Jesus is walking in this area when He is cornered by the Jews.

This continues the visit to Jerusalem that began back in John 7 and if you remember He delayed in going to the Feast of Tabernacles because of the plot to kill Him. But once in Jerusalem, He saw the plot was not that strong and the protection by His heavenly Father was stronger. So He remained in Jerusalem from October to the end of December.

Even Jesus was sensitive to the will of God for His earthly life. He changed His plans as the Father opened door of ministry for Him.

v 24 The Jews therefore gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.

TO GATHER AROUND actually means to corner or surround. The Jewish religious leaders cornered Him and demand some answers.

The word SUSPENSE is interesting in that it really the word SOUL, but is part of an idiom meaning to hold one's soul in suspense because of a lack of information.

NOW THEY ARE ASKING JESUS to tell them plainly if He is the Christ.

I can imagine that Jesus gave out a sigh. All along He has been telling them that He is from above, that He is from the Father. Back in John 8:58 He told them that He existed before Abraham and that He was God. They even wanted to stone Him because of what He had said.

BUT NEGATIVE VOLITION REJECTS EVEN WHAT is plainly given.

v 25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these bear witness of Me.

Jesus refers them back to both His words and His works and that they have rejected both.

v 26-27 We see the reason they do not believe.

But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

The sheep, as in the analogies the Lord gave a few months earlier, refer to Israel. The believers in Israel believed in Christ when He came into the world and revealed Himself to them.

They had positive volition under the Old Testament Law. When the dispensation of the incarnation came, and Christ was on earth, their positive volition advanced them to faith in Christ.

But these Jews have negative volition. They distorted the Law, changed it to fit their plans, did not believe then and were not going to believe in Christ now.

PRINCIPLES.

1.If a person is not operating out of faith, neither words nor works will bring them to believe in Christ

2.Jesus dealt with those who had rejected the Old Testament rule of Law and faith and those who had accepted it and believed in God and His Word.

Matthew 15:3 And Jesus answered and said to them, And why do you yourselves

transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?

Luke 16:31 But he said to him, If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.

Remember Philip going to Nathanael and telling him about Jesus in John 1:45 Philip *found Nathanael and *said to him, We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

3.We deal today with those who are either positive or negative. Who have exercised faith at God consciousness or rejected. Who are ready to advance their faith when they hear of Jesus the Savior or are rejecting already.

And if they are negative and rejecting all the Words and all the Works that God would do will not convince them.

4.Our responsibility them is the same as the Lord's. We give the truth of God to a lost and dying world. Some will hear the voice of their Shepherd and follow Him and others will reject because they are rejecting already.

In Revelation 6 15-16 the rulers of the world would rather die than believe in Christ: And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they *said to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. That is just how negative volition can be.

John 10:28-29 The promise to the ones who believe.

And I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

At salvation the believe receive eternal life: WHY?

So he can go to heaven. WHY do you need eternal life to go to heaven, the unbeliever does not need eternal life to God to hell.

So we can not die. Well, chance are you are going to die physically, so you must mean the soul. But the soul doesn't die. There will be souls, lost souls in hell.

So we can be resurrected. But the unbeliever is resurrected at the Great White Throne Judgment.

So why so we get eternal life? Because God has eternal life and we have to have His life to have a relationship with Him.

The real importance of eternal life is that we who have believed in Christ can now have a relationship, a personal relationship with God not only in heaven, but right now.

These two verse along with Romans 8:38 and 39 establish the principle of eternal security. Once we have believed in Christ we are saved forever, there is nothing anyone can do about it, even you cannot unsave yourself.

We added nothing of value to salvation, it was a free gift accepted. We did nothing to earn it or deserve it and thus we can never lose it.

1. Romans 8:38-39, I have confidence that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus." The last prepositional phrase,

In Christ Jesus, is technical for our union with Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Because we are in union with Christ, nothing can separate us from our eternal salvation. We can never get out of union with Christ.

2. Through the baptism of the Spirit at the point of faith in Christ, every believer is entered into union with Christ in the Church Age. This is called positional sanctification.

Therefore, every Church Age believer shares who and what Christ is.

3. Jesus Christ is eternal life. Being in union with Him means we share His life,

1 John 5:11 12 This is the record: God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has [eternal] life; he who does not have the Son does not have [eternal] life. 4. We share Jesus Christ's divine righteousness, 2 Cor 5:21.

5. We are accepted in Christ forever, Eph 1:6.

6. We share the destiny of Christ, Eph 1:5.

7. We share the heirship of Christ, Eph 1:4.

8. We share the election of Christ.

9. We are sanctified in Christ, 1 Cor 1:2, 30.

JESUS CHRIST DIED FOR US WHILE WE WERE SINNERS. THE LOVE OF GOD WAS DIRECTED TOEARDS US WHILE WE WERE HIS ENEMIES IN OUR SINS.

WE ARE NOW SONS, CHILDREN OF GOD, MEMBERS OF HIS ROYAL FAIMLY.

Jesus Christ said it very plainly, nothing can snatch us out of the Father's hand.

INTRODUCTION:

Lord Congleton of Dublin once devised a clever plan for teaching his tenants how faith secures forgiveness of sins, while unbelief shuts one out from the benefits of the Gospel. Many who owed him several years' rent were expecting severe action in the court. Instead, he posted a notice promising remission of back dues to any who would meet him on a certain day prior to 12 noon. On the designated day, he sat in his office awaiting their response. They crowded the street, whispering and talking, but no one entered the open door. Just a few minutes before noon, a tenant who had been delayed came running in to ask for his receipt. Do you really expect to be forgiven your debt? asked Lord Congleton. Yes, sir, because you faithfully promised it. And do you believe me? Yes, I do, because you would not be the kind to deceive

a person. But are you a good and industrious man? the landlord inquired. The notice said nothing about that, sir. So you just believed what I said and have come for your receipt? Indeed, I have. Lord Congleton wrote paid in full on his bill and handed it to him. Just as the hour struck, the man ran out of the house waving the release and crying, I've got it! I'm a free man! The others in the street rushed to the house, but the door was shut! One man had believed, and he alone received the benefits.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER TEN, VERSE 24 (vv 24-42).

This passage describes Jesus' last visit to Jerusalem prior to His triumphal entry, arrest, and crucifixion that will occur a few months after our passage.

Here we see the religious leaders force a show down with the Lord while He was walking in the portico of Solomon at the Temple.

And we see Jesus offering even these who oppose Him an opportunity to believe in Him for their salvation.

v 24 The Jews therefore gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.

These religious leaders want statements from Christ that they can use against Him. They are not seeking truth with their questions but seeing an indictment.

As we noted last week, Jesus has already made it very clear that He was the Messiah, the Son of God.

v 25 Both His WORDS and His WORKS have been a testimony to who He is, but these have been rejected by the negative religious crowd.

Jesus answered them, I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these bear witness of Me.

v 26 The reason they have rejected is given: But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep.

Then v 27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;

THE SHEEP WHO BELIEVE IN CHRIST, hear his voice, and follow Him are the Jews who have believed in God under the Old Testament revelation.

Consider the disciples, Peter, Andrew, James, John, others who were following John the Baptist and seeking the kingdom of God when Christ came to the Jordan.

They believed in what God provided in the Old Testament economy and when Christ came their faith expanded.

But these religious leaders were not believers. They rejected the Word of God, God's Law, and reinterpreted prophecy to fit their own agenda.

They did not believe and when Christ came they did not believe Him.

v 28-29 And to His Sheep, believers, Jesus has given them something all the religion of the religious leaders could not give.

And I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

Two things to consider: Why is the believer, why are we given eternal life? And then, how secure is this eternal life?

At salvation the believe receive eternal life: WHY?

So he can go to heaven. WHY do you need eternal life to go to heaven, the unbeliever does not need eternal life to God to hell.

So we can not die. Well, chance are you are going to die physically, so you must mean the soul. But the soul doesn't die. There will be souls, lost souls in hell.

So we can be resurrected. But the unbeliever is resurrected at the Great White Throne Judgment.

So why so we get eternal life? Because God has eternal life and we have to have His life to have a relationship with Him.

The real importance of eternal life is that we who have believed in Christ can now have a relationship, a personal relationship with God not only in heaven, but right now.

The gift of eternal life at salvation becomes the basis for the spiritual life and that spiritual life is a life in a relationship with Christ and dependant upon Christ.

II. Secondly, how secure is our eternal life?

These verses along with Romans 8:38-39 declare the absolute security of our eternal life.

Romans 8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In John 10:28-29 Eternal Security is assured in three ways.

1.By definition: Eternal Life is just that, eternal. If something is eternal it means it will last forever, it is not dependant upon conditions, it is eternal, not intermittent.

2.This life is a GIFT: It is not something we earn by merit. God gives it to us as a gift, not dependant on who and what we are.

We are not saved by our efforts but by His grace and a grace gift is given unconditionally. We did not earn it by works we cannot lose it by works.

Romans 11:6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

3.Then thirdly, we are assured of our security by promise: Jesus said that no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. Jesus has made a promise to His sheep, that they are secure.

No one ant that even includes ourselves, can take us out of the hands of God who has saved us by grace and given us eternal life.

The believer can never get on with the spiritual life if he is insecure of his salvation, if he is afraid he can do something to lose that which he did not earn.

v 30Then Jesus drops the bomb: I and the Father are one.

People today might debate what Jesus meant by this. The liberal theologian would deny that Jesus was claiming deity but only showing a unity of purpose.

As He says I and the Father are one He is claiming a unity of essence not personality. The trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is united by a common, inseparable essence. But each member of the trinity is separate in personality. Jesus is fully God and added to that was true humanity. He is and forever will be the unique person in the universe

v 31The Jews had no problem interpreting this statement. They knew that Jesus was stating that He was God. So they decided to kill Him.

The Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

v 32This is not the first time the religious leaders have tried to kill Jesus. As early in the Gospel as John 5:18 the Jews wanted to kill Jesus because He broke their sabbath laws. In John 7 the leaders formed a plot to kill Him. In John 7:30 and 44 they wanted to arrest Him. In John 8:59 they were going to stone Him.

And now again they pick up stones. This was a deliberate attack. They were in the Temple, in the portico of Solomon and would have had to go outside to find stones.

At the end of John 8 and later in John 10 we see that the Lord eludes the ones who were planning to stone Him. But here He uses the situation to convey more truth.

Jesus answered them, I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?

They were not believing what Christ had said, His words, so He brings their attention to His works.

v 33 The Jews answered Him, For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.

The charge is a serious one: Blasphemy, to speak ill of God. And is punishable by death by stoning according to Jewish Law.

v 34-36 What follows is an argument that conforms to Rabbinic debate, prevalent in that day. The accusation of blasphemy is an accusation regarding WORDS and so Jesus is going to deal with WORDS, not with the meaning of these words but their use.

He refers to Psalm 82:1 and 8 which refers to the judges of Israel who were given divine authority to perform a divine function as gods. The Hebrew word ELOHIM was used predominately in the Old Testament for God Himself but also is found referring to human judges (Exodus 21:6 and 22:8 and Psalm 82)

Jesus answered them, Has it not been written in your Law, I said, you are gods? If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, You are blaspheming, because I said, I am the Son of God?

THREE TRUTH come out of these verses.

1. Jesus quotes from Psalm 82 but refers to it as the Law of Israel. The Sadducees and others who rejected all but the books of Moses are told here that even the poetry and wisdom literature of the Old Testament is God's Law.

This is strong stuff on the inspiration of the entire Old Testament

2. Secondly he tells them the Scriptures, even the Psalm, are the words of God and cannot be broken. This teaches that the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament are sure, they are not and cannot be broken. God's word, even in the poetry, is eternal truth.

3. Of Himself He states His uniqueness: He was set apart (sanctified) and sent into the World by the Father. His origin is heaven, not earth.

And way back in John 3:13 Jesus spoke of His unique origin. To Nicodemus He said: And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, even the Son of Man.

v 37-38 His argument stopped the stoning. And then He does an interesting thing, He extends to them an invitation to believe.

If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.

We have a 1st cc IF, this is called the IF of assumption. If you assume this, then do this - if you assume I do not do the works of my Father, then do not believe me.

He had the credentials of the Messiah, by His works, and they were without excuse in not believing Him.

But if I do these works and you do not believe Me, or what I say, then believe the works.

In order that you may know (aorist) and continue to know (present tense) that the Father is in Me and I am in the Father.

Here is Jesus giving an invitation to believe not in the words He spoke but in the works He did. And believe for salvation and continue to believe in Him in the Spiritual Life.

REMEMBER: This invitation is given to those who He already said were not His sheep because they did not believe.

THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE some use v 26-29 to deny the free will all men have to believe in Christ. They say that God has already determined or elected the sheep who are to be saved and has elected the others to the status on non-sheep, unbelievers.

But here we see that Jesus is talking to those who He has already said are not His sheep, who have not been given to Son by the Father - and yet He gives them an invitation to believe in Him.

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that WHOSOEVER - even those who are said not to be His Sheep.

v 39 Their response is not a response of faith but a reaction of anger.

Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp.

We are not told HOW Jesus eluded them but He did, because His time had not yet come.

v 40-42 Jesus leaves Jerusalem not to return again until the Triumphal Entry.

And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was first baptizing, and He was staying there. And many came to Him and were saying, While John performed no sign, yet everything John said about this man was true. And many believed in Him there.

He removed Himself from the religious crowd, He separated from the ones who had locked themselves into negative volition.

He went actually to the place it had all began over three years ago. To the place where John had baptized Him and He began His public ministry.

John the Baptist ministry still had an effect on the people of this region.

While the religious leaders of Jerusalem had seen the signs, wonders, and miracles Christ preformed, these people had only the words of John and the words of Jesus - and yet they believed, many believed in Him there.

Jesus went there for three reasons.

1. It was a safe retreat, removed from the religious leaders who would be plotting His death.

2. It was a good place to prepare for what lay ahead as He His hour would come and He would go to the cross to die for the sins of the human race.

3. And it was a place as mention, that was a beginning. And He was able to strengthen Himself in the Father as He could recall all that had occurred in the three years since He had entered public ministry by coming to John and being baptized in the waters of the Jordan.

Hearing the words of the Father that would have still been so clear in His ears: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

To retreat, to refresh, to remember AS HE SET HIS FACE TOWARDS JERUSALEM AND THE SACRIFICE HE WOULD MAKE FOR EACH OF US.

Chapter 11

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER ELEVEN, VERSE 1 (vv 1-16):

In his Gospel, John is very selective in his portrait of Jesus Christ. What he writes is for a purpose. The miracles he relates are designed, for example, to be signs that point to Jesus as the Messiah, the Son God.

In John 11 we come to the last sign, the final miracle as told by John. And it is the most impressive. Jesus Christ raises from the dead, Lazarus, his friend. But unlike the other two occasions when Jesus raised people from the dead shortly after they died, Lazarus will have dead for four days before Christ calls him forth from the tomb.

In this chapter Jesus is going to proclaim that He is the Resurrection and the Life. And He is going to demonstrate that by raising Lazarus

from the dead. Death, the great horror that sin has produced is conquered by Christ.

But first, lets see what happens prior to this most impressive miracle.

v 1-3 Jesus learns that Lazarus is sick and near death.

Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. And it was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. The sisters therefore sent to Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.

Remember from two weeks ago that Jesus had left Jerusalem and Judea and gone east to the Jordan. He was in Bethabara, about twenty miles from Bethany which is just a couple miles outside of Jerusalem.

A messenger come to Jesus with the bad news of Lazarus' illness. About a days journey.

Mention is made of Lazarus' family. He had two sisters, Martha and Mary. These three are mentioned often in the Gospels and were very close to the Lord Jesus.

When most people are mentioned in the Bible their parents are somewhere also mentioned. But not with these three. They were probably orphaned at a young age and their closeness came from having to help each other.

Martha and Mary would have depended upon Lazarus more as the head of the household than just a older brother.

A special mention is made here of Mary, who it states: was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair.

Now you do not remind someone of something or reference something that has not yet occurred. And in John's Gospel the anointing of Christ by Mary in Bethany will not occur until John, Chapter 12.

The verb ANOINTED is an aorist participle which is going to precede any main verbs in the construction.

So this anointing occurred prior to the illness of Lazarus and yet would have been known by the readers of this Gospel.

John's Gospel is the last Gospel written but in Luke we have the account of a woman, an unnamed prostitute in Capernaum, anointing Jesus' feet with ointment.

And that is what John is referring to. Prior to her encounter with Christ, Mary was living in the immorality of prostitution.

So it Mary of Bethany who is mentioned in Luke 7:36-50 and to whom Jesus said: You faith has delivered you, go in peace - And she did, she returned home to her sister and brother as a believer in Jesus Christ.

INTERESTING NOTE: So many people try to say Mary Magdalene was a prostitute but the Bible never says that, she was demon possessed but her occupation is never mentioned. Whereas people miss Mary of Bethany and her past as a prostitute.

BUT HERE IS THE POINT: The past is past. The liabilities, the handicaps, the successes of the past are not what counts. What counts is what you are now, are you in Christ, have you put your faith in Him?

Mary, a former prostitute, became a faithful follower and friend of Christ.

v 4 Jesus responds to the news of Lazarus' illness. This is the reply the messenger was to give to Martha and Mary:

But when Jesus heard it, He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it.

Now what is interesting is that if we look at the chronology of this chapter we would see that Lazarus dies the day the messenger gave the message to Jesus.

So at the time Jesus is saying, This sickness is not unto death, Lazarus is dying.

The death that Jesus spoke of is a permanent death, and Lazarus' physical death would not be permanent.

INSTEAD, it God will be glorified and the Son of God will be glorified.

GLORIFIED the verb, is an aorist subjunctive that looks to the future, a few days into the future when Jesus will be glorified by others who witness Lazarus' return from the dead.

GLORY or GLORIFIED means to speak well of, to praise, to honor with words. And that is what will result from this miracle.

But that is yet a few days off. Now when the messengers return with Jesus' reply, Lazarus will be dead. But these two sisters are to trust in the Word of the Lord rather than the sorrow of the circumstance.

Jesus gave them a promise they could lay hold of. Look ahead to verse 40 as Jesus talks to Martha, He reminds her of His promise.

When we are confronted with disease, disappointment, delay, even death, our only true encouragement is the Word of God.

v 5-6 Now what Jesus does next seems to be very odd. Especially when we consider the love that Jesus had for this family.

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When therefore He heard that he was sick, He stayed then two days longer in the place where He was.

That really does not even make sense in human viewpoint. He loves them, Lazarus is sick, so He stays away for another two days?

I sure the disciples had a number of questions at this point?

1.If Jesus loved Lazarus so much, why did He allow him to get so sick?

2.Why also did Jesus delay in going to Bethany?

3.Why did not Jesus just say the word as He had done with the nobleman's son and healed

him? He did not have to be in Bethany to do that.

4.And why did the Lord's behavior seem to contradict the love He professed for this family?

WELL WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT God does love us.

1.But this love is not a pampering kind of love. It is a perfecting kind of love.

The fact that He loves us and we love him is not a guarantee that we will be sheltered from the times of storm, from the problems and pains of life.

The Father loved the Son but this loved perfected salvation and did not pamper the Son. Jesus was the man of sorrow and the one who experienced the shame and pain of the Cross.

2.Jesus could have prevented the sickness and even healed Lazarus from a distance but Jesus was dependant upon the Father's will and would use this as an opportunity to bring glory to the Father.

We may not be comfortable in all that confronts us but we can glory God in all that we do.

3.And why did Jesus delay? Because He was operating according to a divine timetable. He was waiting for the Father to tell Him it was time to go to Bethany.

v 7 Two days had now expired: Then after this He said to the disciples, Let us go to Judea again.

v 8 The disciples reacted out of fear for Him and themselves.

The disciples said to Him, Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You going there again?

v 9-10 Jesus gives some very practical advice that also has spiritual significance.

Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does

not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.

Basically, Jesus is saying we will go during the day, a time when all can see us. And the religious leaders will not move against us during the day.

This was certainly proven as the cowardly religious leaders waited to not only arrest Jesus at night but to put Him on trial at night because they had feared the people.

But the spiritual significance to what Jesus is saying is found in the earlier statement that Jesus is the Light of the World, John 8:12 and 9:5 I am the light of the world.

IF WE WALK WITH JESUS CHRIST, who is the Light of the World, there should be no fear, no stumbling, no darkness. The night may close in around you, but Jesus, your friend and companion, is the light of the World.

v 11 Then Jesus really confused them: This He said, and after that He said to them, Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awaken him out of sleep.

Those who have believed in Christ are described as being asleep when they die. This is not their experience but ours in relationship to them. We see them as asleep and just like a person asleep we anticipate their awakening. They however are not in some state of soul sleep, but are face to face with the Lord.

v 12 The disciples are confused (what's new?): The disciples therefore said to Him, Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.

They saw this only as a good reason not to go.

v 13-14 Jesus now makes the situation very clear to them.

Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep. Then Jesus therefore said to them plainly, Lazarus is dead,

This is grace by the way, but a grace that we so other receive. Are we ever like these disciples? Are we at times confused by what God is doing? Of course we are - but He is the one who also enlightened. He explains, He teaches, He instructs, He enlightens until we understand His wisdom.

v 15 Here again we have one of those perplexing statements: And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him.

There is something these disciples need to believe that is going to be demonstrated by Lazarus' death. This chapter is a great chapter on faith. The word BELIEVE is used eight times in one form or another in this chapter.

These disciples need to believe that Jesus is the one who can conquer death. Now the physical death of Lazarus is a picture of all of us under the penalty of sin. We are all dead, we are all in a tomb, bond to sin, and decaying in the flesh.

But Jesus and Jesus alone can take care of that greatest of all problem, death, and if He can conquer the death of the body, even after four days in the grave, he can also conquer all the other problems of life that we face.

Jesus was glad for the sake of these disciples that He was not in Bethany, and that they would have an opportunity to advance their faith in Him.

v 16 Thomas, the real cynic of the group, still figures that Jesus is will be arrested and killed as soon as He returns to Jerusalem. He doubted the words of Christ them and will doubt again later on - but listen to what He says.

Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with Him.

He may lack faith but Thomas does not lack courage.

The name THOMAS (Aramaic) as explained in the passage is DIDYMUS (Greek), and means TWIN.

We are never told who he is the twin of. But there are times when we could all be his twin.

We lack faith but not courage. Sometimes our courage gets us into trouble. We charge head long into places where even angels fear to tread. We are doubters but we are devoted.

Thomas was a man of loyalty and courage and when, and it would occur, he became a man of faith, he would serve the Lord in a tremendous way.

As the twin of Thomas we may have good character but that character must be brought under the banner of faith in Christ and His word. As twins of Thomas we all need to increase in faith and faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER ELEVEN, VERSE 17 (vv 17-46).

As we learned last week, this is a chapter on Faith Building. We saw that the disciples who with Jesus at the Jordan had an opportunity to increase in faith as they trusted Jesus. They were very perplexed by the words and actions of their Lord.

But they were patience, they trusted him. Even Thomas who so often lacked faith had the courage to state that they would go with Jesus, back to Judea, even it meant their death.

The vindication of their faith is going to be seen as they are with Jesus when He raises Lazarus from the dead.

BUT NOW IT IS TIME to go to Bethany and to provide an opportunity for Martha and Mary to increase in faith.

v 17-19 Jesus arrives at Bethany.

So when Jesus came, He found that he (Lazarus) had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off; and many of the Jews had come

to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother.

By way of chronology, we can see that Lazarus died from his illness the very day the messenger arrived at the Jordan with the news that Lazarus was sick.

REMEMBER JESUS' REPLY: This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it.

So these two sisters, Martha and Mary, had four days to cling to the promise. To face the apparent reality of what they saw, the death and burial of their brother, with the greater reality of the promise of their Lord Jesus Christ.

Every experience of suffering and trial ought to increase our faith.

BUT THIS is not automatic. We know even in our own lives those times when suffering has resulted in failure rather than faith.

WE MUST RESPOND POSITVELY TO the Word and apply the Word of Christ to the problems of life.

Jesus had sent these two sisters a promise and now we see their faith in that promise.

v 20-22 It is Martha who first goes to meet Jesus.

Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him; but Mary still sat in the house. Martha therefore said to Jesus, Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.

While being sisters, Martha and Mary are very different. Martha was the worker, the doing of things, the woman of action. And in Luke 10 we can see that her actions got in the way of her relationship with Christ. Mary, was the more serious, the one who is always seen sitting at Jesus' feet learning from Him.

Now Martha is not wrong in her activity, but she is in need of setting correct priorities. Even in Luke 10 the Lord does not condemn

her for her work in the kitchen but for being distracted by her service.

John Wesley wrote a hymn about these two sisters and part of it states.

Faithful to my Lord's commands, I would
chose the better part, Serve with careful
Martha's hands, And love with Mary's heart.

So in understanding Martha it is understandable that she would be the first one out of the house to greet Jesus.

IN HER WORDS TO HIM SHE expresses faith, but it is limited.

We too often see faith as some absolute systems of trusting in Christ. But the Bible shows us people who increased from faith to faith.

Romans 1:17 For in it (the Gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, But the righteous man shall live by faith.

Let's consider what she believes, the extent of her faith.

1.If you had been here my brother would not have died.

2.Even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you.

She has faith in Christ's ability to deliver from sickness and even death, she has faith in the fact that whatever Jesus asks of God, God will do.

But she needs to advance her faith to believing that Jesus Christ is still in control even as she faces the reality of her brother, now dead for four days.

She needs to advance her faith to believing the promise he gave back in verse 4: This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it.

v 23Jesus gives her a very clear promise: Jesus said to her, Your brother shall rise again.

v 24But while Jesus is thinking of the present, Martha is thinking of the future.

Martha said to Him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.

She has faith in the resurrection of the dead. She believes the Old Testament promises regarding this doctrine.

When she says I KNOW she uses OIDA a very strong word for confident knowledge.

v 25-26But Jesus takes the doctrine of the resurrection out of the pages of the Old Testament and put it in a person, himself.

Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?

With this statement Jesus amplified this doctrine in three ways.

1.He brought it our of the shadows of the Old Testament into the light of the New Testament

The Old Testament revelation of the resurrection was not clear nor complete. It was in the shadows. Jesus clearly states that resurrection is a promise to those believers who have died.

2.Secondly, He took it our of the book and put it into a person, Himself.

When you are sick you want a physician, not a medical book. When you are in a court of law you want a lawyer not a law book.

And when you, as believer, look ahead to death and the eternity that lies beyond it, you need a person. Jesus Christ provides himself for you - I am the resurrection and the life.

3.Thirdly, Jesus brought the doctrine of the resurrection out of the future and into the present.

For Martha this was the greatest truth of all. The power of the resurrection of Christ is available now, in the present.

Paul would later on saw that he hoped that all believers would come to know the power of the resurrection of Christ right now. We serve a risen Savior who is at the right hand of the Father! We serve in His power, a power that was greater than death.

v 26 Last part: Do you believe this?

All that Christ promises is laid to waste if it is not appropriated by faith. Do you believe it?

A man in West Texas lived in poverty because he did not believe in oil, after his death the riches source of oil ever found in Texas was found under his land. After he died his heirs became millionaires overnight

v 27 NOTICE THE SIMPLE RESPONSE: She said to Him, Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world.

She gives the Lord four titles.

1. LORD: The one who is in control

2. CHRIST: The Messiah who fulfills the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament

3. THE SON OF GOD: This looks at His deity

4. HE WHO COMES INTO THE WORLD: The uniqueness of Christ, the only one who has ever come from heaven to earth.

And thus the only one who can save mankind.

In this brief statement she reveals a great deal that she knows about Christ and she reveals her faith in Him.

v 28-29 The joy of a relationship and fellowship with Christ is so great that it can be shared with others without in any way lessening the joy we have with Him. Our faith is to be shared and that is what Martha does. She shares the Savior she loves with the sister she loves.

And when she had said this, she went away, and called Mary her sister, saying secretly, The Teacher is here, and is calling for you.

And when she heard it, she arose quickly, and was coming to Him.

v 30-32 Read aloud.

Notice the last phrase: Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died.

Again we see some faith but not enough faith. She believed in the power of Jesus to prevent even death, but she did not believe in the promise of Jesus.

MARY IS SO MUCH LIKE MANY OF US TODAY: The power of God is believed while the promises of God go unused.

BELIEVERS want the display of God's power without trusting in His Word.

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

v 33 Jesus responds to her: When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her, also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit, and was troubled.

TO BE MOVED IN SPIRIT: This is to be moved with indignation, indignation at the pain that sin has caused.

TO BE TROUBLED: Means to be disturbed in the mind. Jesus knew how much an enemy sin and death were to the perfect plan God had for man and the sight of these who he loved in their sorrow caused Jesus to have empathy for them.

Jesus is called the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3) and more than anyone else feels the pain that we endure as a result of sin in the world.

v 34 And said, Where have you laid him? They said to Him, Lord, come and see.

v 35 The shortest verse in the Bible and one that has tremendous impact for us - JESUS WEPT.

While the word used in verse 33 for weeping means a loud, emotional lament, this word, used only here in the New Testament refers to a silent, quiet weeping.

Jesus Wept.

1. Because He was seeing the pain of sin and death
2. Because He had compassion for Mary and Martha
3. Because He knew even better than they the perfect plan that God had for them, a plan that included no sorrow, no pain, no tears.
4. Jesus wept because many who would believe in Him, even now would be confronted with the pain and sorrow of life.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

We can never say no one understands - Jesus wept and in the tears that stained the face of our Savior He showed us forever that He understands. OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER ELEVEN, VERSE 35 (vv 35-57).

We saw last week that when Jesus arrived in Bethany both sister, Martha and Mary, had an opportunity to increase in faith. They had faith in the power of God and now needed to put their faith in the promise of God.

Believing what Jesus promised and believing that He is the resurrection and the life.

Now when Jesus encountered Mary and the others who were consoling her we read in verse 35 that

v 35 Jesus wept.

He wept silently because He knew better than they the perfect plan the Father had for creation. That the death they mourned entered the human race through sin.

1 Corinthians 15:21-22 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.

v 36 But Jesus, our Savior, is the one who can do more than just weep with us or

sympathize with our suffering. He can do something about it.

REALIZE SOMETHING AT THIS POINT.

1. Jesus Christ took care at the Cross of the greatest problem we had. Without the Cross and the substitutionary death of Christ, man is on a fast track to Hell. Jesus Christ took care of that problem.

2. If Jesus Christ solved the greatest problem we had, it stands to reason that He can solve the lesser problems we have. In the study of reason and logic this is called an a fortiori principle. If He can do the greater He can also do the lesser.

ILLUSTRATE: If you can lift 100 lbs you can also lift 50 lbs.

3. In the case of the problem faced by Martha and Mary, Jesus will, with a request to the Father and a Word, solve the problem. Lazarus will live.

4. Now what about the many situation in which He does not step in with a Word and solve the problem?

AND HERE IS A When Jesus does not by His power solve a problem we have, it is for a reason.

We need to grow in faith, we need to exercise the doctrine we have, we need to move our from behind our comfort zones, we need to get back into fellowship, we need to trust Him.

Maybe we have been chosen to suffer so that we can be an encouragement to a weaker brother who will one day endure similar suffering.

Maybe we are being used as a testimonial of God grace in the supreme court of heaven and are a living testimony to Angels and men.

5. HERE IS THE BEAUTY OF ALL THIS: Whether the problem is solved by Jesus or continues, our focus is on Him.

If the problem is miraculously solved, He get the glory. If we are called on to suffer long, He gets the glory. If we are called upon to upon to be patient, He get the glory.

Isaiah 40:28-31 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, Yet those who wait for the Lord Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

v 36-37 The reaction and conclusion of the crowd.

And so the Jews were saying, Behold how He loved him! But some of them said, Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him who was blind, have kept this man also from dying?

Has your love, your sincerity, your actions ever been questioned? Have you expressed your love towards someone only to have it rejected or misunderstood? Have you ever had to explain yourself? Our Lord was constantly being misunderstood, misquoted, and rejected.

The word for LOVE in v 36 is FILEW and it is an imperfect tense indicated that they saw this love as passed now that Lazarus was dead.

This word for love looks at the relationship of love. And Jesus did have a relationship of love, pure love with this whole family.

BUT THAT WAS NOT WHY JESUS WEPT, His was a silent weeping of compassion, understanding, and knowledge. Not for Lazarus but for those who sorrow.

Then, He is criticized for not preventing this death. And a comparison is brought into the

discussion. He healed the blind, could He not have kept Lazarus from dying.

REMEMBER LAST WEEK WHEN WE SAW that Martha and Mary believed in the power of God but were having a problem believing, having faith in the promise of God.

HERE IS A SIMILAR PROBLEM. These Jews were recognizing the power of Jesus to heal the blind man. But now where critical because that power was not being revealed the way they thought it would be revealed.

AND JUST AS THE PROBLEM OF POWER AND PROMISE persists today, so does the problem of false expectations persist today among believers.

Jesus solves a problem at one time and then in other situations delays or allows the problem to continue and the believer complains regarding what the Lord is doing.

WE TOO OFTEN HAVE AN EXPECTATION OF WHAT GOD should be doing or should not be doing according to our ideas and plans rather than His.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.

While this was a promise to the nation of Israel, God extends the principle of this promise to his people today. We can trust His plans for us!

v 38 Jesus therefore again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.

The KJV says He groaned in himself. He had done this in verse 33 where it says He groaned in his spirit. Then it was mourning and His human spirit's response to their sorrow. Here it is because of their lack of understanding and rejection of what He was doing.

v 39 Jesus said, Remove the stone. Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, Lord, by

this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days.

The stone, probably similar to stone that would sealed the tomb of Jesus, was a chiseled stone, like a large wheel. It was placed in a chiseled track and could be rolled aside with the help of a few men.

Martha, again, always the practical one, mentions to the Lord a very practical problem.

He has been in the tomb for four days and by now he has started to stink - the wording of the KJV on this is classic: Lord, by this time he stinketh.

But don't we all stinketh when we are dead in our sins. What we see happening with this very real event is also for us a picture of what we are and what we need when we are spiritually dead.

WE ARE IN THE GRAVE, WE STINK, WE ARE APART FROM CHRIST, and then He calls us.

v 40 Jesus said to her, Did I not say to you, if you believe, you will see the glory of God?

Jesus goes back to the promise He made to the messenger and was delivered to her four days ago.

ONE IMPORTANT NOTE: This was not said directly to Martha but was given to a messenger to deliver to her. Just as the Word of Christ, the Bible, is not given directly to us by the Lord but is delivered through messengers. But that does not distract from the promise, it is the Lord speaking to us.

We have a 3rd CC used as the Lord says If you believe.

The 3rd CC looks at the potential, the possibility and leaves the decision of faith, the decision to believe in her hands.

JUST AS THAT DECISION IS IN our hands, will we believe?

v 41-43 The Miracle of Lazarus returned from the Dead.

And so they removed the stone. And Jesus raised His eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hearest Me.

And I knew that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people standing around I said it, that they may believe that Thou didst send Me.

And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

Jesus, perhaps when He had first received news of Lazarus' illness had prayed to the Father. He now publically thanks the Father for hearing Him.

This thanksgiving was done for the sake of the people, it was a testimony of sorts that would clarify the Lord's dependence upon the Father.

PURPOSE: That they, the people, might believe that the Father sent the Son to earth.

The Lord's loud cry was Lazarus, come forth.

If He had not specified who was to come forth, this graveyard would have been filled with those who returned from the dead, summoned by the cry: Come forth.

But the Lord was specific: He called for Lazarus, and by way of analogy, He calls for each of us by name. He is not a Savior of a mass of people unknown to Him, He is the Savior of each of us.

A line in a modern Christian song tells us that He loves each of us as if there was only one of us.

He would have come to earth, lived and died, suffered for sin, even if only one of us needed a Savior.

Our relationship with Him is personal, individual.

v 44 What happened next would have been quite a sight.

He who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings; and his face was

wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, Unbind him, and let him go.

Lazarus did not walk out of the tomb under his own strength, he could not, he was bound hand and foot. He could not even see what was going on, his face was wrapped around with the burial cloths.

IT WAS NOT HIS STRENGTH THAT brought him out of the tomb but the strength of God. It was not human power but divine power.

NOTICE ALSO: He is unbound and let go, he is set free. In the spiritual application of this the call of Christ sets us free.

v 45-46 Two Reactions.

Many therefore of the Jews, who had come to Mary and beheld what He had done, believed in Him.

But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them the things which Jesus had done.

AT VERSE 47 WE GO TWO MILES TO THE SOUTHWEST, TO JERUSALEM.

But before we join the Pharisees in Jerusalem and see their reaction to Jesus let's examine the application we have seen in this account so far.

1. Divine power can solve even the greatest of man's problem.

2. When man's problems are not solved by the Lord it is because He has something greater for us on the other side of the problem.

3. Whether problems are solved, go unsolved, or are just not solved now, our responsibility is to focus on Christ our Lord.

4. Martha and Mary were given an opportunity to wait upon the Lord, believe not only His power but also His promise. This was an opportunity to increase in faith.

5. The Jews who were with them also had this same opportunity. Some took advantage of it, others did not. They put Christ into a box of action according to their expectation.

6. When we require God to act according to our expectation we limit ourselves to knowing and loving a God who is fashioned by our mental and emotional expectations and limitation.

We will never see the greater glory God has for us. From glory to glory and grace to grace, His plan for us continues to increase beyond our expectations.

7. The potential of the increase of faith was validated when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. He came forth, by the very power of God. He was set free by the very word of God. And he was again among the living by the compassion and love of God.

Our Lord did a great thing for those He loved as He raised Lazarus from the dead. Does He love you? Is He still the Savior who can do great things for those He loves? Is He not the one who has given you life everlasting, and who has set you free from the bondage of death by sin. INTRODUCTION:

I think all of us have had an occasional bad day, some have even had an occasional bad decade. But have we not also had really bad things happen to us that ended up being for good. We may have lost a job, only to get a better one. We may have suffered rejection only to end up experiencing greater acceptance. We might have lost but in the end found ourselves as winners.

In our passage to day we are going to see not a mere bad decision, but an evil decision, be turned into good.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER ELEVEN, VERSE 45 (vv 45-57).

John Chapter eleven reveals the account of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead.

Last week we saw the Lord Jesus depend upon the Divine power of the Father to raise Jesus from the dead.

While the Lord was God He had, at His incarnation, set aside the use of His divine power.

Look at verse 41: Jesus had prayed to the Father that Lazarus might be raised from the dead. And that prayer as were all the prayers of Jesus, was answered.

We see in this account what Jesus can do and what man can do.

1. Jesus can pray of absolute accuracy to the Father which will always be answered. And right now Jesus is in heaven, in glory praying for us.

2. Jesus can give us His Word to obey. Remember that He asked those standing around to roll away the stone. And they obeyed him. Martha interjected some practically into the situation by commenting that by now her brother, dead for four days, stinketh.

3. Jesus can call forth the dead to life and does so every time one who is an unbeliever, spiritually dead, believes in Christ and is saved. He is born again, made alive.

4. Our Lord can deliver us from the most difficult situations of life.

What is man capable of doing.

1. Man can obey and roll away the stone exposing the stench of death. Man can see the problems mankind faces and can accurately interpret them, but cannot solve them.

2. Man can obey the Lord as some of these did who rolled away the stone and loosened the grave clothes.

3. Man can believe as some of these did, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior.

4. And man can reject as some of these did, and run off to others to find support for their unbelief.

v 46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them the things which Jesus had done.

Here we have some of the ones who had come to comfort Martha and Mary running off to the religious leaders. They came to comfort

and left to criticize. They wanted to tell the Pharisees and get some support for their unbelief.

Rejection and Unbelief demand support from others. When man is uncertain he desires to build certainty by numbers. If the Pharisees agree that something is wrong then we must be right in our rejection of what happened right before our very eyes.

And man will do the same thing today, they find their truth in numbers, their faith will be in the crowd, and their decisions will be by majority vote.

v 47 Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs.

The word COUNCIL is SUNEDRION which we have anglicized to SANHEDRIN.

This was the ruling council of 70 Jewish men who ruled and controlled the people of Judah under the watchful eye of the Roman governor Pontius Pilate.

The CHIEF PRIESTS would have included Caiaphas and his father-in-law, Annas who was the former chief priest and the political boss who ran the city.

They were both Sadducees and of the aristocratic class, very wealthy, very secular in their faith. They were the establishment religious leaders. Rejected all the Old Testament except for the books of Moses.

The Pharisees were the more common men and did largely outnumber the Sadducees.

BOTH GROUPS HAD A LOT TO PROTECT. THE Sadducees their wealth and position, the Pharisees their influence and control.

And this man Jesus was invading their comfort zones.

They ask: WHAT ARE WE DOING? They wanted to do something, anything. Doing something would take the place of what they should do which is do nothing, only believe.

And then they admit that the Lord was doing many signs.

Now a sign is designed to point you in the right direction.

When you are traveling and you see a sign that says Tulsa so many miles you know you are on the right road.

Signs point the way, but could you imagine the absurdity of ignoring the signs that said you were going to St. Louis instead of Tulsa and then saying you knew a better way?

These religious leaders saw all the signs, many signs, and ignored them and stayed their course to destruction.

v 48 Here their problem is stated.

If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.

What they really feared was the Romans and what they really feared about the Romans was what they could personally lose.

OUR PLACE refers to the Sanhedrin, their ruling body with all its power and perks.

And that is what they were really concerned with, their position of power. The nation was important but only in relationship to their power.

HERE WE SEE THE EVIDENCE OF power corrupting.

These religious men were so concerned with protecting their power that they were willing to kill the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTICE: They recognized the power Christ had, that if He was to continue ALL men would believe in Him.

BUT THEY REJECTED that power and sought to secure their own power, in their own strength, by means of their own evil schemes.

v 49-50 After listening to this discussion, the chief priest speaks up.

But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, You know nothing at all, nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish.

As most bullies, Caiaphas begins by insulting the others.

1. You know nothing at all: A double negative in the Greek which is permissible for emphasis.

2. Nor do you take into account: Consider, or use good logic or reasoning.

3. What is expedient: Not what is true or good or best but what is expedient for them.

EXPEDIENT is a compound word means to lift together, it was used for that which a group could do to promote or protect itself and its own interests.

So he is going to give them the answer.

That one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish.

CAIAPHAS' ATTITUDE OF ARROGANCE, even among the Sanhedrin, would suggest that he was in control - but he is not.

A thousand years before Caiaphas suggested this sentence of death, Asaph, David choir director wrote in Psalm 76:10 For the wrath of man shall praise Thee; With a remnant of wrath Thou shalt gird Thyself.

v 51-52 John's commentary on what Caiaphas determined.

Now this he did not say on his own initiative; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

YOU SEE IT WAS CAIAPHAS' WORDS BUT IT WAS GOD'S WORK!!!

God was in control and God would use, even an evil man like Caiaphas, a political and

religious bully, to fulfill His perfect plan of Salvation for mankind.

OBSERVATIONS.

1. Caiaphas was interested in only protecting himself and his power base.

2. Caiaphas talked about the nation but did not have the nations interested at heart.

3. Caiaphas was using the good for the people approach to sell his evil plan to eliminate Christ.

4. Like many self protecting and arrogant leaders he thought he was in control.

5. God is so great that He can use whoever, whenever, to fulfill His perfect plan.

6. Caiaphas' plan would succeed, but his goal would not be realized. The rejection and crucifixion of Christ would result in destruction for the nation.

In 70 AD, less than 40 years after the crucifixion, the Romans would march against Jerusalem and destroy it.

7. But God's plan would not only succeed, but also provide salvation for any of Israel who believed in Christ and extend far beyond that - He would gather together children of God who were scattered abroad.

PRINCIPLE OF APPLICATION.

1. We need never fear the decisions of powerful men.

2. Their decisions may not be right, may not be true, may not be what is best, but God can take the evil decisions of man and work it for His perfect good.

3. In Romans 8:28 we are promised: And we know that God causes all things to work together for His good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

We often apply that to circumstances but how about applying it to the decisions, even the

bad decisions that others make that effect our nation and our very lives.

4. In our current political climate we may not like the decisions that are being made - but God is so great that He can work these together for His good.

AND WHATEVER IS HIS GOOD IS GOING TO BE OUR GOOD.

5. We need never fear the decisions of men, if we love God and are called according to His purpose.

Domitian, an anti Christian Roman ruler, thought he was slowing the expansion of the gospel when he had the apostle John banished to Patmos. But God was in control, for it was on that island that He gave John the vision that resulted in the book of the Revelation. And Augustus, an earlier ruler who called for a census in order to consolidate his empire, made it possible for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem rather than in Nazareth. Again, God directed the decision, and prophecy was fulfilled.

v 53 The Sanhedrin went along with Caiaphas, and why not. They were as concerned about their positions of power as was he.

So from that day on they planned together to kill Him.

v 54 Jesus Christ knew thought that God was in control and not Caiaphas. He was not afraid of these political and religious bullies but He also knew that the time had not come for His to be offered up. So He removed Himself from their presence.

Jesus therefore no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews, but went away from there to the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there He stayed with the disciples.

This shows us the marriage of faith and common sense. remember that God is the one who invented common sense and it would have been senseless for Jesus to remain in or

near Jerusalem and publically minister until the right time.

Ephraim was 15 miles north of Jerusalem, outside the jurisdiction of the Temple guard. The name EPHRAIM means fruitful and it was there that Jesus had a fruitful and productive ministry with His disciples.

v 55-57]John now jumps ahead to the week prior to the Passover and relates the speculation about Jesus among the people who had come from throughout the Jewish world to celebrate this annual event.

Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover, to purify themselves. Therefore they were seeking for Jesus, and were saying to one another, as they stood in the temple, What do you think; that He will not come to the feast at all?

Not only will He come to the Passover, but after this Passover, life for mankind will never be the same. Not only will He come, He will take the Passover and make of it Salvation for all who believe in Him.

While the people were seeking Jesus for one reason the Priests and Pharisees were seeking him for another reason.

Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him.

And we know the one who will do just that, Judas Iscariot will report Jesus to the Council.

BUT EVEN IN THAT GOD WILL BE IN CONTROL INTRODUCTION.

According to an oriental legend, some farmers decided they should keep only their small potatoes for seed. That way they could enjoy the large ones for their meals. So that's what they did. They ate the big ones and use the little ones for seeds. As they years passed, the practice was continued. But eventually the farmers began to notice something at harvest time. Although the small seed potatoes

produced a crop, the new potatoes were gradually reduced to the size. Year after year the potatoes became smaller and smaller until they were the size of marbles. These farmers had learned a costly lesson. They could not expect to grow a crop of large potatoes if they planted only the small ones. I wonder if we as a church we have not been keeping the big potatoes and returning only the small ones for the past 2000 years?

Chapter 12

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER TWLEVE, VERSE ONE (vv 1-8).

v 1 Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

John now brings us to the week prior to the Passover, the week prior to the betrayal, arrest, trial, and crucifixion of our Lord.

v 2 So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him.

Mark tells us in Mark 14:3 that this dinner party took place at the home of Simon the leper who has been healed by Jesus of his leprosy.

Leprosy was a disease that made a person an outcast among his people. But now healed he is living in the village, entertaining friends. And with Jesus and his disciples being in Bethany he invites them over for a feast.

SO AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS paragraph, we see the response of appreciation. Simon had been an outcast, but Jesus touched him and he was healed, now he again a part of society, but takes advantage of an opportunity to express love and appreciation for the Savior.

RECLINING AT THE TABLE is idiomatic for dinner. And dining together is a picture of fellowship. So we see a time of fellowship sparked by Simon's appreciation.

The fellowship was not limited to Simon and Jesus alone. In John's Gospel we find that Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and the disciples are all present.

PREINICPLE: Fellowship with the Son, our Savior, includes fellowship with others who are His.

1 John 1:3 What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

ADDITIONAL Christ's fellowship with us is something that we can extend to others. It is not something we hold in private but express to others.

v 3 Mary therefore took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

While John identifies who it was who anointed Jesus, Mark gives us some additional details. Listen as I read.

Mark 14:3 There came a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard; and she broke the vial and poured it over His head.

Now at this point we need to examine four things.

1. The purpose of Mary
2. The attitude of the disciples
3. The response of Christ
4. The result of this anointing

FIRST WE MUST UNDERSTAND A very simple truth: Mary loved her Lord, Jesus Christ -

Now consider what it meant for Mary to love her Lord. What is it like to love someone for whom you can do nothing.

We most often express our love by doing something for the one we love. Love can find

its highest expression when it can do something for the one we love that they cannot do for themselves.

BUT TO LOVE the Lord of Glory, the one who was very God, the Savior, the Messiah who has come to earth to pay the price for sins - how can show your love for Him?

In it is this home with this strong desire to express her love to her Lord that she comes to Him with an alabaster vial.

THE ALABASTER VIAL.

1. In I Chronicles 29:2 David assembled the items for the Temple of God. We are told that there was alabaster in abundance.
2. Alabaster is a white, pure, marble type of stone that is formed from stalactites in caves.
3. Two interesting things about it: It is high in hydrated calcium sulphate and it takes a long, long, time to form.
4. Calcium, one of the basic building blocks of the human body. Giving strength to bone, to the frame. And sulphate, which burns with a clear blue flame. And alabaster takes years, centuries to form in caves of the earth.
5. The calcium looks at Jesus' humanity, the sulphate at the pure deity of the Lord, and the time of formation the centuries of promise that predicted that Messiah would come.
6. And what did Mary do to that alabaster vial, she broke the vial. Just as Christ would be broken on the Cross.

And then in her love she pours its contents on his head and on his feet.

Can you imagine what it was like for Mary who wanted to do something to show her love to Jesus, and could do nothing. But then remembers the alabaster vial, perhaps the most costly and precious thing she has, and she gives it to her Lord.

QUESTION.

Where did this woman, of humble means, come up with a vial of perfume that was worth a whole years wages.

Note v 5: It was worth 300 denarii, and a denarius was a days wage. This was worth a years wage.

REMEMBER.

Mary had once lived in Capernaum where she was a harlot. I think she received this as a gift from one of her many men.

AND IF THIS IS THE CASE it represented something she still carried with her from her old life, her life lived before encountering Jesus and His love and grace.

AND NOW SHE GIVES IT, UNSHELFISHLY, TO THE LORD.

PRINCIPLES.

1. We many not have alabaster vials filled with the trappings of the old life but we do have memories.
2. We are often distracted from our relationship with Christ by those memories. Our minds recall the things gained through human strength, through the actives of the OSN whether good or bad. And they are potential distractions for us.
3. Just as Mary gave this costly perfume to Christ as a gift of her love, we need to give our past to Him.
4. Our past can destroy us. It can make us feel unworthy of His love, it can remind us that we are nothing. Satan wants to bring us down by reminding us of our past, our failures, our sins. And what better way to do that than with our memories. Our thoughts of the life we had apart from Christ.
5. Guilt, shame, loss of spiritual self esteem, loss of our sense of destiny can all come as we cling to the past.

IF YOU ARE MENTALLY HOLDING ON TO any alabaster vials of the past, give them to Lord

who love you. Let Him take them and turn them into that which will bring Him glory.

Maybe you once were involved in adultery or fornication or some other sexual sin. Satan wants to remind you of that and to whisper in your ear that you do not deserve to be called a Christian. He wants that memory to be ever present, like an alabaster vial of perfume set on a mantle where you must look at it every day and remember what you were. Give it up, give the past to Him.

He may take it use it to bring glory to Him. He may allow you to warn others, to comfort others, to encourage others in Christ who are the path you once traveled. And He is glorified.

v 3 Continued.

Now what she is doing is anointing Jesus for burial (v 7)

I do not think she understood the significance of what she was doing. That was not important to her. She just wanted to show her love for Jesus Christ.

And she was doing something that is not prohibited in the Word of God, in any of the pages or pages of Law, it was not even contrary to the Talmudic Law.

v 4-5 She had the right, the freedom, the prerogative to do what she did, but notice the attitude of the disciples.

But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii, and given to poor people?

Mark 14:4-5 But some were indignantly remarking to one another, Why has this perfume been wasted? For this perfume might have been sold for over three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor. And they were scolding her.

NOW NOTICE: The act of adoration and appreciation was between Mary and Jesus. Although it was in the presence of others it

had nothing to do with them. But they chose to intrude.

We are told in Mark that some were indignant, in Matthew we are told this group was the disciples, and in John we find the spokesman was Judas.

Not only were they INDIGNANT: The words means to be angry or to be unwilling.

It is used only in the Synoptic Gospels to describe the attitude or emotions directed at a real or assumed wrong.

And while their attitude was one of indignation against Mary, their actions went even further.

1. They assume this was waste of a valuable commodity. This assumption is totally based upon their norms and standards.

They assume and they conclude - a waste

2. Then they get into the I've got a better idea syndrome.

For this perfume might have been sold for a whole years wage and the money given to the poor.

Judas' better idea had behind it an evil motive.

John 12:6 Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.

But as he said it the others concurred with his better idea.

3. The result was that they started to scold Mary.

SCOLD is a word that actually means to snort like an animal, and means to express great displeasure, and to give stern warnings.

It is a verb in the middle voice, they thought they could benefit themselves by putting down someone else.

Now can we even begin to imagine how Mary felt in the midst of this?

Put yourself in her place. She comes with most precious thing she had and freely, willingly gives it to her Lord. And all of sudden everyone is against her, criticizing her, accusing her, and coming up with their better ideas.

Have you ever done something you believed to be so right and have interpreted as being so wrong.

FOR A MOMENT don't even think in terms of spiritual things, just the things we do for others and right when we receive think we will receive commendation, instead condemnation.

We think applause and receive attack, We want praise and instead we are punished, We want to be the hero and end up the goat,

We have all had things like that happen but now think of it in terms of spiritual service and worship.

The words spoken, the innuendos, the judgments, the criticism, all coming against us for doing something we thought was so right.

v 7-8 BUT INTO THIS conflict comes the Christ.

Jesus therefore said, Let her alone, in order that she may keep it for the day of My burial. For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have Me.

I think we can well imagine what she felt like but notice she did not speak up. Perhaps she was too confused, too frustrated, more likely, too hurt. She did not attempt to vindicate herself, justify her actions.

SHE DID NOT HAVE TO, her Lord would speak for her.

The Lord commanded them: Let her alone
A FEW OBSERVATIONS.

1. What she did opposed no standard or law.

She gave the most precious thing she had to the Lord Jesus Christ

2. What she did had nothing to do with the others

3. The disciples were wrong in intruding into another's adoration and appreciation of the Lord

4. The Lord vindicated her. She did not have to reason with the disciples, explain to them what she was doing and why, try to convince them and justify herself. The Lord would do this for her.

Deuteronomy 32:36 For the Lord will vindicate His people, And will have compassion on His servants; When He sees that their strength is gone, And there is none remaining, bond or free.

5. The Lord Jesus was not going to allow Mary to be harmed and the disciples to be so wrong.

APPLICATION: How many Christians have had their enthusiasm stolen, their love for God lost, their desire to serve subverted, by the critics?

APPLICATION: In any area of service and worship that is dictated to in the Word of God people may need to be taught what is right and what is wrong but what about in the things that are not specified in the Scripture? And there are many. Have we any right to criticize and judge? Of course not - but we do.

Let's look at it this way. Were the disciples ministering encouragement to Mary? Or were they ministering discouragement.

6. We must put ourselves on both sides. We must not criticize others in areas of non-essentials and when we are criticized we must let the Lord vindicate us.

We must let alone and be left alone in the worship of our Savior and Lord.

v 8 Then the Lord Jesus adds a principle of priority.

For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have Me.

They, as we, can always help the poor, the poor are ever present. But this was a unique opportunity to minister to Jesus Christ, who very soon would no longer be with them.

INTRODUCTION:

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: Only he who believes will be obedient.

Man will not be obedient as a result of nothing. He must believe, have trust in that system or that one he is obeying. In our passage this morning we are going to see those who have great activity but lack a faith that will endure. They obey but they do not believe so their obedience is only for the moment.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER TWELVE, VERSE 9 (vv 9-26)

We now come to the last week of the incarnation. The time in Jesus' earthly life when He will go to the Cross, die for the sins of human race, and yet be raised again from the dead never to die again.

This week begins with lack of understanding, misunderstanding, and opposition. But in the midst of this there is a hint, a glimmer of light, that sheds itself on what is to come in the Church Age.

John 12:9-11 Mis-understanding and opposition.

v 9 The great multitude therefore of the Jews learned that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead.

Not just a multitude, but a great multitude. The feast of Passover drew Jews from all over the ancient world to Jerusalem. The size of the city swelled to four times its normal population.

Many of them heard that Jesus was in Bethany, less than five miles from Jerusalem. They went there to see Him but we are told that something else also motivated them - they wanted to see Lazarus whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

WE SEE IN THIS A MIS-UNDERSTANDING:

The great crowd misunderstood the importance of Jesus Himself over the miracles that Jesus performed.

They got involved with the PRODUCT rather than the PERSON.

QUESTION: If Jesus had not raised Lazarus, if Lazarus had not been there with Jesus, how many would have made the five mile journey to Bethany?

AS CHRISTIANS TODAY we so often get distracted from our Lord by that which the Lord is doing. We fixate, get focused upon production, we become fascinated with the power of God rather than His Holy person.

We will see in this chapter what this misunderstanding regarding the true priority, Jesus Christ, will result in.

v 10-11 But misunderstanding is not all we see in these verses. There is also opposition.

But the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus to death also; because on account of him many of the Jews were going away, and were believing in Jesus.

The religious leaders under the direction of Caiaphas the High Priest had already decided to do away with Jesus. Now their evil scheme extends to Lazarus who they want to kill.

Now Jesus had given Lazarus life, but these religious leaders wanted to give him death.

And that is what religion holds for us - DEATH.

Religion wants to control and one of the problems here is that Bethany is outside the jurisdiction of the Temple guard. These religious leaders did not have any authority there at all so as the people left they left the authority of the religious crowd.

Again: Religion wants to control, Jesus wants to set us free.

In this we also see that there may be a risk in following Jesus. The world hated Him, put

Him on a cross to die. And the world will extend their antagonism to you.

Just as there is blessing by association, there is also suffering by association and if we take our stand with Christ we will suffer for his sake.

John 15:18-19 If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

John 12:12-19 The Triumphal Entry.

v 12-13 Some of the same ones who had gone to Bethany now come to the northern gate of the old city, north of the Temple, to welcome Jesus Christ as He enters the city.

On the next day the great multitude who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees, and went out to meet Him, and began to cry out, Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.

This tremendous scene is recorded in each of the Gospels and has been the subject of countless paintings, cantatas, and even movies.

But when you know the rest of the story the joy of the moment is short lived.

Some of these same people, who welcomed Jesus into the city as a king would later that same week cry out for Him to be crucified as a common criminal.

AND YET WE SEE THAT THEY echoed the words of Scripture, they quoted from the Psalms.

Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.

If we compare all the Gospels we see that the people cried out four things:

1) Hosanna: God save us

2) Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord: A customary greeting in ancient Israel

3) Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David: Here is where we see their anticipation of Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. They hoped that Jesus was the promised king.

But they would be disappointed, not because he was not the king, but because he was not the king according to their ideas. He was not there to defeat Rome, but Sin and Satan at the Cross.

4) Hosanna in the highest: Orientation to the fact that salvation had to come from God.

THESE ARE ALL GREAT THINGS TO SAY, but they were only said, they were not believed. They were spoken for the moment, the excitement of the moment.

They were facts without faith - and their testimony would be very short lived.

v 14-15 The manner by which Jesus entered the City.

And Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written (Zechariah 9:9), Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, seated on a donkey's colt.

Jesus chose to enter the city riding on a young donkey. There is an interesting dynamic in this that is not often seen.

The full quote from Zechariah 9:9 states: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

John adds FEAR NOT because it would seem unusual for a king, for a conqueror to enter a city on anything less than a white horse. But Jesus arrives on a young donkey. While this may contradict human thinking it is perfectly in line with God's viewpoint.

God's viewpoint saw this as an act of humility on the part of the Lord Jesus Christ. And in this humility God the Father would deposit His own strength in His only begotten Son.

But the religious leaders of Jerusalem, who obeyed the Talmud, the Jewish commentaries on the Law, would have seen it as an act of arrogance.

They prescribed that anyone entering the city for the first time for Passover must do so on foot. Even those who road a donkey or mule to the city were to dismount and humbly walk into the city.

But Jesus was following a higher principle that did not go along with the traditions of religion. No doubt some of the Pharisees who would have witnessed this site would have shook their heads and condemned Jesus for riding into the city. But Jesus obeyed the Law of God, the Word of God, and fulfilled the prophecy of God.

How often today does religion shake its head and condemn the Christian who obeys the Word of God.

How often today do we put tradition, and the petty rules of petty people above the perfect viewpoint of God.

Jesus was not concerned with what religion might think, but only in what His heavenly Father thought and God thoughts are not man's thoughts.

v 16 These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.

This verse tells us that the disciples did not understand what was going on. And if the disciples did not understand what was going on I guarantee you that the people who were there, at the gate, did not know what was going on either.

But later on, after the ascension of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit, these disciples understood.

THIS IS A PERFECT ILLUSTRATION of how we may not understand everything we hear about God and His plan. But in that lack of understanding we must not reject. We must instead be patient and wait for God to add information to information and we will understand.

The disciples did patiently wait. The people did not. When Jesus did not conform to the expectation they had regarding what the King should be like, they rejected what had been said and done that day.

v 17 And so the multitude who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead, were bearing Him witness.

More than any other Gospel writer, John put emphasis on the true motive of most of the people who welcomed Jesus into the city.

They were there, as they had so often been during the ministry of Christ, to marvel at the signs, the miracles that this man from Galilee performed.

Many in the crowd who had been in Bethany when Jesus came and raised Lazarus from the dead were telling others that this was the man who could bring the dead to life.

NOTICE: They were talking about Christ but they were not talking the right things about Christ. They had a testimony but they lacked the personal application of that testimony and that was to personally believe in Jesus Christ.

v 18-19 The testimony of some effected the many in two ways.

1. For this cause also the multitude went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign.

They came but they came because they were curious, they had heard about signs and like

many believers today wanted to be entertained rather than enlightened.

2. The Pharisees therefore said to one another, You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him.

They saw their plan to eliminate Jesus not working and this gave them an even greater resolve to destroy Him.

SO THEN THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY, so proclaimed by so many, was really a combination of lack of understanding, misunderstanding, and opposition - except on the part of Jesus Christ, His heavenly Father, and us who read with knowledge of what these things mean.

John 12:20-23 Everything Changes, A new game with new rules.

This little incident is one of the most dramatic moments in the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ.

v 20-21 Gentiles seek the Savior.

Now there were certain Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast; these therefore came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, Sir, we wish to see Jesus.

The religious leaders wanted Jesus dead. The crowds were seeking Him for all the wrong reasons, the disciples did not understand - and then we have these Gentiles, Greeks who had believed in God under the Old Testament covenant, seeking Jesus.

They had given some thought to their approach. They first sought out PHILIP, who from a Hellenistic Jewish family and who had a Greek name.

These Greeks are our FORERUNNERS, and their seeking of Jesus is perpetuated now in nearly 2000 years of history - we still seek Jesus - Jew or Gentile, bond or free, we all have a common Savior in Jesus Christ.

v 22 Philip did not know what to think of this: Philip came and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip came, and they told Jesus.

Philip did not tell them to go away, that Jesus was only for the Jews. Instead he sought wise counsel with Andrew and together they went to the Lord.

v 23 Now in John 2:4, John 7:30, John 8:20 we saw that Jesus hour, His time according to the perfect timing of God, had not yet come. But now.

Jesus answered them, saying, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Israel had turned away, they had reduced the coming of the Son of God to a trivial activity to be proclaimed as king one day and a criminal the next.

But Gentiles were seeking a Savior, indeed His time had come to fulfill all that had been written and spoken about Him.

He would die for the sins of the world.

REMEMBER JOHN 1:11-12 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.

INTRODUCTION:

President Woodrow Wilson, once said in one of his speeches, It is very difficult for an individual who knows the Scriptures to get away from them. Their message haunts him like an old song and follows him like the memory of his mother. It remains with him like the words of a reverent teacher and forms a part of the warp and woof of his life! Every time we come in contact with the Bible, it either softens or hardens us. We cannot remain unmoved by it! God who cannot lie has unalterable decreed that it shall never return void.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER TWELVE, VERSE 20.

The arrival of these Gentile, Greek believers seeking Jesus represents a dramatic turning point in the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Unlike the Jews who were seeking signs and seeking a king to eliminate the hardship of Roman rule, these Gentiles came to seek Christ Himself.

It is as a result of their quest that Jesus states.

v 23 The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

We might assume He would say that the hour for His crucifixion has come - but He knows that there is something far greater about occur. He knows He will go to the Cross, be lifted up to die and in doing so remove the barrier of sin that stands between man and God.

There will be glory but first there will be suffering.

AS A RESULT OF THESE GENTILES SEEKING JESUS WE have three messages.

v 24-26 A message to these Gentile Greek Believers

v 27-33 A prayer and a prophecy regarding His death

v 34-36 A message to the Jews to believe while there is still time

This is the final public ministry of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospel of John. It ends on a sad note of condemnation upon those who rejected their King, their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

JOHN 12:24-26

Jesus will use an analogy that will make a lot of sense to these Greeks. A Grain of wheat was used in many of the ceremonies of the Greek fraternities to teach about production and bearing fruit.

Jesus is going to use what is known to these men to take them to something that is unknown.

v 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

The grain of wheat, the seed, is a very small and insignificant thing. By itself, in its current state it is rather useless.

It has to be planted, it has to die in the ground, and only then can it flourish into a full grown stock of wheat that can feed and nourish the hungry.

This is prophetic of Jesus Christ, in a few days He will die and on resurrection Sunday he will come to full bloom as the eternal living Savior.

There can be no glory a part from suffering. Jesus will suffer, but He will be glorified by the Father and that glory will be offered to a lost world.

But in the next verse He applies this principle to man.

v 26 He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal.

These Greeks understood very well the idea of loving one's own life. Pleasure, self directed, self sufficient pleasure was one of the highest ideas of Greek culture.

But Jesus tells these Greeks that there is something very wrong with that philosophy. That the one who loves his life will lose it.

The word LOVE is FILEW and is a present, active, participle. It means to have relationship love with life. To have a friendship with life. That the one loving his life keeps on being sustained by his life. That his significance, his security is in life and the pleasures of life.

LOSE is present tense and is the main verb. The present participles runs hand in hand with the present tense verb.

The man who loves his life of pleasure and self sufficiency thinks he is holding on to his

life but it is like sand slipping through his fingers and while he loves he is really losing life.

BUT IN CONTRAST: He who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal.

The word HATE is MISEW and is a very mild word for hate. It is the opposite of FILEW and was used for loving less, not loving, not being a friend to.

And that must be our attitude towards life. When we love our lives and life that we live in this world we are like the man who loves the seed - but the seed is weak and useless.

Only when it is planted does it bring forth fruit.

If we love our lives and the life we have we will never present ourselves to God to be planted.

A man once visited a remote mission station in Africa and after trekking through the jungle for days finally came upon the missionaries. So far removed from civilization the visitor remarked that the missionaries had really buried themselves in the jungle. The mission director quickly replied, we haven't been buried, we have been planted.

v 26 The results of being planted by God: If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall My servant also be; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

The IF is a 3rd CC. This is a potential that not all believers will take advantage of. Some will follow, and serve, and be honored, and others will not.

This verse is like a summary of everything Jesus has been teaching as recorded by John.

And there are three important parts to this statement.

1. To serve Him we must first follow Him: Too many people think they can serve God without knowing God or following God.

The earthly life of Jesus Christ was lived and recorded in the Gospels so that we can follow Him.

2. When we serve Christ we are with Christ: Our fellowship with Him is a fellowship of service. He is presently with the Father but we are with Him, serving Him as His ambassadors on earth.

3. When we serve Christ we are honored by the Father: The word honored means that the Father will consider us of value, bestow upon the servant favor.

It is a future tense that looks to eternity and the reward given to the servant of God as a direct result of his service on earth.

JOHN 12:27-30 JESUS' PRAYER AND GOD'S ANSWER.

v 27 Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, Father, save Me from this hour? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

Jesus is expressing the content of His soul as He approaches the horror of the Cross.

Now death by crucifixion has been considered to be the most cruel and torturous death ever devised by the evil mind of mankind.

Understanding this the Lord would, in responding to this impending horror, would be troubled.

BUT THERE IS something else that He anticipates as He sets His face to the Cross, the spiritual suffering for sin - sin that He never knew and yet sin, once imputed to Him, would separate Him from the Father.

He had never known spiritual death, He had never known separation from the Father.

And yet He knew that when He died for the sins of the human race the Father could have no fellowship with Him.

As He looks ahead to His mission He is troubled.

The word TROUBLED is TARASSW and is passive voice. His soul was caused to be troubled by the events that were to come.

The Lord had no frame of reference for personal acts of sin, He had no frame of reference for spiritual death, for separation from the Father. Yet He knew He would personally experience these in order to die for the sins of the human race.

NOTICE HE DOES NOT ASK What shall I do - He knows what He is to do. These question is What shall I say.

TO EXPAND: Shall I say, Father, deliver me from this hour? But for the purpose of man's salvation I came to this hour.

The perplexity is faced with a prayer that puts the glory of God above any thought of the Son seeking glory on His own.

v 28 Father, glorify thy name.

Some Principles.

1. Jesus was at a crossroads. Should He try to glorify the Father according to what He wanted or should He allow the Father to glorify Himself through Him.

2. As Christians we all stand at the same crossroads. Do we, our of our ability and with our ideas attempt to bring glory to God or do we make ourselves available to God's use so He will glorify Himself through us?

3. The choice is between our plans and His, it is between our ideas and God's better ideas. It is choice between our ability and our availability.

4. The result of the decision will bring us to the limitation of legalism or to the expanse of Grace.

Jesus Christ, in His humanity, chose the Father's plan.

And the Father responded to this decision of Jesus' humanity: There came therefore a voice out of heaven: I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

The Father uses a past aorist tense that looks back to the baptism of Christ in which He made Himself available for public ministry and a future tense that looks ahead to the Cross when Jesus will make Himself available to be the lamb of God who dies once and for all for the sins of the human race.

The Son of God received the applause of the Father when He made Himself available for the Father's use. We receive the applause of heaven when we too make ourselves available to God as an instrument, a tool, through which He will glorify Himself.

v 29 The two responses of the crowd probably paralleled the two groups that were present.

The multitude therefore, who stood by and heard it, were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, An angel has spoken to Him.

The Greeks would have interpreted this as thunder while the Jews would have opted for an angel.

v 30 Jesus tells the crowd what is going on.

Jesus answered and said, This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes.

The word SAKE is not found in the Greek text. The verse should read: Not because of me this voice has happened but (strong contrast) because of you.

The voice of the Father was heard because of the people. The Lord Jesus was already determined to go through with the Father's plan. The people heard the voice of the Father so that they would know that there was divine approval upon the Son of God.

This should have been very convincing for the people who were there but as the week unfolded we see that it was not.

JOHN 12:31-36 A MESSAGE OF THE CROSS AND THE WARNING TO THE JEWS

v 31-32 A prophecy of the Cross and its Results.

Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.

The JUDGMENT that is upon this world is the Cross.

To the world the Cross would appear to be a defeat, but to God it is a Victory.

At the Cross the world was judged and found guilty of sin. The ultimate sin of the human race was the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. All the evils that have been perpetrated upon man by man do not measure up to the evil of the Cross.

But out of cursing comes blessing and it was at the Cross that Jesus Christ paid for sins and secured salvation for all who would believe in Him. It was at the Cross the victory cry was given - it is finished.

The Cross was also a judgment on Satan, the ruler of this World.

Now the ruler of this world shall be cast out.

The verb SHALL BE CAST OUT is EKBALLW a fut, passive.

It looks ahead in time to a time when Satan will be thrown out of the world, the basis for that future judgment is the work of Christ at the Cross.

v 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.

The IF is a 3rd CC along with the aorist subjunctive verb.

This construction would usually mean that to be lifted up is only a potential but the CC must be subordinate to the verb which makes the only area of uncertainty when this will occur.

In His humanity Jesus knew what was to occur but precisely when it was to occur.

LIFTED UP as used in John 3:14 and John 8:28 refers to death by crucifixion. But in the Old Testament (Isaiah 52:13) it meant to be lifted up and greatly exalted.

In this phrase LIFTED UP we have both the horror of the Cross and the glory of the Cross. The Son of God was to be glorified by being crucified.

ALL MEN refers not to every member of the human race but all races of men. Not just Jews, but even Gentiles, like the Greeks who were standing by listening to this.

v 33 John adds the interpretation: But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.

v 34 The crowd, the Jews, did not understand.

The multitude therefore answered Him, We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?

They knew something but they did not know enough. They knew that the title SON OF MAN was a title of the MESSIAH. They knew that the Messiah was to rule forever.

But they had only a partial understanding of the Scriptures. They did not know or chose not to know that the Messiah would to suffer and die, like a lamb silent before the shearers, before He would be glorified forever.

BUT THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE HERE I want you to see.

This is the last public message of the Lord recorded in the gospel of John. This is the last opportunity many who are present will have to believe in Christ.

This was a turning point in His ministry. It was a time of crisis. It was a time of opportunity.

AND THEY WANTED TO DISCUSS fine points of theology. At a time it was past time to believe in Christ.

This pattern is often repeated. The Gospel is given to an unbeliever and they want to discuss theology. There is time for discussion, but this was the time for faith.

v 35-36 Jesus tells them the opportunity is here, now, and they are, in their unbelief, on a path of darkness. Every time they reject, they move farther and farther into the darkness.

Jesus therefore said to them, For a little while longer the light is among you. Walk while you have the light, that darkness may not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. While you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light.

The light was shining in their presence and they had better take advantage of the opportunity to believe and be saved. By a simple step of faith they could pass out of darkness and into the light of salvation.

Israel had seen His miracles, had heard His messages, had scrutinized His ministry, had at times even hailed Him as the Messiah - but refused to believe in Him.

AS CHRISTIANS WE HAVE THE LIGHT TODAY IN OUR LAND, BUT THE LIGHT IS GROWING DIM. Christians who once stood strong in the faith are distracted by the philosophies of life, by man's thinking and man's viewpoint. Priorities once so well set are out of order. The trivial becomes the important and the important become the trivial.

HOW LONG DO WE HAVE to enjoy the light of Jesus Christ, how long?

Christians need to decide and then keep on deciding by faith to walk in the Light of the Lord Jesus Christ. INTRODUCTION:

It was Isaiah who, 700 years before the incarnation of Christ spoke of Christ and said (Isaiah 55:6) Seek the Lord while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near.

That same urgency will be expressed by Jesus Christ in our passage, and that same urgency continues even today, to seek the Lord as our Savior, to seek the Lord as our friend, now, while the opportunity is here.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER TWELVE, VERSE 28 (vv 28-50).

This is the final public message of Jesus that John records in his Gospel. In these message two groups are being addressed, the Greeks (Gentiles) who are seeking Jesus and the Jews to whom Jesus has presented himself for the last three years and yet are rejecting Him.

THIS CHAPTER is really a turning point, it stands between the ministry of Christ and the suffering of Christ. Jesus knows He is to go to the Cross and He is troubled with that unknown that He is to face. The Jews, his own people have rejected Him wanting Him to be a king after their own expectations. These Greek Gentiles are seeking Him and His message. This is a time of crisis, a time of perplexity, a time of in which His soul was troubled.

But the perplexity is faced with a prayer that puts the glory of God above any thought of the Son seeking glory on His own.

v 28 Father, glorify thy name.

Last week we closed with four Principles.

1. Jesus was at a crossroads. Should He try to glorify the Father according to what He wanted or should He allow the Father to glorify Himself through Him.

2. As Christians we all stand at the same crossroads. Do we, our of our ability and with our ideas attempt to bring glory to God or do we make ourselves available to God's use so He will glorify Himself through us?

3. The choice is between our plans and His, it is between our ideas and God's better ideas. It is choice between our ability and our availability.

4. The result of the decision will bring us to the limitation of legalism or to the expanse of Grace.

Jesus Christ, in His humanity, chose the Father's plan.

And the Father responded to this decision of Jesus' humanity: There came therefore a voice

out of heaven: I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

[The Father uses a past aorist tense that looks back to the baptism of Christ in which He made Himself available for public ministry and a future tense that looks ahead to the Cross when Jesus will make Himself available to be the lamb of God who dies once and for all for the sins of the human race].

The Son of God received the applause of the Father when He made Himself available for the Father's use. We receive the applause of heaven when we too make ourselves available to God as an instrument, a tool, through which He will glorify Himself.

v 29 The two responses of the crowd probably paralleled the two groups that were present.

The multitude therefore, who stood by and heard it, were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, An angel has spoken to Him.

The Greeks would have interpreted this as thunder while the Jews would have opted for an angel.

v 30 Jesus tells the crowd what is going on.

Jesus answered and said, This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes.

The word SAKE is not found in the Greek text. The verse should read: Not because of me this voice has happened but (strong contrast) because of you.

The voice of the Father was heard because of the people. The Lord Jesus was already determined to go through with the Father's plan. The people heard the voice of the Father so that they would know that there was divine approval upon the Son of God.

This should have been very convincing for the people who were there but as the week unfold we see that it was not.

JOHN 12:31-36 A MESSAGE OF THE CROSS AND THE WARNING TO THE JEWS

v 31-32A prophecy of the Cross and its Results.

Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.

The JUDGMENT that is upon this world is the Cross.

To the world the Cross would appear to be a defeat, but to God it is a Victory.

At the Cross the world was judged and found guilty of sin. The until mate sin of the human race was the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. All the evils that have been perpetrated upon man by man do not measure up to the evil of the Cross.

But out of cursing comes blessing and it was at the Cross that Jesus Christ paid for sins and secured salvation for all who would believe in Him. It was at the Cross the victory cry was given - it is finished.

The Cross was also a judgment on Satan, the ruler of this World.

Now the ruler of this world shall be cast out.

The verb SHALL BE CAST OUT is EKBALLW a fut, passive.

It looks ahead in time to a time when Satan will be thrown out of the world, the basis for that future judgment is the work of Christ at the Cross.

v 32And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.

The IF is a 3rd CC along with the aorist subjunctive verb.

This construction would usually mean that to be lifted up is only a potential but the CC must be subordinate to the verb which make the only area of uncertainty when this will occur.

In His humanity Jesus knew what was to occur but precisely when it was to occur.

LIFTED UP as used in John 3:14 and John 8:28 refers to death by crucifixion. But in the Old Testament (Isaiah 52:13 it meant to be lifted up and greatly exalted.

In this phrase LIFTED UP we have both the horror of the Cross and the glory of the Cross. The Son of God was to be glorified by being crucified.

ALL MEN refers not to every member of the human race but all races of men. Not just Jews, but even Gentiles, like the Greeks who were standing by listening to this.

v 33John adds the interpretation: But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.

v 34The crowd, the Jews, did not understand.

The multitude therefore answered Him, We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?

They knew something but they did not know enough. They knew that the title SON OF MAN was a title of the MESSIAH. They knew that the Messiah was to rule forever.

But they had only a partial understanding of the Scriptures. They did not know or chose not to know that the Messiah would to suffer and die, like a lamb silent before the shearers, before He would be glorified forever.

BUT THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE HERE I want you to see.

This is the last public message of the Lord recorded in the gospel of John. This is the last opportunity many who are present will have to believe in Christ.

This was a turning point in His ministry. It was a time of crisis. It was a time of opportunity.

AND THEY WANTED TO DISCUSS fine points of theology. At a time in which it was past time to believe in Christ.

This pattern is often repeated. The Gospel is given to an unbeliever and they want to discuss theology. There is time for discussion, but this was the time for faith.

v 35-36 Jesus tells them the opportunity is here, now, and they are, in their unbelief, on a path of darkness. Every time they reject, they move farther and farther into the darkness.

Jesus therefore said to them, For a little while longer the light is among you. Walk while you have the light, that darkness may not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. While you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light.

The light was shining in their presence and they had better take advantage of the opportunity to believe and be saved. By a simple step of faith they could pass out of darkness and into the light of salvation.

Israel had seen His miracles, had heard His messages, had scrutinized His ministry, had at times even hailed Him as the Messiah - but refused to believe in Him.

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Christians need to decide and then keep on deciding by faith to walk in the Light of the Lord Jesus Christ.

v 36 Last part: These things Jesus spoke, and He departed and hid Himself from them.

During the week of the Passover, except for the final night, Jesus and His disciples left Jerusalem and returned to the Bethany, which was outside of the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin and Temple guard.

JOHN 12:37 through 50.

John adds an epilogue to this last of message of Jesus that shows us the condition of faith and lack of faith on the part of Israel.

In this summary of Jesus' teaching at the end of His ministry, John records Jesus' words to three groups.

1. A warning to unbelieving Israel, v 37-41

2. A warning to believers, v 42-43

3. A warning to the nations, v 44-50

A WARNING TO UNBELIEVING ISRAEL.

v 37 But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him;

v 38 That the word of Isaiah (Isaiah 53:1) the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

v 39-40 The reason for their negative volition.

For this cause they could not believe, for Isaiah said again (Isaiah 6:10), He has blinded their eyes, and He hardened their heart; lest they see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart, and be converted, and I heal them.

While this may appear to contradict the idea of free grace salvation offered to whoever will believe in Christ, it does not. We take v 39 and 40 out of the context and do not consider v 37 and 38. Nor do we read on and see the Lord's own explanation of this negative volition in v 46-50.

A FEW PRINCIPLES.

1. Heathenism results from rejection not from not hearing

2. People in unbelief hear the words, see the signs, yet refuse to believe.

3. Grace may be refused so persistently as to destroy the power to accept it. I will not eventually leads to I cannot.

4. Augustine said: God thus blinds and hardens, simply by letting alone and

withdrawing himself, and God can do this by a judgment that is hidden, although not in any way unrighteous.

5. God's purpose is not frustrated by the opposition of evil men. When the Jews rejected Christ and their hearts were hardened, the message of Christ was extended to the world.

6. The very presence of Jesus, His words and His works, were an indictment to those who refused to believe and whose hearts were hardened.

7. Today, when Jesus is presented and God's word is taught, those who reject are hardened in their evil resolve ever time they oppose the truth.

A WARNING TO THE BELIEVERS IN ISRAEL, vv 42-43

Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

John does not want his readers to think that all of the leaders of Israel rejected Christ. Some did believe such as Nicodemus who eventually publically proclaimed His faith in Christ.

These rulers who believed were believers. The criticism of their lack of public confession is not saying that they were not really saved, they were saved - but they were hindered in their growth because they did not acknowledge Christ before others.

Confession, acknowledging Christ publically is not the means of salvation but it is a result of growth.

Romans 10:9-10 That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

The confession of Christ in these verse results in the deliverance of those who are already righteous because they have believed in Christ as their Savior.

We see also why they and why we today are timid at speaking out about Christ - they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God (what would so and so think).

There was a woman in our congregation who meet a mother and young daughter when they first moved to Tulsa. The woman witnessed to the young daughter and lead her to salvation but hesitated to talk to the mother, after all, what would she think, she would not really be interested would she. The mother and daughter moved across town and a couple of years later they meet again. The mother had become a believer and asked the woman, why did you tell my daughter about Christ and you did not tell me. I needed the Lord then and it was not until I moved away that someone else told me what you could have told me.

A WARNING FOR THE NATIONS, vv 44-50

In these last words of the public testimony of Christ prior to the Cross we see an appeal that is tender and reaches out to beseech men to be saved.

Many of the major themes of Jesus' teachings are summarized by John in these final verses.

v 44 And Jesus cried out and said, He who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him who sent Me.

v 45 And he who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me.

There is unity in purpose in the Father and the Son, Jesus and the Father are one.

v 46 I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness.

Jesus brought light to a world, for a world, both Jews and Gentiles, who were in darkness yet many chose to remain in that darkness.

v 47 And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.

v 48 He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

In rejecting Christ the unbeliever carries the full weight of the Word of God that He has heard to the Great White Throne and is judged by what He has rejected.

It is an awesome thought that the unbeliever will face the judgment of every bit of Scripture he has ever heard.

v 49 For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak.

v 50 And I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.

In His humanity the Lord Jesus Christ submitted to the Father, He and the Father are One.

We are in turn to submit to the Words of Christ, the truth that is in Jesus Christ.

By this faith decision we have eternal life and life more abundantly.

LET US PRAY.

How much time do we have, we may not have another chance. Is our heart close to be hardened because we have refused to believe. Or our eyes dimmed because as believers we chose to walk on a path of life of our own making rather than God's. We must seek the Lord now, seek him, Seek the Lord while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near.

There is not of us here who knows what tomorrow hold for us. We may not have another chance.

If you are an unbeliever here this morning you cannot let this opportunity pass by. Believe in Christ and be saved.

If you are a believer maybe you need to make a decision to get serious about the plan of God and let God conform you through His Word to the image of His Son, let God change you into the person He saved you to be.

That requires a faith decision, and then faith decisions every day as you walk with Him in the Spirit. INTRODUCTION.

Many of you have visited historical monuments that remind us of our beginning as a nation. We visit Plymouth rock and stand in silent awe that this was where brave souls seeking religious freedom first set foot. We go to Independence Hall and silently appreciate that this is where a Justice nation was born. We visit the birthplaces of famous presidents, poets, and patriots and appreciate where these great men had their beginning.

Now the Church was born on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) so what we have here we have here in John 13 through 17 is the conception of the church.

Today I would like you to invite you to come with me to the place where our faith our faith was conceived. The place where Christianity began and our doctrine was first spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ. The Upper Room in Jerusalem, the night before the Cross of Christ.

Chapter 13

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER THIRTEEN, VERSE ONE (vv 1-17).

v 1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

The event that caused Jesus to know that the hour had come for His sacrifice for the sins of the human race occurred in John, chapter 12

when the Jews rejected Him and the Gentiles began to seek Him.

He knew that His death and departure out of this world would mean that He would return to the Father, that He return to His eternal rightful place.

BUT SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED IN THE last three years, He came to love, very deeply, His disciples. WE are told that He loved them to the end.

NOW AS JOHN BEGINS THESE FIVE CHAPTER that lay the foundation for truth for the Church Age, he begins in chapter 13 with the foundation of LOVE.

v 1 He loved His own and loved them to the end

v 34-35 A new commandment to love one another just as He loves us.

And between these two we have an example of how Jesus loved His disciples. And this was to be an example for them. See John 13:15 For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.

BUT NOW THE PROBLEM: Three times in this chapter we see that the disciples are more concerned with themselves than with their Lord.

Here Jesus is getting ready to die, in John 12:27 he even told the disciples and others that He was troubled in His soul.

Perceiving the adversity that Jesus faced we would think His disciples would want to minister to Him, to encourage Him, to comfort Him - but they were so wrapped up in themselves they were incapable of ministering to their Lord.

AND THIS CREATED ANOTHER PROBLEM: How do you express your love to someone who is not receptive to your love?

HAVE YOU EVER WANTED TO LOVE SOMEONE, and I do not mean romantically, but love someone who really hard to love.

Maybe a spouse, or a child, or perhaps as an adult child you have a parent to whom you have never really been able to tell them how much you love them.

We might say: How do love the unlovable?

We are going to see how Jesus loved His disciples even at a time when they were more wrapped up in their needs than His impending death and departure.

v 2-5 Jesus Christ expressing His love for His own.

And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him,

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God, and was going back to God,

v 4 shows us that the Lord had a confidence in both His identity and His destiny.

He did not have to engage in any pettiness. He did not have to demand of His disciples that they minister to Him.

His security and significance was from the Father.

We can only love others when we are secure in Christ and our significance is in Him as the Lord's was in the Father.

TRUE LOVE, SPIRITUAL LOVE will be sacrificial on the part of the one loving and beneficial to the ones being loved.

rose from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself about.

Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

The Act of washing the feet was a common courtesy of the ancient world. They did not have paved streets and very few hard surface walkways. In the major cities one could find stone paved streets but even there as one

went from house to house the feet would get dirty.

Also, the common footwear of this region was the sandal, and if you have ever worn them you know your feet get dirty.

Thus it was the custom for the women or the women servants to wash the feet of guests when they came invited to a home. Or the host could provide water and towels for one to wash their feet upon entering a house. A great way of telling someone not to stay too long was to not offer to wash their feet.

THEREFORE: This was like the doormat of the ancient world.

At this Passover supper there were no women nor any servants nor had any basins been set out for the disciples to wash their feet so the task had not been taken care of by this mid point in the meal.

THE DISCIPLES WHO HAD BEEN IN charge of the meal should have taken care of this courtesy, and when they realized that this was an oversight, we would think one of them would have offered to do this, but they did not.

They had going half way into the meal with dirty feet stuck in each others faces and not one of them had offered to wash the other disciples feet.

THIS AND OTHER PASSAGES show us where their hearts were, not on being servants but on serving their own needs. Not on ministering to others but only on ministering to themselves.

BUT JESUS BROKE THROUGH THE SELF CENTEREDNESS OF the disciples as He, the honored guest of the feast, took off His robe, took basin and towel, and began to wash the disciples feet.

v 6-7 Peter' Question.

And so He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, Lord, do You wash my feet? Jesus answered and said to him, What I do you do

not realize now, but you shall understand hereafter. The understanding hereafter will occur once the Holy Spirit has been given to them, after the Lord ascends to be seated at the right hand of the Father.

At this time, although he has told them he will be leaving, they have not gotten the point.

v 8-10 Peter's Objection.

Peter said to Him, Never shall You wash my feet! Jesus answered him, If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me. Simon Peter said to Him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus said to him, He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.

Here is where the English text hides a gem of truth from the original language.

WE HAVE TWO DIFFERENT WORDS FOR WASH BEING USED IN THIS VERSE.

1.He who has bathed, the word here is , LOUW, an aorist, passive, participle that refers to washing the whole body. In Acts 9:37 it is used in a literal sense for washing the whole body.

In Revelation 1:5 it is used for believers who are washed from their sins in the blood of Jesus Christ.

2.To wash his feet, is NIPTW, , which is used as an aorist, middle, infinitive. In Mathew 16:17, to wash the face, in Matthew 15:2 and Mark 7:3 to wash the hands. In I Timothy 5:10 of the widow who serves as washing the feet of guests.

It thus refers to washing only part of the body.

3.Jesus uses these two different words to refer to salvation, He who has bathed, and the believer who is in need of forgiveness of specific confessed sins, Need only to wash his feet.

4. The aorist participle of LOUW precedes any other action, as salvation precedes the believers forgiveness in time.

The middle voice used for washing the feet indicates that this can be something done by oneself for one's benefit, as we confess for the forgiveness of sins.

5. Therefore, the washing of the feet pictures the confession technique God has made available to his children.

v 11A Subtle Indictment of Judas Iscariot.

For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, Not all of you are clean.

v 12-15 What all this meant: Or HOW DO YOU LOVE THE UNLOVABLE?

And so when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments, and reclined at the table again, He said to them, Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.

These verse have greatly confused believers today, to the point that certain Christians have established a sacrament of washing one another's feet. But we have a problem in seeing this as a mandate or as a sacrament.

1. Jesus has already explained the figure behind the act of washing the disciple's feet.

This pictures confession and forgiveness of sin for the believer in Christ. Just as once a person takes a bath he may need to have his feet washed, the believer once saved and having been redeemed from his sins, he needs to have his sins forgiven.

2. When Jesus began to explain what he has done, verse 12-14, he gives us two statements.

a. Ye call me Master and Lord - Terms of respect and terms of love for Him.

OUR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY: Love the Lord our God

b. Ye also ought to wash one another's feet - Have for each other the attitude of forgiveness which is part of the.

OUR SECOND RESPONSIBILITY: Love others as I have loved you.

3. In verse 14 where Jesus says we ought to wash one another's feet, the verb is not imperative but indicative meaning a mood of truth rather than a mandate.

4. And then in verse 15 he tells us that He gave us an example

UPODEIGMA

This word refers to a copy, not the original.

Thus, this example is warning, that we should have the attitude of forgiveness one for another.

5. The only other reference to the washing of feet occurs in I Timothy 5:10 where the widow is described as one who shows hospitality and grace to others as she gives them lodging, displays kindness, and washes the feet of the saints.

The act is not mentioned in any other portion of the New Testament BUT the attitude is mentioned.

Ephesians 4:32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Colossians 3:13 Bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

SO HOW CAN WE LOVE THE UNLOVABLE people in our lives? The same way Jesus Christ loved His disciples in that upper room nearly 2000 years ago . . . we can have the attitude of service that begins with our love for God and then is extended to one another.

LET US PRAY.

Maybe there has been someone in your life who has just been real hard to love. They may want you to love them in a certain way, according to their demands or their standards.

But you can love them as Christ loved us. According to a standard that begins when we serve Him and then, in kindness, tender-heartedness, love one another.

What you can do right now is request of the Father that you can love them just as your Lord has loved you.

Galatians 5:13 tells us that through love we can serve one another. INTRODUCTION:

Waiting to be interviewed for a job as a wireless operator, a group of applicants paid little attention to the sound of the dots and dashes which began coming over a loudspeaker. Suddenly one of them rushed into the employer's office. Soon he returned smiling. I got it! he exclaimed. How did you get ahead of us? they asked. You might have been considered if you hadn't been so busy talking that you didn't hear the manager's coded message, he replied. It said, The man I need must always be on the alert. The first one who interprets this and comes directly into my private office will be hired. The lesson is clear: Too many Christians are not really tuned in, so they do not hear God's directives.

The disciples at the Last Supper, in the upper room, were very pre-occupied with themselves. They had to be prepared to listen to the Lord would teach them that evening. He had to get their attention. So he washed their feet.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER THIRTEEN, VERSE 12 (vv 12-20).

v 12 And so when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments, and reclined at the table again, He said to them, Do you know what I have done to you?

Last week we saw that by washing the disciples feet, which was customary for that

day due to the dusty conditions of the roads, that Jesus was both able to teach them something and show them something.

1. He taught them the principle of confession of sins. That we who have taken a bath, been washed of our sins at Salvation, need to continue to wash our feet, because of post-salvation sinning.

When we sin we do not get saved all over again, we confess, cite our sins to God agreeing that we have sinned and that Jesus died on the Cross for those sins.

In like manner, the unbeliever cannot confess his sins and be forgiven because that would be like having clean feet and the rest of the body is dirty. The unbeliever needs the cleansing bath of salvation.

So He taught them confession of sins, rebound, grace recovery.

2. He also showed them something. How they are to serve one another. As believers we can serve one another and the best way we can do this is by encouraging believers to stay in fellowship and when they do sin, encourage them to recover the grace position by confession of sins.

We do not serve one another when we are critical, when we gossip, when we malign. Too often that is what is passed off for serving one another.

We sit around polishing our armor and when we go to battle, we do so with each other.

Let me give you four attitudes we must have if we are to follow Christ's example and serve one another.

1. The attitude of love: Remember v 1, Jesus loved His disciples and loved them to the end. From love we will treat each other in grace.

2. Know the mechanics of confession (I John 1:9): We can tell others to confess only when we know what it means. We can teach others how to confess their sins.

The woman who confessed her sins only at bed time. She needed to be taught about confession.

3. Consider the source of sin: We all have OSN, and we all sin. Peter reminds us that we are all like sheep who have gone astray. Paul tells us all have sinned and even calls himself a wretched man who needs to be delivered from the temporal death of being OOF.

When we consider our Sin Natures we will not criticize or malign the fellow believer who sins.

4. The attitude of fellowship:

James 5:19-20 My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins.

We need to draw the line around our church large enough that many will be included. We all need the encouragement that comes from the fellowship of other believers.

LET US NOW LOOK TO VERESE 16.

After washing the disciples feet, teaching them something and showing them something, Jesus gives five principles that result from what He did.

v 16 The Principle of Service: Serving one another from humility of mind and action never degrades the servant.

Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master; neither is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.

We are sent as servants by the King of kings and the Lord of lords. It is His commission that we carry in life.

Napoleon was once riding through the camp when his horse reared. A young corporal grabbed the reigns and saved the emperor from a serious fall. Napoleon immediately gave him a battle field commission and made him a lieutenant. Upon man then walked into the officers mess where a Major stopped him

and asked what he was doing, who told you that you could come in here. He replied, the emperor just made me an officer. He was at that moment accepted.

We are sent by the King of kings, the Emperor of emperors, the Lord of lords.

He came as a servant. The most favored title the Lord used for himself was Son of Man. Are we greater, no, and we too must be servant.

Jesus washed the feet of the disciples but that did not in any way detract from His authority and glory.

A believer never stands so tall as when he stoops to help another whom Christ loves.

v 17 The Principle of Happiness: True happiness is based upon learning, thinking and applying Bible Doctrine.

If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

IF begins a 1st cc. KNOW is OIDA an understanding that goes to the very heart, engulfing the mind and the actions.

BLESSED is MAKARIOS as an adjective that is descriptive of the believer who both has and applies B.D.

Man searches for happiness but true happiness and contentment in life come in Christ and in the Spirit when we experience the joy of applying God's word and serving as Christ served.

John 15:11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

v 18 The Principle of God's Foreknowledge and Man's Volition.

I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me.

Jesus knew, both from His observation of Judas and by the revelation of the Father, that Judas Iscariot would betray Him.

Yet God's perfect will is greater than man's free will. God will use the evil decisions of Judas to bring about the wonderful plan of salvation by Grace.

God does not have to HINDER man's free will because He is HIGHER than man's free will.

The Lord quotes from Psalm 41:9 that tells us that betrayal will come from sources very close. it might be the one who eats your food that will kick you in the face (the lifted heel).

Yet God does not coerce their free will, but He can bring good out of it even for you.

If you have ever experienced the pain of rejected and yet know that it was perhaps the best thing that could have happened to you to bring you into greater dependence upon the Lord than you know what I mean.

v 19 The Principle of Prophecy: Prophecy encourages us to have faith in God and depend upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He.

The Lord is referring to His betrayal by Judas mentioned in the previous verse. He tells the disciples that He will tell them something before hand which He does in v 21-26.

Then when they see this come to pass they will all the more believe that He is the Messiah.

We must never de-emphasize the impact of prophecy. God has a plan for the human race and that plan is revealed prophetically in His Word.

While we do not see the specifics of prophecy which will be fulfilled in the Tribulation, we do see the stage being set for the final act of history.

We can see how decisions being made right now by world leaders may be the prelude to the events of the Tribulation.

From prophecy we can know what will happen and what will not happen and we can know that Jesus Christ is in control of history and that history is really HIS STORY

v 20 The Principle of Perpetuation: God the Father sent the Son, and now the Son sends His disciples.

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.

As the believer goes out into a lost and dying world as an ambassador of Jesus Christ He does so perpetuating the ministry that was Jesus Christ's.

Shortly, the Lord will go to the Cross, He will die, He will be buried only to rise from the dead and then to ascend to be seated at the right hand of the Father.

We represent Him. And when the world rejects you recognize it not rejecting you but the One who sent you and the One who sent Him.

John 20:21 Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.

SO THE EXAMPLE OF SERVICE, WASHING THE FEET OF THE Disciples, prepared them for the truth that is to follow.

PRIOR TO RECEIVING the great encouragement and instructions Jesus was to give them in that upper room, they had to check both their position and their practice.

THEIR POSITION: They need to be in fellowship, have their feet washed just as we must have our feet washed which occurs when we confess our sins.

THEIR PRACTICE: Applying they truth they had in obedience to Christ, dependence upon Him, and serving, both with attitude and action, one another.

One person present could not handle this. He could not do as Christ did, the principles

meant nothing to him - He was there in the presence of Jesus Christ as an unbeliever.

But today we have believers who imitate the unbeliever, and for them the words of Christ mean very little.

They are not prepared to hear the great things that God has to teach them from His Word.

They are not prepared to see the great things God can do in their lives.

These disciples would within the next twenty-four hours witness the greatest event that has ever occurred in the History of the human race. Jesus Christ, God's Son, would go to the Cross and die for our sins. And yet He would live and be seated at the right hand of the Father.

Fifty days after this night in the upper room, on the day of Pentecost, these disciples, these eleven men, who were prepared that night would turn the world upside down.

WE HAVE THE TRUTH JESUS GAVE HIS DISCIPLES GIVEN TO US.

AND THE WORLD STILL IS IN NEED OF BEING TURNED UPSIDE DOWN.

WITH EVERY HEAD BOWED AND EVERY EYE CLOSED.

What these disciples had available to them is no different that what we have available to us.

We have the same principles. The same privileges. Service, joy, free will, faith, and a commission that we to are sent to a lost and dying world.

That we too are sent to love one another and encourage one another.

ARE WE LISTENING - DOES THE LORD HAVE OUR ATTENTION?

OUR WORLD is one without faith, without hope, without eternal life.

BUT JUST AS THESE DISCIPLES MADE A DIFFERENCE SO CAN WE.

Are we willing to prepare, to listen, to learn and to think and to apply the truth that is in Jesus to our lives, to circumstance in which we find ourselves, to our very existence.

Are we willing to go before a God who loves us so very much and make ourselves available? That is all God wants, not ability but availability - and He will do the rest. OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN CHAPTER THIRTEEN, VERSE 21 (vv 21-32)

In John 13 the Lord Jesus Christ is laying a foundation for the truth that He will teach in John 14 through 16.

These disciples will be the ones who will carry on the message following the ascension of Christ. They must be prepared because God uses prepared people.

On the Day of Pentecost they are going to stand firm, in Jerusalem, and present the message of a risen Savior in the dramatic power of the Holy Spirit.

But right now, as we first gather with them in the upper room for the last supper and the last message, they are distracted.

In John Chapter 13 the Lord Jesus Christ establishes a platform from which He will then be able to give them a crash course of C.A. truth.

1. THE MEANS, Confession of sins: Demonstrated by the washing of the disciple's feet. This gets the believer in fellowship and provides the divine strength for what must be accomplish.

2. THE METHOD, an Attitude of Service: Also demonstrated by the washing of the disciples feet and then taught to them in verses 12 through 20. Attitude is the beginning of everything.

3. THE MOTIVATION: Spiritual Love. The believer is to love other believers as Christ has loved us.

4. THE MISSION: Jesus will leave them and return to the Father and their mission, is to be His ambassadors on earth.

5. THE MEMBERSHIP: Not just anyone can be an Ambassador of Christ and be a servant to His people. The one who represents Christ must be a believer in Christ.

And that is what we are looking at this morning. The one unbeliever who is present, who will soon leave this gathering.

v 21 When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.

Two times we are given this glimpse into the soul of the Lord Jesus - He was troubled.

In John 12:27 He was troubled as He look ahead to the Cross.

And here in John 13:18 He is troubled as He looks ahead to His betrayal by Judas.

In Luke 24:38 we see that the troubled heart is one in which thoughts arise that could then result in great fear.

But we also see in John 14:1 that the troubled heart is calmed by faith in the God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

To be TROUBLED is not sin, but lacking faith it can lead to sin.

Now Jesus was troubled as He looked upon the twelve disciples and knew Judas would betray Him.

He was also troubled knowing that Judas, an unbeliever, had no part in what He was about to reveal to these disciples who would turn the world up side down as they took the Gospel to a people who were lost in sins.

So Jesus makes an announcement: Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.

The words TRULY, TRULY translate AMEN, AMEN which were used to introduce an

absolute truth that must be learned and understood.

The truth these disciples need to hear was one who was there was not really there with them in spirit or even in faith.

v 22 The reaction of the Disciples.

The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking.

Rather than be concerned with the fact of the betrayal and the troubled spirit of their Master, they were concerned with themselves and trying to figure out who the guilty party was.

Let me try to give you a parallel: Let's say I came to you and told you I had been to the doctor and he said I only had five days to live. And instead of comforting me or praying with me, or even instead of helping me to prepare for this final examine, you launched into a medical investigation to learn as much as you could about the disease from which I was dying.

That might be a reaction, it might keep you busy, but it is really not what I needed.

These disciples basically ignored Christ and just wanted to find out if they were the one would betray their Lord.

MOST OF YOU HAVE SEEN THE PAINTING THE LAST SUPPER, in it the artist tried to depict this moment, the very moment following the Lord's announcement that one of them would betray Him. As the disciple's asked is it I?

And while that pictured is revered in Christian circles, it really portrays the attitude of indifference to Christ's betrayal and an attitude of trying to assign guilt.

v 23-25 John and Peter get into the investigation.

There was reclining on Jesus' breast one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved (John). Simon Peter therefore gestured to him (John), and said to him, Tell us who it is of whom He is

speaking. He (John), leaning back thus on Jesus' breast, said to Him, Lord, who is it?

John, the writer of this Gospel, was the youngest of the disciples and the one who is seen most often as being near the Lord. Here he is leaning against Him.

Notice he does not identify himself. In the entire Gospel he refers to himself as the Disciple whom Jesus loved. Five times in the Gospel of John when John could have used his own name, he did not but wrote of the Disciple whom Jesus loved.

He was so awe struck by the Love of the Lord that he mentions that above his own identity.

Peter, perhaps understanding that Jesus was not going to publically reveal which disciple would betray Him, asks John to ask Jesus who it is. John was close to the Lord and I imagine these verses took place in very hushed tones.

v 26 Jesus therefore answered, That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him.

So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

The reaction of the disciples to Judas leaving the upper room in verse 28-29 would lead us to having to see a time lapse between the first part of verse 26 and the second part of verse 26.

He gave the answer to John, who may or may not have passed it on to Peter and the answer given to John was not heard by the other disciples.

Then some time goes by as they are eating the first courses of the Passover meal and then, Jesus gives the morsel to Judas.

THE MORSEL or THE SOP was a choice piece of the Pascal lamb wrapped in the unleavened bread and dipped in the bitter herbs. This morsel, even at the Passover feasts today, is given to the honored guest.

v 27 Tells us what happened to Judas.

And after the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Jesus therefore said to him, What you do, do quickly.

Satan took possession of Judas at that moment. And the Lord Jesus dismissed Him from the upper room.

NOW I WANT YOU TO SEE SOMETHING IN WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

Judas, as an unbeliever, had no part in the founding of the church and doctrine that was to be taught that night.

The New Commandment of vs 34-35 could not be applied by the unbeliever, the wonderful promises Jesus would give His disciples have no meaning to the unbeliever.

Judas not only lacked faith in Christ but was willing to be used by Satan to betray Christ.

Yet Jesus loved Him. Not in the same way He loved the disciples but He loved Him - and in this we see how Jesus treated the unbeliever.

Seven Lessons on How Jesus treated Judas.

1. Jesus understand the unbeliever He knew that Judas would betray Him. So many of us think that no one understands, Jesus does. He even understands the unbeliever.
2. Jesus gave Judas an opportunity to believe. He had called him to follow Him. And now, here in the upper room He gave Him an opportunity to repent and believe.
3. Jesus protected Judas. He did not publically humiliate Him or reduce Him for his unbelief. He protected His privacy.
4. Jesus gave Judas freedom. He did not coerce Judas but gave him freedom to decide to put faith in Him or betray Him.
5. Jesus gave to Judah the very best. The morsel of food was reserved for the honored guest, yet Jesus, the honored guest of the feast, gave this to Judas.
6. And then, even after Satan entered into Judah, Jesus was gracious towards him and

gave him permission to leave and do the evil deed - What you do, do quickly.

7. And after Judas left Jesus did not hold him up for condemnation in the presence of the other disciples. Even then Jesus protected this unbeliever who would betray Him.

We can learn a great deal from this as about how we are to treat the unbeliever.

Now the unbeliever is not apart of the family, the commandment to love one another is not for the unbeliever. We love the unbeliever in a different way than we do fellow believers. But we do love them.

We must warn them of their fate. We must give them opportunity, in privacy and in freedom to believe. We must be gracious to them even to the point of being willing to give them the very best. And if and when they reject, we must not ridicule them or condemn them.

v 28-30 So extensive was Jesus protection of Judas even in this evil deed, that the other disciples did not know what was going on.

Now no one of those reclining at the table knew for what purpose He had said this to him. For some were supposing, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, Buy the things we have need of for the feast; or else, that he should give something to the poor. And so after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night.

v 31-33 Jesus knew that all that was happening on that night was part of the Father's perfect plan.

When therefore he had gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately.

With the departure of Judas, Jesus knew that prophetic events had been put into motion. And that these events would result in His death on the Cross.

But more important, that though these events he would be glorified by the Father and the Father would be glorified in the Son as the plan of God for man's salvation becomes a reality.

The word IMMEDIATELY is given as a promise to the disciples. They will first see the Lord suffer and they might wonder what glory there is in the horrors of betrayal, arrest, trial, crucifixion, and death.

But then the glory, resurrection, ascension, and to be seated at the Father's right hand, a place of honor, a place of glory.

Jesus was preparing them for what was to happen and what was to come.

The crucifixion, the death of Christ would appear to these disciples to be an end to all that Jesus had said, and done, and taught.

But it wasn't and end, it was a beginning. And they had to be prepared to be a part of that new beginning.

And now they are ready to begin this time of preparation.

v 33 I am leaving soon

v 34-35 I am leaving you with a new commandment

And that new commandment will become the foundation for all you will accomplish as Christians, living in the CA

AND TODAY WE ARE THE LEGACY OF THAT PREPARATION and that new commandment is as much ours as it was theirs

WE, AS BELIEVERS, ARE TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER JUST AS JESUS CHRIST LOVES US.

We are to love the unbeliever but in a different way. In a way that will always make the issue of salvation clear.

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

But among ourselves there is something better, something deeper, something eternal.

We can love one another - just as Christ has loved us. INTRODUCTION:

How often in life have we found ourselves in a situation where we have said that if we had know how rough it was going to be we would have never gotten ourselves into this mess. The days in which we have said, I should have stayed in bed. The task we took on in which we have said I never should have even started.

Many times that may have been our thinking and our cry when the going has gotten rough.

But Jesus Christ, as He looked ahead to the Cross knew what was going to happen. But more importantly, He knew what was going to result from the Cross so He looked beyond it to the Crown.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER THIRTEEN, VERSE 31 (vv 31-35).

Judas has left the upper room, Jesus and His disciples are together for the last time prior to the Cross.

The intense training that must be done to prepare these men for what is to come can now begin.

Judas had to leave. He was an unbeliever and as an unbeliever has no part in what is about to said.

unbeliever can listen to doctrine being taught but so often in their human understanding will distort the truth. Some things that can comfort the believer can be used by the unbeliever to avoid putting personal faith in Jesus Christ.

FOR EXAMPLE: When Jesus gives his disciples and us as believers a New Commandment to love one another just as He loved us, the unbeliever could take that and rationalize that because he is loving and kind to people, everything is alright between himself and God. But that New Commandment is for believers only.

THE ONLY COMMANDMENT the unbeliever can respond to is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

v 31 Now back in v 2 Satan had put a thought into Judas' mind. Now in v 27 Satan actually entered or possessed Judas. Between these two verse we have Judas making the decision to betray the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOW AS BELIEVERS we cannot be possessed by Satan or any of his demons. We are possessed, indwelled by God the Holy Spirit who formed in us at salvation a place for the indwelling of the glory of the Son of God.

BUT OUR THOUGHTS can lend themselves to Satan's plan of evil. We must guard our thinking so as to not be a pawn in the plan of the evil one.

NOW IN VERSE 31 JESUS BEGINS to explain what is going to happen.

When therefore he had gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him;

Jesus knew, from the Old Testament Scriptures and from direct revelation from the Father, that with Judas leaving, the plan of the Father was put into motion.

NOW JESUS KNEW EXACTLY WHAT LAY AHEAD. He knew He would be betrayed, He knew He would be illegally put on trial, He knew from Isaiah that He would be beaten to the point that He would unrecognizable. He knew He would be mocked and spit upon, and He knew He would go to the Cross, suffer agonizing physical pain, and die.

AND HE ALSO KNEW THAT in the midst of this His heavenly Father would take the sins of the human race and pour them out upon Him and then the Father, who could not look upon sin, would turn His back on Him.

HE KNEW HE WOULD EXPERIENCE SPIRITUAL DEATH AND for that He had no frame of reference what so ever.

BUT HERE WE SEE THAT HE LOOKS through all that and says.

Now is the Son of Man glorified and God the Father is glorified in Him.

He knew the horror and the pain of what was to happen but he looked beyond that to the resulting glory of the plan of God.

IN v 31 and 32 THE LORD USED GLORIFIED, five time.

It is the Greek word DOXAZW and is from the word GLORY.

Now when we studied II Corinthians 3 we noted that GLORY in the Old Testament

The word GLORY appears over 400 times in the Bible.

It is commonly the translation of the Hebrew KA-BOWD which refers to the splendor and majesty of God. This splendor or glory of God is revealed in some awesome way and man then stands in awe of what he sees about God.

The word GLORY in New Testament Greek is word DOXA . It looks more at the character or essence of God revealed in some manner.

For the Jesus Christ to be GLORIFIED means that the character and essence of the Father will be revealed in Jesus Christ.

NOW IN THE GOSPEL of John, when the Lord spoke of this glorification, He was referring to His death and resurrection.

But His disciples did not understand.

John 12:16 These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him.

BUT THOROUGH THE BETRAYAL, THROUGH THE TRAILS, THROUGH THE CROSS - AND IN THE RESURRECTION they will see that Jesus was all He claimed to be and accomplished that which no one else could accomplish.

In Acts 3:13 as Peter and John spoke in the Temple they tell us how well they now

understood that the Father had glorified the Son.

Acts 3:13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered up, and disowned in the presence of Pilate.

SO THE STATEMENT AND PROMISE OF GLORIFICATION MEANS

1. That God the Father will reveal in His Son His perfect plan
2. That the Son will be vindicated in all He said and promises
3. That the man will see the love of God as Christ dies for our sins
4. That the man will see the power of God as Christ is raised from the dead
5. That man will see the strength and the glory of God that can be his through faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is more than our example, he is our precedent for the spiritual life.

v 31 Let's go back to verse 31.

We have seen the intended results of what Jesus said: That the glory of God will be revealed in the Son.

But now I want to step back for a moment and look at the cause. What is that caused Jesus to say this - to be able to look beyond the horrors of the Cross to the Glory of the Resurrection.

When we examine what caused our Lord to say and do what He did we must remember that we are looking at His humanity.

Deity is not in view in the incarnation. Deity doesn't have to be glorified by deity. Deity is inherently glorious.

So we look at Christ's humanity and consider what allowed Him to face the greatest adversity of the Cross and all that lead up to it and proclaim glory to God and that God will glorify Him.

REMEMBER OUR STUDY OF JAMES 1:2

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials.

When we studied that on Wednesday night I told you that the word used for CONSIDER does not mean a long drawn out mental process of thinking or evaluating or discerning.

But rather it means to have a Mental Attitude go out ahead of you so that when you encounter various trials, the JOY you have in God will be of more value, more important, more real, than the problem that is being face.

This Mental Attitude of JOY is the result of a decision that we make in which we declare we will live above our feelings while at the same time not denying our feelings.

It was said that our Lord was troubled in John 12:27 and in John 13:21. That is an emotion and yet the JOY that He chose was greater. The emotion is not denied but the response is not to the emotion but the decision to have JOY in plan of God.

Joy, then, is a particular Christian response in that we decide to trust, have faith in the sovereignty of God because of the love of God.

OUR LORD Jesus Christ made the choice, to have Joy even in the face of trials.

This choice was based upon three conclusions.

1.He understood the power of God: He knew that God was the Sovereign, all powerful creator of all things.

So He knew that God was in control and could control all things. He look not at the problem but to the one who was in control of the problem.

When he was betrayed that thought was already in His mind. We may see that He laid down His life in the presence of the Jews, the Sanhedrin, the Romans, even Pilate. But it was really God. Into the Father's hands He commended His life.

2.He understood the person of God: He knew that the Father loved Him. And He knew that because of that love He could depend upon the grace of God.

Rather than see the weakness of His humanity, or the evil intentions and the hatred of His enemies, the Lord Jesus saw the love of the Father.

Before He even went to the garden, before Judas betrayed Him, before the adversity of the crucifixion, that M.A. was there, the love of God was going out before Him.

3.He understood the purpose of God: The humanity of Christ knew with confidence that the Father had a perfect plan and Destiny for Him.

Man tried to put the Lord into their mode. They tried to get Him to conform to their agenda. But He knew that God had a plan for Him.

This thought, this M.A. went out before Him as He faced what was to come.

NOW AS THE LORD JESUS SAW JUDAS, indwelled by Satan, leave the upper room He came face to face with what was to come.

But He did not react, He did not panic. Although He knew what was to come, a M.A. of joy based on the power of God, the person of God, and the plan of God was already formed in His mind.

AND HE LOOKED BEYOND THE CROSS TO THE CROWN.

v 32If (since) God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately.

The glory of God will be revealed in Christ, and in Christ man will glorify God.

v 32tells us that God will glorify the Son, and in this the Son will glorify the Father.

This shows us something, a progression of glory that begins with the Father, is extended to the Son -

In John 16:14 we see that this progression continues in the Holy Spirit: He (the Holy Spirit) shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you.

But the progress of glory doesn't end there: It goes on to the believer in Christ who is both glorified by God and glorifies God.

II Thessalonians 1:11-12 To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power; in order that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we can live that God is glorified in our lives because we are commanded to do so.

I Corinthians 6:20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

NOW, HOW DO WE DO THIS, WHAT ARE THE MECHANICS.

1. God the Son glorified the Father because He looked beyond the Cross to the Resurrection

2. He was able to do this because He had a mental attitude of Joy prior to the problem.

3. That M.A. of Joy was based upon His knowledge and application of the power of God, the person of God, and the purpose of God.

4. He did that knowing full well what He had to go through to before the glory of the resurrection.

5. With His attitude He was able to glorify the Father and the Father glorified the Son.

6. Jesus Christ is our precedent for life and we are to have that attitude in us that was in Him.

Philippians 2:5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.

7. When we let that attitude go before us, dealing with the problems of life based upon

the ultimate glory that we will find in God's perfect plan, we will glorify God as did Jesus Christ and God will glorify us as He did His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

LET'S BOW OUR HEADS IN PRAYER.

To be able to glorify God in what we do. What an awesome thought. We know what we are, we know we sin, we know we so often fail and live in fear. But God's power, His person, His plan is so much greater than us.

We can live life choosing to have a M.A. that declares that we will depend upon God, that we will respond to Him instead of react to life around us. And with that attitude, we can glorify Him.

Have you been depending upon God, trusting in Him, choosing to live in His power, His plan? If not there is no time like the present to begin.

Your Cross may be just around the corner, Jesus knew what He was to face, we do not. But just like our Lord, we can look beyond the adversities of life and see the Crown God has for us.

1 Peter 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of unfading glory. OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER THIRTEEN, VERSE 33 (vv 33-35).

Judas is gone, believers are together with their Lord, He has told them that God the Father will glorify Him.

He has looked through the Cross to the Crown and proclaimed the plan of God to be a plan of glory.

Now the Lord Jesus looks at the more immediate situation.

v 33 Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You shall seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, I now say to you also, Where I am going, you cannot come.

The disciples, unaware of the series of events that have now been put into motion, need to be prepared for Jesus departure.

A LITTLE WHILE LONGER is just a matter of a few hours. By this time tomorrow night, the Lord's body will be in the tomb.

They had heard Him say this to the Jews back in John 7:33-34, but now He says this to them.

THEY SHALL SEEK HIM: This is a future tense verb indicating that their seeking of Him will be a result of something in the present - their relationship with Him, His love for them, their love for Him.

Remember the context set by John 13:1, He loved His own and He loved them to the end.

But now He is going away and this leaving is hard on Him and He knows it will be hard on the disciples.

He tells them that WHILE THEY WILL SEEK HIM THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO COME TO WHERE HE IS.

The verb CANNOT COME is from the same root as the word for power. It means to have an ability by way of one's virtue, ones ability, or one's resources.

The disciples lack the resources to be able to follow Him. This will come, but it is not for now.

The believer will be with the Lord but the timing is in the Father's hand and only then will the ability, the divine ability be realized (Peter's response in v 37, he wanted to go right now).

SO HE IS LEAVING AND TELLING THEM THEY CANNOT GO WITH HIM.

v 34-35 These two verse answer the questions that would arise from the previous verse.

You are leaving? What are we to do?

Because He is leaving: A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you

are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

For the past three years Jesus has demonstrated spiritual love to His disciples.

These very different men who were called by the Lord to follow Him have loved Him but have not always loved one another.

Luke 22:24-27 Just earlier that evening: And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest. And He said to them, The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called Benefactors. But not so with you, but let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves.

These disciples were always in a conflict, competing with one another, trying to be first on earth and wanting to be first in heaven.

BUT NOW JESUS TELLS THEM, commands them with a new commandment that they should love one another.

NEW COMMANDMENT: This is KAINOS ENTOLJ the word NEW which is KAINOS means new not in time but in form, different in nature as to the old.

The other word for NEW is NEOS and means new in time or that which is recent.

This commandment is new, it is different that the old commandment that was to love thy neighbor as thyself. That was the rule of love for the Old Testament believer. In the C.A. we have a different commandment which is to love one another.

The quality of that love is stated with the commandment, Just as I have loved you.

The adverb JUST AS is KAQWS which means in exactly the same way.

The adverb shows us that this is a very special kind of love, it is the same love Jesus Christ in His incarnation He expressed towards His disciples.

v 35 Tells us the value of this love: By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

The ALL MEN is PANTES and is an adjective for ALL and includes not only men but also angels, all will know we are His disciples by our love for one another.

AS A COMMANDMENT, WE MUST SEE THIS AS SOMETHING WE CAN DO. God will not command us to do that which we are incapable of achieving.

To see the mechanics of Spiritual Love we must examine FIVE things: The WORK OF THIS LOVE, THE CAUSE, THE MEANS, THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THIS LOVE, AND THE PERSON.

1. The Work of this love is a work of sacrifice. Spiritual love is a sacrifice to the one loving and a benefit to the one being loved.

Human love too often gets this backwards. Human love wants to benefit by loving and expects others to sacrifice.

This love is an environment that includes magnitude, direction, and impact or effect. ILL: John 3:16.

As an environment you are commanded to be in that environment. And you know when you are in it.

It is never defined but is described in I Corinthians 13 by the sixteen environment of Spiritual Love.

EXAMPLE: It is long suffering. It does not weaken when it suffers. It is kind even under attack.

To do this work we must recognize and accept the authority of the one giving the command, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We must also recognize and accept that it is impossible for us to have spiritual love apart from our occupation with Christ.

Israel was occupied with the Old Testament Law and loving thy neighbor as they loved themselves.

We are occupied with Christ and loving other believers as Christ loves us.

When a conflict occurs between believers, their first thoughts must not be of themselves but of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He loved from His humanity as a precedent for us. He had the power of the Word and the power of the Spirit to Love and we have that same power.

2. The Cause of this love is the Holy Spirit.

If we desire to love as Christ loved us we will have to depend upon God the Holy Spirit to produce that love in us.

Jesus Christ did not make a decision to love, He made a decision to trust in God the Holy Spirit to lead Him, to empower Him.

Luke 4:1 tells us that He was led by the Spirit, and He made a decision to Walk by the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit and to live by the Spirit.

This is the only way we as believers can exist in both the seen and unseen world in which we find ourselves.

We cannot see what is going on in the unseen world, the Holy Spirit can and as God He is in control.

John 14:15-17 If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.

The only thing that will cause us to love as Christ loved will be dependence upon the

Holy Spirit. A part from the Holy Spirit it is impossible to keep these commandments.

Romans 5:5 The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. When something is poured out it goes everywhere, every area of your life is affected by this love.

3.The means of spiritual love is faith: Here is where we come into the picture. Do we believe by faith that God the Holy Spirit can overcome our human nature, or sin nature, and produce this love in us?

Do we believe it? We might understand it, we might be able to explain it, describe it, dissect it, but do we believe it?

Hebrews 11:6 tells us that: Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Faith is not a technique, faith has no power, the power is in the person in whom we place our faith.

We are to walk by faith just as we were saved by faith we are to live and to love by faith.

4.The consciousness of this love: We come to an awareness of spiritual love as we study the Word of God.

There is so much in the New Testament about this love. And we need everything God has revealed to us about this love. We need examples, illustrations, mandates. methods.

We need to know how Christ loved because that is the standard, love one another just as I have loved you.

We need to know how this was done so that we can love as Christ loved.

This is impossible a part from that other source of power that was available to the Lord Jesus Christ and to us - the power of the Word.

The fellowship of the Holy Spirit is our learning of Jesus Christ as our precedent and that includes how He loved us.

5.The person of this love is Jesus Christ: Spiritual love is Jesus Christ himself in you.

We are to be conformed to his image, complete and whole in Him, mature in Christ, able to love one another just as He loved us.

AND IT IS THIS LOVE THAT IS PRODUCED IN YOU BY GOD THAT will authenticate you before both the seen and unseen world.

Nothing else is your authentication, nothing else tells the world that you are a follower of Jesus Christ.

Yet we try to use everything else but nothing else works.

BUT WHEN WE CAN LOVE ONE ANOTHER, that works!!!

IT WAS DECADES LATER THAT JOHN, who was there that night, listening to the Lord Jesus, wrote to believers and said.

1 John 4:20-21 If someone says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME WE STARTED TO OBEY THAT NEW COMMANDMENT, it was given to us nearly 2000 years ago. OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER THIRTEEN, VERSE 34 (vv 34-35).

v 34-35 These two verse answer the questions that would arise from the previous verse.

You are leaving? What are we to do?

Because He is leaving: A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

For the past three years Jesus has demonstrated spiritual love to His disciples. And now He tells His disciples and us that we can have this same love for one another.

v 35 Tells us the value of this love: By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

AS A COMMANDMENT, WE MUST SEE THIS AS SOMETHING WE CAN DO. God will not command us to do that which we are incapable of achieving.

To see the mechanics of Spiritual Love we must examine FIVE things: The WORK OF THIS LOVE, THE CAUSE, THE MEANS, THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THIS LOVE, AND THE PERSON.

REVIEW.

1. The WORK of this love is a work of sacrifice. Spiritual love is a sacrifice to the one loving and a benefit to the one being loved.

This love is an environment that includes magnitude, direction, and impact or effect. ILL: John 3:16.

MAGNITUDE: It can be measured, how great is it? How much do we love as Christ loved?

For God so loved the World that He gave His only begotten Son.

IT HAS DIRECTION: Spiritual love must have direction, God so loved what? The World.

In Spiritual love we are to love other believers.

FORCE OR EFFECT: What is it going to do. In John 3:16 the effect is eternal life. What is the effect of our spiritual love to other believers?

Spiritual Love is never defined but is described in I Corinthians 13 by the sixteen environment of Spiritual Love.

When a conflict occurs between believers, their first thoughts must not be of themselves but of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He loved from His humanity as a precedent for us. He had the power of the Word and the power of the Spirit to Love and we have that same power.

2. The CAUSE of this love is the Holy Spirit.

If we desire to love as Christ loved us we will have to depend upon God the Holy Spirit to produce that love in us.

Jesus Christ did not make a decision to love, He made a decision to trust in God the Holy Spirit to lead Him, to empower Him.

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Nothing else is your authentication, nothing else tells the world that you are a follower of Jesus Christ.

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BUT WHEN WE CAN LOVE ONE ANOTHER, that works!!!

IT WAS DECADES LATER THAT JOHN, who was there that night, listening to the Lord Jesus, wrote of the unique spiritual ability the believer has to fulfill this commandment of spiritual love.

TURN TO JOHN, CHAPTER 4:7 through 19

It is impossible to understand this passage without first understanding that John is referring to spiritual love, that which is the prerogative of the believer only.

If this were human love we would find contradiction, because man can love, family, wife, friends - this is human love which is the prerogative of all mankind.

But we have something better: Spiritual Love.

Now when does Spiritual Love have to be applied: It is not applied to the unbeliever in our context because we are to love one another and in I John 4, John talks about loving the brethren, other believers.

So the application of this is to other believers and the opportunity is when conflict arises.

REMEMBER EARLIER I mentioned that when a conflict arises our first thoughts need to be of Jesus Christ, not ourselves, not how horrible the other person is, but of Christ and His love for us.

That is how Spiritual Love will resolve conflict.

THIS ATTITUDE THAT BRINGS ABOUT UNITY AND LACK OF conflict includes at least seven things.

1. FIRST: Recognition of the Angelic Conflict. Satan wants believers to be in conflict. And the conflict continues in the C.A.

When we are in conflict with another believer we are playing out Satan's game plan.

2. SECOND: Recognition that we are not going to change anyone except ourselves. We presume that we can change others then demand that they change to fit our expectations. We have no right to expect that of another believer.

Now if we are in a position of authority over that person we can expect them to conform to our standards in our working relationship. True for the home, the job, the team, the local church.

But conforming to a working standard is not change, it is expediency and authority orientation.

3. THIRD: The application of Spiritual Love. When we love others as Christ loves us we will give them freedom to be what they are even when what they are is in subjective conflict with what we are.

Spiritual Love does not demand change. It is unconditional. When your spiritual love starts to be person dependant, recognize it is not Spiritual Love.

Spiritual Love brings people who are very different together. Spiritual Love is illustrated by God, He loved us before we changed, He loved us while we were sinners. He came to us where we were.

4. FOURTH: Truth and Spiritual Love are not designed to change people. The Lord Jesus with His disciples expressed perfect truth and love. That did not change them, it certainly did not change Judas Iscariot who was the recipient of perfect truth and love.

We sometimes whine that we are right or that we loved someone so much but they did not change or they rejected us or they disagree with us. So what? Jesus loved His disciples, one turned against Him and they all at various times denied or disobeyed Him.

5. FIFTH: We must have the attitude of humility. This will orient us to authority and it will allow us to relate to our peers with a live and let live attitude.

Humility is the vehicle on which Spiritual Love rides. And with humility, spiritual love will be consistent, unconditional, and not demanding.

Remember how Jesus Christ illustrated this in the Upper Room, He washed the disciples feet. He took on the humble attitude of a servant.

6. SIXTH: Recognize that any change that people chose to make will not be because of

the demand of another. To change people must have a DESIRE to change, be MOTIVATED to change, have the MEANS or METHOD to change.

7. SEVEN: Control and Conformity is not Change. You can control another and you can demand conformity but you cannot change someone. You can only have Spiritual Love for them. That Spiritual Love that is unconditional and unchanging may be a motive for them to change, but we must not even expect that.

In marriage there is a lot of conflict over subjective issues. A lot of demanding that each other change to suit the other. And sometimes there is change because of that, but it is superficial and full of resentment. We are under a prime directive in the plan of God: To love one another as Christ loved us.

1 John 3:23 And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

Consider what Chuck Swindoll says about conflict: How we disagree is important. Not only after a conflict has begun, but even before. Suppose someone wrongs you. Even then at the moment when the injury first occurs, we can chose to respond in such a way that disharmony will be defused. Could you not, the next time you are wronged, invoke the principle of I Peter 4:8 about love covering a multitude of sins and graciously forgive this person without ever having to bring it up. Your response will show your real concern for the unity of the Body of Christ.

What is Chuck Swindoll saying: Have spiritual love one to another.

LET US PRAY - Maybe there someone in your life you have had a hard time loving. Well, you can love them as Christ loved them. You have available to you a love that the world does not know about. OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER THIRTEEN, VERSE 36.

Verse 36, which begins a new paragraph, sets up the encouragement discourse of John 14 - *Let not your heart be troubled.*

But we also have to see it as part of John chapter 13 which is an introduction to the entire Upper Room or Farewell Discourse.

In John chapter thirteen we have what we would not expect. Jesus is preparing for the Cross, spending His final hours with the disciples He has come to love (remember v 1). He is saying good-bye as He faces the most difficult test anyone has ever faced.

Yet instead of receiving comfort and encouragement from His disciples, He is having to comfort and encourage them.

They are self-absorbed and in their self-absorption they fail, they fail to do understand, they fail to comfort, they fail to serve, they fail in loyalty, and they fail in their faith.

John 13 includes three distressing and embarrassing episodes

1. The failure to serve: Rather than provide for the feet of the guests to be washed or wash each others feet, the honored guest of evening, the Lord Jesus Christ humbled himself and washed their feet.
2. The failure of loyalty: Judas Iscariot, having been influenced by Satan decides to betray Jesus. Satan entered him and he left to do his evil work.
3. And now we come to the third failure: The failure to listen and the failure to understand.

v 34-35 This is no small statement: In light of the 1500 years of Old Testament, standing against the 1400 regulations of that Law, Jesus gives his disciples and us a New Commandment

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

He gave them that New Commandment to tell them what they were to do upon His leaving - but they did not listen.

v 36 Rather than ask for explanation or more teaching on how to fulfill this wonderful new commandment and challenge, Peter goes back to his own potential loss of his companionship with Jesus Christ.

Simon Peter said to Him, Lord, where are You going? Jesus answered, Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you shall follow later. Peter said to Him, Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You.

The very first question: *Lord, where are you going?* Shows us that Peter is not thinking, not listening, and not remembering.

Throughout John's Gospel, Jesus has told his disciples and others that His abode was with the Father, in heaven.

In the other Gospels we read accounts of how Peter was specifically told what laid ahead for His Lord, the Cross and the Crown.

But Peter forgets or chooses to ignore that elementary truth and asks a question to which he should know the answer.

Jesus responds with grace and encouragement.

Jesus answered, Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you shall follow later.

The human tendency would be to rebuke, to remind Peter that he had been taught this already - but the human tendency of our Lord, F/HS and using the doctrine in his soul, replies with compassion and encouragement.

You cannot follow me now but you shall follow me later.

This is much stronger in the GNT than in the English. Jesus uses a FUTURE tense, *you shall follow me later*, to indicate that this is an assured promise based upon his position as a believer in Christ.

v 37 But Peter is still not listening: *Peter said to Him, Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You.*

This response shows us that Peter understood that the Lord's life was to be taken. That Jesus would lay down His life to gain salvation for who ever would believe in Him.

But Peter wants to get himself into the picture. He wants to stick with Christ and he even proclaims that he would be willing and able to lay down his life for Him.

He has a bit backwards, doesn't he.

Here is where the IMPOSSIBLE is really IMPOSSIBLE.

Peter wants to do something that he cannot do. Peter is so self-absorbed that he wants to die for Jesus rather than encourage and comfort Jesus in His death for him.

When a believer get wrapped up in himself, he tries to substitute zeal for what he really needs, the grace of God.

PETER'S ZEAL INCLUDED SIX PROBLEMS.

1. Peter wasn't listening: He was talking, proclaiming, and not hearing the promise that he would follow but at God's perfect time.
2. Peter was talking: Proclaiming what he could do for Jesus rather than seeing what Jesus must do for him.
3. Peter was demanding: He wanted to go, wanted to follow Jesus right now.
4. Peter was boasting: He proclaims, and I am sure it was loud enough for all to hear, that he would lay down His life for Jesus Christ.
5. Peter was thinking only of the moment: He did not consider the implications and the results of what he was saying. It was proven that when the test of loyalty came, he failed.
6. Peter was thinking only of self: He may have shown his loyalty by dying to save the physical life of Jesus Christ but that would

have meant no salvation for the human race. We cannot be saved because Peter died for us.

APPLICATION: Our zeal, our enthusiasm, can get in the way of what we really need and what we should really be doing.

v 38 Jesus will have to use some very strong words to get Peter to start thinking right.

Jesus answered, Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a cock shall not crow, until you deny Me three times.

The first phrase of this verse is very pointed: *The life of thee as substitute for me, will you lay down?*

In John 10 when Jesus taught of how the good shepherd would lay down his life for his sheep he used the same construction.

When Caiaphas in John 11 spoke of eliminating Jesus he also used the same grammatical construction.

And yet now Peter thinks that he can die as a substitute for Jesus Christ?

The second part of this verse reveals to Peter that quite the opposite is true.

Truly, truly, I say to you, a cock shall not crow, until you deny Me three times.

The words TRULY, TRULY make this a significant and solemn truth.

And the truth is that instead of dying for Jesus, Peter will deny Jesus not once but three time before morning.

And as publically proclaimed as Peter's pledge was to die on behalf of Jesus, was Jesus proclamation that Peter would deny his Savior three times before morning

Every one there heard this prediction: Peter, the leader of the disciples, Peter the outspoken, Peter who had just professed his dedication and loyalty, would deny Christ three times by morning.

SO INSTEAD OF BEING AN ENCOURAGEMENT, PETER BECAME AN EMBARRASMENT

Because he wanted to do that which was impossible. He wanted to do that which only God, through Jesus Christ, could accomplish. He wanted to lay down his life for his friend, but his friend, Jesus Christ, would lay down his life for the human race.

HOW COULD PETER HAVE CORRECTED THIS PROBLEM? But setting aside his self absorption, by getting his focus off what he was going to do and listening to Jesus.

Remember what Jesus had said to Martha regarding her sister, that her sister Mary had chosen the best part *To sit at the feet of her Savior and listen to His Word.*

IF PETER HAD CHOSEN THAT BEST PART INSTEAD OF HIS part, he would have been and encouragement rather than an embarrassment.

HOW CAN WE ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER.

1. We are member one of another: Romans 12:5 *So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*
2. We are to be devoted to one another: Romans 12:10 *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;*
3. We are to think the same thing towards one another: Romans 12:16 *Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.*
4. We are to accept one another: Romans 15:7 *Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.*
5. We are to admonish (warn) one another: Romans 15:14 *And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another.*
6. We are to greet (salute with honor) one another: Romans 16:16 *Greet one another*

with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

7. We are to serve one another: Galatians 5:13 *For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*

8. We are to consider one another as more important than self: Philippians 2:3 *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself;*

9. We are to bear one another's burdens: Galatians 6:2 *Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.*

MAYBE THERE IS SOMEONE you need to encourage. All it takes is doing what Peter did not do. Get your eyes off self and chose the best part. Listen to the Words of Christ your Savior.

When our human fails, we are being reminded that there is something better, something higher, something God has for us
INTRODUCTION:

A leader has been defined as someone who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way. In our passage this morning, Jesus is going to comfort His disciples by telling them that He is the way, the truth, and the life. He knows the way, goes the way, and shows us the way.

Chapter 14

Here on a night when the disciples should have been comforting and encouraging their Lord and their friend, Jesus Christ, He had to comfort and encourage them.

In John 13 we observed three embarrassing and distressing episodes. The failure of the disciples to provide for the washing of the feet of the guests and Jesus humbling himself to this task. The departure of Judas, who was filled with Satan and left to betray the Lord Jesus. And Peter, proclaiming he would die in

Christ's place and yet being told that before morning he would deny Jesus three times.

This is not, at this point, a very happy party. Most of us, about this time, would have made some excuse to leave. The mood was silent and sullen.

And it is to the disciples confused bewilderment, fickle faith, dim vision, and self absorption, that Lord speak in John, chapter fourteen.

v 1 Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.

The one who had been troubled now speaks to the disciples who are troubled.

Back in John 12 Jesus was troubled as He looked ahead to the Cross. In John 13 He was troubled as He considered Judas who would betray Him.

To be TROUBLED which is TARASSW is an emotional response to something that is perceived and believed.

From being TROUBLED we can go to the sins of fear and worry or the triumph of faith as we trust in God who loves us.

The disciples are just about to go into fear and worry. If Peter, who had been such a strong follower of the Lord will betray him, what about us? And where is Judas, why has he not returned?

Legitimate questions that they asked about themselves and that resulted in being troubled.

To eliminate their troubled hearts and thus eliminate the possibility of sin, fear, and worry, the Lord gives them a command.

Do not let your hearts be troubled.

To command these disciples, or to command us today to have untroubled hearts would be empty counsel were it not that Jesus also taught how to accomplish such a feat.

HOW OFTEN have we been told, or told others not to worry, not to be troubled, not

fear, but in doing so fail to give them any mechanics as to how that can be accomplished? Jesus gives us the means to accomplish His desires for us.

You trust in God, [now] trust also in me. [Or] You believe in God, believe also in me.

The verb PISTEUW can be translated either believe or trust.

The first time it is used it is an indicative mood of reality, they trust in God. But the second time it is used it is an imperative mood that challenges them to take faith farther, to trust more specifically in the Son of God, Jesus Christ their Lord.

LET'S SEE WHAT WE HAVE IN VERSE 1:

1. The disciples were troubled, as we are often troubled as we live in this fallen world.

2. We are troubled by what we perceive to be reality. By what we believe in.

EXAMPLE: You go the doctor and after an examination, maybe X-rays, he comes in to the examining room and tells you that you will need surgery. You are troubled by this - because you believe him.

EXAMPLE: Have you ever been troubled by something you believed to be true and found out it was not true. You mortgage company calls and tells you that you are three months behind on you payments, then calls back and tells you it was a computer error (not such thing, only human errors).

3. So here is the point, we are troubled, upset, emotionally distraught, by what we believe.

4. So Jesus tells His disciples, and us, believe in something else. Something that is more real, more eternal.

ND THAT IS THE When we are troubled we are believing in life around as being more real than our God who is in control of all things forever.

When Jesus said: You trust in God, now trust also in Me.

There can be no doubt that He as making himself equal with the Father.

FOR A MAN TO SAY this would indeed be empty words.

A man who was only man will eventually disappoint

BUT FOR A MAN WHO IS ALSO GOD to say this not only declares that He is God but that He is deserving of such trust.

For Jesus to say, TRUST ME, is something that we can do with full assurance of confidence and faith and hope.

GOD IS SOVERIGN, He is all powerful, and beyond that, He is a God who loves us. His goodness and mercy will have only the best for us if we but trust in Him and His Son Jesus Christ.

Years later Paul would emphasize the same thing when he said in Philippians 4:6-7

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

v 2-3 Tells them specifically what they are to believe.

In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

First, they were to trust Christ, trust also in Me. Then and only then will they be able to trust what He said as being more real than the present situation.

Here they were wallowing in their misery and fearing that they were going to be abandoned, and Jesus tells them - trust in me and then my promise.

Jesus goes from Himself to His Words in telling the disciples to not be troubled but instead to trust.

This promise must not be treated as simplistic, it is not merely the words of someone who cares saying don't worry, be happy.

The whole basis for Jesus being able to say this, mean it, and challenge the disciples to believe it is theological.

The elementary theological truth, that Jesus is going away, to the cross, to the tomb, and then to heaven as the God-Man, the Savior, is what allowed them and us to trust in His Words.

Even for the troubled Christian today, there would be little hope or comfort apart from what happened over that one week end in Jerusalem nearly 2,000 years ago.

BUT BEFORE WE LOOK at the truths Jesus is asking us to believe, let's examine a pattern.

1. Believe in God: We come to a point of God consciousness, recognizing that all that we see, all that we are, is not an accident. That there is a God and He has created us. We trust in Him and He brings us to a point of hearing about His greatest gift to us.

2. Believe in Christ: God's Son who is the only Savior. This is what we must do at the point of Gospel hearing if we are to be saved. We believe in the Person of Christ, the God-Man who went to the Cross and died for us.

3. Then believe in the truth that Christ gives us: We must not do this apart from the believing in Him, trusting in Him.

A promise is only as valid as the integrity of the person who makes the promise. Are there those who make promises to us that we know will not be fulfilled? But are there others who we know their word is their bond and whatever they say will be done.

We must first believe in Christ. For salvation of course, but also for the spiritual life. We believe that He is Sovereign and that He is

Good and that He loves us with an unchanging love - we trust Him, we can trust His word.

AND THAT MAY VERY WELL BE THE PROBLEM MANY CHRISTIANS have today, they have stopped believing in Christ.

They believed in Christ for Salvation, but then the troubles of life come into the soul, the allow the adversities of life that must kept outside to become stress in their soul. They forget to believe in Christ, the God-man who is sovereign and who loves them and who they can trust.

They try to claim a promise, apply a verse, stand on a principle, but they do not believe the one who gave the promise, the verse, the principle.

Doctrine is removed from the person of Christ and becomes an empty system that fails them.

That is what we are seeing in James 1. That out before us in life goes the power of God, the love of God, and the plan of God in Christ Jesus.

That when the troubles of this life come, we can believe the Word of Christ because we believe in Christ who stands behind His Word.

v 2-7 Jesus gives His disciples three truth that must be believed if faith is to prove triumphant.

1. Jesus is not simply going away. Rather, He is going away to His Father's house to prepare a place for us.

In the passage, Jesus tells us that He is going away to prepare a place for us.

In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

The word DWELLING PLACE is a rare Greek word found only here and in verse 23. It refers not to a mansion, or a palace, but a place to live.

A place to live in the heaven, the Father's house, a place to live with our Savior, Jesus Christ.

The emphasis them is not on the place itself, but on our eternal presence with the Father and with the Son.

IT IS FROM THIS TRUTH that we develop our eternal perspective. While we have many temporal privileges as Christians and while we can enjoy the joy of the Lord and the abundant life He has for us, we must never lose sight of the fact that we are just passing through.

Our home, our place to live forever, in the presence of Christ, is heaven.

2. The second truth: Jesus is coming back for His own.

v 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

GOING AWAY is a reference to His death and COMING AGAIN is a reference to His resurrection.

He looks at both the Cross and the Crown and tells His disciples and us that He will return for His own.

This is a promise of the rapture, that Jesus Christ will return for His Royal Family, that our rightful place is with Him.

When Douglas MacArthur left the Philippines he made a promise, I shall return. And those he left behind fought bravely with that thought in mind, that their commander would return, and he did.

We must live life knowing that Jesus Christ our Savior will return for us.

It is our blessed hope, Jesus is coming again.

3. The third truth we are asked to believe is that we know. as His disciples, the way to the place He is going.

John 14:4-7

v 4 And you know the way where I am going.

v 5 Thomas said to Him, Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?

v 6 Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.

v 7 If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.

I respect Thomas for being the one who asks the hard questions. He is thinking. He is thinking that he does not know where the Lord is going so then, how can he know the way?

Thomas is described as a blunt man who faces fear, doubt, and confusion, head on.

He will not pretend to understand when he does not.

And Jesus is very sensitive to him and patience with him. Jesus teaches him.

At verse 6 Jesus states that He is the way, the truth, and the life and that no one comes to the Father but through Him.

The way that Jesus was to go was the way of the Cross.

Our way is Jesus Himself.

It is an amazing statement that He makes.

I AM THE WAY: Spoken by one who will face the same of a Roman Cross, the death of a despised and debased criminal. And yet a death that is for us.

I AM THE TRUTH: Spoken by one who will be condemned by lying witness and whose very words will be twisted by his accusers.

I AM THE LIFE: Spoken by one who battered corpse will soon rest in a sealed tomb.

There is glory in this paradox, the glory of the resurrection.

BY HIS WAY TO GLORY, through the sacrifice of the Cross, He becomes the way to glory for

us. Not through our sacrifice, but through His sacrifice.

His way to glory was unique. Only He could travel that path, but once traveled, He becomes something so much more than just an example. He becomes the way itself.

AS WE STUDY THE BIBLE, AS WE LISTEN IN ON THIS FAREWELL DISCOURSE OF JESUS TO HIS DISCIPLES, WE ARE REMINDED THAT our faith transcends promise and principle and precept. Our faith is wrapped up in person, Jesus Christ - the way, the truth, and the life.

If we are to have an abundant life free from troubles, we must begin with Him and then believing Him, believe what He tells us. **OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER FOURTEEN, VERSE 8 (vv 8-12).**

In the previous chapter, the Lord Jesus Christ, as He was preparing His disciples for His departure, stressed three things.

1. Our Relationship with Him: Confession of sins (rebound) as illustrated by the washing of their feet

2. An attitude towards Him and towards others: The attitude of a servant. This includes humility and submission to Him in our Christian service.

3. A Relationship with other believers: The attitude and action of loving one another just as Christ has loved us.

But with all this we see in John 14 that He is going away. And yet we are not to be troubled by His absence. As a matter of fact, in His absence He will provide more for us than those who followed Him had in His presence.

John 16:7 But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

BUT HIS DISCIPLES DID NOT UNDERSTAND.

So in John 14 we have three disciples, Thomas, Philip, and Judas (not Iscariot) asking questions.

And these three with their three questions really parallel questions that man has had through the history of the church.

1. Thomas states: Lord, we do not know the way? How many of us have asked God in our prayers to show us His way? And yet here we are told that the way is Christ, the truth is Christ, life itself is Christ.

We focus upon Christ, we rivet attention upon Him. He is our goal because He is the author and finisher of our faith.

We may be walking through a no man's land but we do not walk alone, Christ carries us. Know Him, know the way.

2. Philip's questions is more like a demand: Show us the Father and we will be forever satisfied.

Like so many since then, Philip determines what the believer needs, what will satisfy him, and demands it of God.

Philip pictures for us those of us who approach our faith, without faith. Those who are so overly simplistic that they forget that God knows what we really need.

3. Judas (not Iscariot) in v 22 asks a question that touches upon dispensational truth. The answer will later be given in the epistles as the uniqueness of the C.A. is unfolded.

But Jesus immediate answer deals with the necessity for those who say they love God to obey the Word of God and in doing so both the Father and the Son will abide with that believer.

NOW LET'S GO BACK TO JOHN 14:8

v 8 Philip said to Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.

As with each of the disciples who address the Lord, Philip uses the title of respect and honor, LORD.

But then he makes a demand.

SHOW us the Father: SHOW is a verb and Philip states this as a command, an aorist, active, imperative.

The word itself carries with it the idea of showing for the purpose of proving.

So Philip demands proof, not so much that Jesus is the Son of God but proof that Jesus truly represents the Father and proof that what Jesus is saying is the Word of God.

We see that, that is the issue when Jesus responds to the questions.

But notice the last part of his question.

Show us the Father, and it is enough for us.

The word ENOUGH means to be sufficient, to satisfy, to suffice. It is a verb and it is present tense.

When he said SHOW us the Father, that was aorist.

But when he says that will SUFFICE he uses a pres.

PHILIP FALLS INTO THE SAME ERROR MANY do even today. They think that a one shot experience will be sufficient for their entire Spiritual Life.

In this they forget about faith, walking by faith, and instead they want some thing that they have determined will be good enough to last them for a life time.

PHILIP'S ERROR could be called the ERROR OR THE YOUNG BELIEVER.

1. Young Christians too often try to make the Christ Centered life simplistic.

2. Young Christians too often determine what they need for the Spiritual life.

3. Young Christians fail to listen to Jesus Christ and hear His Words.

4. Young Christians try to replace faith with experience.

5. Young Christians fail to trust Christ to show them and provide for them what they truly need.

6. Young Christians think in terms of meeting casual needs while not recognizing crucial needs.

7. Young Christians think in terms of the moment without considering long range possibilities.

v 9-11 Jesus Answers Philip.

Jesus said to him, Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, Show us the Father?

Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; otherwise believe on account of the works themselves.

v 9 This is a rebuke. Often a rebuke is what will get us to abandon our error and listen to the correction.

Jesus said to him, Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, Show us the Father?

The first factor of faith is to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He alone is the one who has come from heaven to earth, that He is God in the flesh.

The deity of Christ is one of the major themes in John's Gospel. From the very first chapter we see Jesus, the incarnate Word, Jesus who became flesh and dwelt among us.

Philip has forgotten this. In his simplistic view of God he is unable to grasp a triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with perfect agreement of essence.

We can look back into the Gospel of John and see that even the unbeliever religious leader understood that Jesus was claiming to be one

with God, claiming to be God. They conspired to kill Him for this very reason.

Philip forgot the first factor of faith.

And to him Jesus says: He who has seen me has seen the Father.

If you know Christ you know the Father. If you have a personal relationship with Christ, you have a personal relationship with the Father and with the Holy Spirit.

v 10 Three failures of Faith.

We live the Spiritual life by faith. If we try anything other than faith we will fail.

NOTICE THE FIRST WORDS OF BOTH VERSES 10 and 11.

Do you not believe.

Believe Me.

The issue is the issue of faith, what do we believe? What do we not believe?

1. Philip failed to believe and apply the essence of God to the situation.

v 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me?

Many time Jesus had declared that He and the Father were One. If they are one in essence they are in agreement.

We can trust Christ, and can trust that the more we come to know Him the more we come to know the Father.

2. Philip failed to believe and apply the promises that Christ had made.

v 10 The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative.

We need never doubt that what is revealed by the Son or by the Holy Spirit is in perfect agreement with the Father.

3. Philip failed to believe in the works of the Son that fulfilled the Father's plan.

v 10 But the Father abiding in Me does His works.

What was accomplished by the incarnation of Jesus Christ, His life, His death, His resurrection, fulfilled in every way the Father's plan of grace.

We need never fear that anything was left undone. The plan is perfect and the Lord's fulfillment of the plan was perfect.

v 11-12 The Power of the Life of Faith.

v 11 First we have the mechanics.

Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; otherwise believe on account of the works themselves.

Here we are given objects for our faith.

NOW REMEMBER: Faith without an object of no value. Faith is a TRANSITIVE concept. Without an object it is meaningless.

First, we can place our faith in the Words of Christ. He declares that He is in the Father and the Father is in Him.

Second, we can place our faith in the Works of Christ. He accomplishes what no one else can accomplish. By the power of the Father and the Spirit He stilled the storm, feed the hungry, gave sight to the blind.

By the power of the Spirit He endured the Cross, despised the shame, and by the power of the Father He sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven.

His works show us that He did for mankind what we could not do for ourselves.

His WORDS and His WORKS: Do you believe them.

v 12 The Promise of the Life of Faith.

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father.

This promise includes a condition, HE WHO BELIEVES IN ME. That condition was explained in the previous verse.

THE PROMISE: The works that I do shall he do also.

BUT GET THIS: And greater works than these shall he do because I go to the Father.

The first part of the promise deals with QUALITY. The second part of the promise deals with QUANTITY. And the last part of the promise deals with POWER.

Last things first: Jesus introduces the fact that the believer, after His resurrection, will receive a power source that they have never had before.

Later in verses 16 and 17 He is more specific as He promised them the Holy Spirit.

THE QUALITY of works that the child of God can do in the power of the Spirit are the same as the works that Christ has accomplished during the incarnation.

1. Literal fulfillment: Peter, James, John, Paul all preformed miracles similar to the miracles Christ preformed.

Peter was so indwelt with power that in Acts 5:15 his shadow could heal the sick.

This part of the promise was fulfilled in the disciples.

2. But there is also a figurative fulfillment in us today: We have the Gospel that brings peace to the world, we have the Word of God that brings light to blind, that can cause the deaf to hear and the lame to walk - not in a physical sense but in a greater, eternal sense. To bring spiritual sight, and hearing, and mobility to mankind is the work that we do.

And that was what the miraculous works of Christ illustrated. What He did by the power of God in physical healings illustrated what He was doing spiritually.

The QUANTITY of the Works: And greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father.

The word GREATER is from MEGAS which means more in quantity. The disciples are

more in number, the believers who follow in the centuries of the C.A. will be many.

These will do more works than He did because they are more in number.

THE PROMISE THEN is based upon FAITH and results in SERVICE.

HOW CONCERNED SHOULD BE WITH FAITH AND THE LACK OF FAITH?

Turn to Hebrews 4:1 and 2

Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER FOURTEEN, VERSE 13 (vv 13-21).

There is a rule that is applied to the study of the Bible that many students of the Word seem too easily to forget. That rule goes something like this.

Read the verse in its context and then read the context into the verse.

Nowhere else is that rule better illustrated than with the verses that are before us this morning. Out of the context they read.

John 14:13-14 And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

Out of context we might think these verses are making our God into a kind of magic genie hidden in Aladdin's lamp. Rub the lamp the right way, utter the right incantation, and you get three wishes. Whatever you ask, some would tell us, in Jesus' name, will be, must be given.

BUT THERE IS A PROBLEM WITH THAT isn't there. That approach puts God below us, subservient to our whims and wishes. And that is not the relationship we have with the one we call LORD.

OTHERS TAKE A DIFFERENT but equally wrong approach to this verse and say that God will give us anything we ask if we just ask in the right way. We have to ask in Jesus name and then have a lot of faith, the more faith the better, and then we will get it.

Those who take that approach will react with guilt and shame when requests are not granted because they believe the failure was that they did not have enough faith.

I was channel surfing (that is jumping from wave length to wave length with the T.V. remote control) the other day and I caught a bit of a talk shows in which people were telling how they abandoned any belief in God when a prayer for help in a time of need was not answered. One guest said she knew she could not be a Christian because she did not have enough faith to get God to answer her prayers.

How sad it is that so many people live lives of guilt and shame thinking the problem is their lack of faith.

SO LET'S SEE WHAT THESE VERSE MEAN.

The Context: Jesus is answering a request by Philip that He would show him the Father. If Jesus would do that just once, Philip says he would forever be satisfied.

Jesus answers this request by saying to Philip, who should have known this in that he had been with Christ for three years, that who ever has seen Jesus has seen the Father.

He tells him he is not exercising faith in what he knows.

1.Faith in who Christ is

1.Faith in the words of Christ, what He has said

2.Faith in the works of Christ, what the Lord has done

THEN THERE IS A PROMISE: But not just one promise, rather five promises.

God never calls us to do something without there being wonderful promises that result from our obedience. Even to have faith results in fantastic blessing.

1.PRODUCTION (v 12): You will do the works I have done and will do even greater works

2.PRAYER (v 13-14): You will have direct access to the Father through prayer (more on that in a moment)

3.POWER (v 16-17): The Holy Spirit (the other Comforter) will come and abide in you

4.PROJECTION (18): I will return for you, I will not leave you as orphans

5.PROMISE OF HIS PRESENCE (v 19-20): We will behold Him, know Him, because He lives we shall also live.

5.PROMISE OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP (v 21): In obedience we will have a way to show our love for Christ and He will reveal Himself to us

OUR FAITH IN HIM, HIS WORD, AND HIS WORKS is what sets us up for receiving these promises. But faith is not the only requirement mentioned in these verses.

Look at verse 15.

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

And also look at verse 21.

He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me

LET'S GO BACK TO VERSES 13 and 14.

In the context of promise and production, in the context that will follow of obeying Christ's commandments, Jesus says.

And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

The word AND is a conjunction that connects these verses with the previous context.

The previous context looks at the believers production

The word WHATEVER is the translation of a two accusative pronouns.

Now pronouns must have an antecedent and the last accusative noun that was used is the word WORKS in verse 12.

The works that I do shall he do also.

SO WE MIGHT EXPAND THIS BY SAYING: And whatever you ask by way of the works that I do, in my name.

IN MY NAME:

1.In ancient cultures a persons name was much more than the mere verbal pronunciation of sounds and syllables.

2.A person's name identified them as to their reputation.

3.We see in many passages that we are to be motivated by the very name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

4.A person's name not only stood for him but was what a person stood for.

5.The name of the Lord Jesus then goes beyond the name to His person, to His work, to His Holy Character.

So to ask in Jesus Name means to ask according to who He is, and He is the Lord. We are to ask according to His reputation, the reputation of one who loves us and wants for us His very best.

NEXT IN THIS VERSE we have the purpose of what we ask and what God gives.

That the Father may be glorified in the Son.

What we ask of the Father and what the Son promises that the Father will give will be that which bring glory to the Father.

HERE IS WHERE WE SO OFTEN FAIL at prayer. We ask for that which will be glory to

ourselves, or to our family, or to our organization, our committee, our church.

But we must ask that which will bring glory to the Father in His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

When we pray do we stop and ask ourselves how our request will bring glory to God? Maybe the greatest glory to God will come by Him not answering our prayer.

And if that is the case our attitude should be an attitude that trusts the Father to give that and only that through which He will be glorified.

v 14 Summarizes the promise: If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

To ask in Jesus name is to ask of God what Jesus Christ our Lord would want for us as we do His work.

Now look down to verse 16: And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever.

Jesus Christ promises to ask the Father to give believers in the C.A. the Holy Spirit.

NOW ON THREE OCCASIONS IN THE upper room discourse Jesus tells His disciples to ask the Father for something.

In John 15:16 we have a statement very similar to the one we have here in John 14:13 and 14.

The context is bearing fruit and having endurance

In John 16:23 we have another similar statement and there the immediate context is endurance and the larger context is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Now both bearing fruit, production, and endurance requires the believer to have a power that is greater than his own.

That power is the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was going to ask His Father that His disciples would have the Holy Spirit in them.

APPLICATION FOR THEM: They should have asked the Father for this unique ministry of the Holy Spirit also. But they did not.

APPLICATION FOR US: We should be requesting of the Father the same things that Jesus Christ requests of the Father on our behalf. But we don't.

Let me give you reasons we fail in our prayer life.

1. We fail to ask

2. We do ask for that which brings glory to the Father

3. We fail to ask with faith believing that God wants for us His highest and best

4. We ask in our own power for things that would add to our power

5. We ask for that which would defeat us rather than cause us to endure

6. We ask according to selfish wants and needs

7. We fail to ask that which Jesus Christ is also asking the Father

v 15 How do we know what to ask for? How do we know what Jesus is praying for us?

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

It is so important for us to see that in the context of the promise of prayer and prayers answered, we have a mandate to demonstrate our love for the Lord by keeping His commandments.

Faith is fine, it is necessary to place our faith in who Christ is, in His Word and in His Work.

But we also must be men and women of obedience, we must keep the Word and to do that we must know the Word.

In the parable of the master and his servants Jesus taught that the master said to His servants (Matthew 25:21) Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a

few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.

HOW CAN WE EVER EXPECT to have the great things that can be ours that will allow us to serve our Lord, to do His works, to glorify Him and the Father, if we do not keep His Word in even the smallest of things?

I would challenge you this next week to stop, ask yourself often, what does God want me to be doing right now? Especially ask yourself that Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday nights about 7:30.

NOW ALMOST EVERYTHING WE HAVE SEEN IN THESE verses deals with the first of the three parts to prayer, prayer preparation.

1.Preparation

2.Persistence

3.Pursuit

Prayer Preparation takes faith and doctrine and combines them together to allow us to pray more effectively.

1.With Faith and Doctrine combined we take time to assess what is happening in our lives from Divine Viewpoint.

2.Too often we view our problems from human viewpoint, that is what Philip did as he made his simplistic request to the Lord

3.Prayer preparation calms the soul

4.Prayer Preparation allows us to see if the problems we are facing are a result of greater problems in our souls

5.Prayer preparation allows us to shift our focus from our problems to God's power to act in accordance with His will for our lives

6.In Prayer Preparation three things occur.

1)God's desires become your desires

2)God's will becomes your will

3)God's thinking becomes your thinking

7.Prayer Preparation allows you to shift from prayers of panic to prayers of purpose

PHILIP had not prepared prior to making his request of the Lord. Had he prepared he would have combined faith and doctrine and God's desire, will, and thinking would have become his desire, will, and thinking.

When we pray as prepared believers, God will answer our prayers and He will be glorified in Jesus Christ, His Son our Savior. OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER FOURTEEN, VERSE 16

v 16And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever.

We saw two weeks ago that the Lord outlined the procedure for service that we are to have.

1.Believe that Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be.

This is for believers, not for the unbeliever. We too often fail to place faith in Christ our risen Lord who is God who came in the flesh and dwelt among us and went the distance for us in dying for our sins.

2.Believe in the Words of Christ: The whole Bible is the mind of Christ. We must believe His Word.

3.Believe in the Works of Christ: That He accomplished what no one else could do. And in accomplishing His work He showed us how to live, by faith in the power of the Word and the Power of the Spirit.

We have the same two power options available to us that were available to Christ. The power of the Word and the power of the Spirit.

In John 14:15 we have the mandate for the first power option of the Word.

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

Now Jesus tells his disciples that He will pray for them to have the Holy Spirit in them that becomes the second power option.

Now I set the word of God as the first power option because we would not even know about the second power option apart from the Word.

Psalm 138:2 For Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy name.

Matthew 4:4 Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Job 23:12 I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my daily food.

In every dispensation believers have been called to be obedient to the Word. But now the Lord Jesus will pray for an additional source of power, the Holy Spirit, to indwell believers.

v 16Continued: And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever.

Any prayer prayed by the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ will be answered.

HENCE: I will pray - He will give.

SOME OBSERVATIONS.

1)The Holy Spirit is obedient to God the Father. While being God, the Holy Spirit is obedient to God and carries out the desires of God the Son, Jesus Christ.

Christ says He will ask the Father, future tense. This will come after the Cross and prior to the Day of Pentecost.

2)He is called Another Helper. There are two words in the GNT for another. ETERROS is another of a different kind. Whereas our words here ALLOS refers to another of the same kind.

The Holy Spirit, the other Helper, is a helper of the same kind as Jesus Christ. He is eternal God.

The word HELPER is PARAKLJTOS from the verb PARAKALJW.

This is one of the oldest and richest words in the Greek language.

To gently rekindle a flame: This pictures someone gently and patiently blowing on dying embers to bring a fire to life again.

To call forth comfort: Pictures a father comforting the crying child.

To call a physician: Pictures someone who is injured calling on one who can help and heal.

To stabilize the troops: Pictures the military officer who, in the heat of battle, calmly encourages the frightened soldiers.

To plead one's case: Pictures the counsel for the defense making an appeal for his client before a judge.

3)Jesus had been the Helper of these disciples during His incarnation. But He was to leave them. The other Helper would come and do in them what Jesus Christ had done with them.

And the promise: The Holy Spirit would never leave them. That He may be with you forever. Jesus would leave them and return to heaven but in His place He leaves the Holy Spirit.

This prepositional phrase is EIS TOV AIWNA and would best be translated with a view to the age. What Age? The C.A. This is the beginning of the mystery doctrine of the C.A.

4)The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Truth: As Jesus Christ is at the right hand of the Father, one of the most important things that we must have is truth. That is the first power option, and without truth, the Word of God, we are left without power to fulfill the plan of God.

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Wisdom (Exodus 28:3), the Spirit of Understanding, The Spirit of Counsel, and the Spirit of knowledge (Isaiah 11:2).

Isaiah 11:2 And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

God the Holy is the revealer of Truth: His ministries include Revelation, Inspiration, Interpretation, and Illumination.

5)The WORLD, used here for the unbeliever cannot receive the Holy Spirit because the world does not behold Him or know Him.

The word BEHOLD means to look closely into, the World does not behold or look closely to see the work of the Spirit. Furthermore, the World does not know, even in the most simple way, the Holy Spirit.

6)But in contrast to the World, the disciples know the Spirit because He abides with them.

The word ABIDE is MENW and means to stay or stand along side.

The word WITH is PARA , face to face with.

That had been the relationship of the Holy Spirit to believers - but all that was going to change.

7)And will be in you: When the request of Jesus is answered by the Father the Holy Spirit will not just be with the believer, He will be IN THE BELIEVER.

The verb WILL BE is a future, middle, indicative and connects the future tense of Jesus request with this, the fulfillment of the request.

The preposition is no longer PARA but EN God the Holy Spirit will be inside the believer.

1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

BACK TO JOHN 14.

v 18This paragraph, verses 18 to 21 connect to the words of comfort that Jesus was giving His disciples in verses 1 through 4.

This comfort message was interrupted by the questions of Thomas and Philip to whom the Lord gave an answer.

Now we return to the concept of being comforted.

REMEMBER: These words of comfort come on the heels of the prediction that Peter will deny the Lord three times by morning light, when the cock crows.

So in addition to comforting the Lord is providing these disciples with truth that will dispel our own weakness.

YOU SEE THERE WILL BE TIMES when we will deny the Lord before morning light. We will go our own way, we will fall in the race, losing our endurance, breaking our stride.

WHAT DOES JESUS THINK OF US WHEN WE DO that? He thinks of comfort, encouragement, warning, and a promise.

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

Even if, like Peter, we deny Him, we are still in His family. We may be errant children, we may be disobedient, but we are still Christians.

And then the promise: I will come to you.

v 19Now in the context of the last supper we might think that this is a specific promise to these disciples who will see the resurrected Lord. But this verse makes this a promise for us.

After a little while the world will behold Me no more; but you will behold Me; because I live, you shall live also.

Every promise that the disciples will see Christ again that is made in the Farewell discourse in a promise not merely of resurrection appearance but to the believer in the C.A. That we will know Christ and see Him in the Word that we study.

We are living in the time when the world does not behold Christ. He is in heaven at the right hand of the Father.

But we continue to behold Him, because He lives and we live in Him.

Our spiritual life is possible because He lives!!

We have a relationship with Him because He is our living Savior.

v 20 In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

IN THAT DAY refers to the Day of Pentecost and the C.A. which follows.

YOU SHALL KNOW is a statement of the confidence the believer can have knowing that his life, his everlasting existence is in Christ who is in the Father and assured by Christ in us.

As Paul would say in Colossians 1:27 Christ in you, the hope of glory.

During the C.A. the confident knowledge of the Christ would be three fold.

1. I am in the Father: This recognizes the deity of Christ, that He is co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. As God He is Lord, He is in control.

2. You in Me: This is our union with Christ. Upon faith in Christ we are forever in union with Him. We share in His power and in His position.

3. And I in You: This looks at Jesus Christ indwelling every believer for the purpose of fellowship. You are never alone, you have a best friend, Jesus Christ your Lord, your Savior, your friend.

v 21 With this confident knowledge comes a triangle of Love. Normally a love triangle is rather hazardous to anyone's health but this love triangle is a sphere of fellowship for us.

1. Link #1: He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me.

We can show our love for Jesus Christ is only one way, by obeying His Word.

2. Link #2: He who loves Me shall be loved by My Father.

The Father's love, His personal love, is found by those who obey the Word of Christ.

3. Link #3: And I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.

The word DISCLOSE deserves a moment of our time.

It is EMFANIZW . Which means to make known by either one's presence or one's words. Only found 10 times in the New Testament

Look at Acts 24:1 And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders, with a certain attorney {named} Tertullus; and they brought charges to the governor against Paul.

Charges were brought, or they informed the governor of the activities of Paul.

Also used the same way in Acts 25:2

Christ is manifested or disclosed to believers by His Word when we obey the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit.

So the two power options are our. The Word which we are to keep and the Holy Spirit who gives us the power to keep the Word - and from this two promises.

1. We will have the very love of God

2. We will come to know more and more Jesus Christ, our personal Savior and Friend. OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER FOURTEEN, VERSE 18

v 18 This paragraph, verses 18 to 21 connect to the words of comfort that Jesus was giving His disciples in verses 1 through 4.

This comfort message was interrupted by the questions of Thomas and Philip to whom the Lord gave an answer.

Now we return to the concept of being comforted.

REMEMBER: These words of comfort come on the heels of the prediction that Peter will deny the Lord three times by morning light, when the cock crows.

So in addition to comforting the Lord is providing these disciples with truth that will dispel our own weakness.

YOU SEE THERE WILL BE TIMES when we will deny the Lord before morning light. We will go our own way, we will fall in the race, losing our endurance, breaking our stride.

WHAT DOES JESUS THINK OF US WHEN WE DO that? He thinks of comfort, encouragement, warning, and a promise.

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

Even if, like Peter, we deny Him, we are still in His family. We may be errant children, we may be disobedient, but we are still Christians.

And then the promise: I will come to you.

v 19 Now in the context of the last supper we might think that this is a specific promise to these disciples who will see the resurrected Lord. But this verse makes this a promise for us.

After a little while the world will behold Me no more; but you will behold Me; because I live, you shall live also.

Every promise that the disciples will see Christ again that is made in the Farewell discourse in a promise not merely of resurrection appearance but to the believer in the C.A. That we will know Christ and see Him in the Word that we study.

We are living in the time when the world does not behold Christ. He is in heaven at the right hand of the Father.

But we continue to behold Him, because He lives and we live in Him.

Our spiritual life is possible because He lives!!

We have a relationship with Him because He is our living Savior.

v 20 In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

IN THAT DAY refers to the Day of Pentecost and the C.A. which follows.

YOU SHALL KNOW is a statement of the confidence the believer can have knowing that his life, his everlasting existence is in Christ who is in the Father and assured by Christ in us.

As Paul would say in Colossians 1:27 Christ in you, the hope of glory.

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1. We will have the very love of God

2. We will come to know more and more Jesus Christ, our personal Savior and Friend.

v 22 It is with this statement of comfort that the next disciple asks the next question.

Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?

Judas, also called Thaddeus or Labbeus, was struck by the statement that the Lord can disclose himself to them but not to world.

He uses the same word that Jesus used but uses it as an infinitive which looks at a result. Hence, he wants to know the process that can result in such a thing.

He wants to know about the mechanics of disclosure.

He is failing to see that there are only two types of people in the World.

When the cruise ship Titanic left England it had no less than five classes of passengers. From the aristocracy of Europe to the common men and women who could barely

afford passage. After it sunk there were only two lists - lost and saved.

As we look at the people of the world we see many distinctions, from the law abiding to the lawless, from the sophisticated to the base, from black to white and everything in between. From the board member to the bush man. God sees the world in only two groups, lost and saved.

When the journey is over all the people of the world will be in only two lists. One is the Lamb's book of life, the saved. The other is the book of works, the lost.

Judas did not understand this. And thus he did not understand that teaching of Jesus would be disclosed to believers while at the same time being hid from the unbeliever.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10 But just as it is written, eye has not seen nor ear has not heard, nor has it entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him. But God revealed them to us (Believers) through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. BUT JUDAS DOES NOT understand this and just like all of us when we do not understand and we go before the Lord with questions, he will teach him,

v 23 through 29: Three ways in which the Lord and His teaching is disclosed to believers.

v 23-25 THE LORD IS DISCLOSED THROUGH THE WORD.

Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me. These things I have spoken to you, while abiding with you.

Jesus uses a 3rd cc conjunction to introduce this clausal construction. IF as a potential of our free will.

Mankind is free to love the Lord or not love the Lord.

LOVES ME: This is agape love which stresses the love that begins in the M.A. Our first thought of love for the Lord is in our thinking not in our actions. This love is the love that responds to the hearing of the Gospel. A love that is unselfish and dependant upon God.

KEEP is a from a Greek word meaning to GUARD. We guars that which we deem as valuable. We hold it tight, keep it locked up. Here we lock up the Word, guarding it, holding it tight in our souls.

MY WORD: Notice that in this verse the word LOGOS is singular. Jesus is not looking at the entirety of His word but only at the Gospel which is what the unbeliever must hear and believe.

TWO THINGS RESULT WHEN A PERSON LOVES THE LORD AND KEEPS HIS WORD.

1.The Father will (future tense) love Him.

Now we know from John 3:16 that God loves the whole world. So this love that comes as a future tense from the present condition of a love for the Lord and a keeping of His Word must be something different.

And it is, this is the love God has for the man or woman or child who believes in His Son as His Savior.

2.And we will come to him (again a future tense) and make our abode with him.

Upon faith alone in Christ alone God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit indwell the believer.

So then the first manifestation that discloses Christ is at salvation.

v 24The unbeliever does not love the Lord. He has heard and ignores or rejects. The unbeliever will not keep the WORD (plural), any of the Word of the Lord.

He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.

We have to watch the way the argument is going. It is not the one who does not keep the word not loving the Lord. All of us fail in keeping the Word at times. But here the one who does not love the Lord (the unbeliever) is incapable of keeping the Word.

v 26Will tell us that this requires the Holy Spirit's ministry in us and the unbeliever does not have that capacity.

He then reminds them again as he has done so often that these words are not his alone, they are the Fathers.

All truth has as its ultimate source God the Father.

v 25These things I have spoken to you, while abiding with you.

He reminds then that have heard this distinction made before.

John 12:47-5 And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.

v 26**THE LORD IS DISCLOSED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

This is the first time in John's gospel that the Lord addresses the third person of the trinity

with the title, Holy Spirit (it is not Holy Ghost).

1) While Jesus Christ was incarnate He spoke the words of the Father. But He is leaving.

2) The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will.

John does something here that is grammatically unusual. The name HOLY SPIRIT is AGIOS PNEUMA and PNEUMA is a neuter noun.

Now if you use a pronoun to refer to a noun it must agree in case and gender. So we should have neuter pronouns, but we do not.

Both the relative pronoun WHOM and the demonstrative HE are masculine pronouns. Totally contrary to correct grammar but totally consistent with the personality of the Holy Spirit.

The same rules of grammar are set aside to reveal the personality of the Holy Spirit in John 16:13-14 and in Ephesians 1:13-14 (in many mss).

3) The Holy Spirit is the one who will teach and remind believers the truth that is in Jesus.

We already observed that the Holy Spirit has four ministries that are specific to the Word of God including interpretation and illumination which would be the teaching of truth the Lord mentions here.

TEACH is DIDASKW where we get the word DOCTRINE.

But we also have a fifth ministry of the Holy Spirit as He brings truth to us.

He reminds us of all things that the Lord as told us.

REMINDE is UPOMIMNJSKW and means to remind and cause remembrance after hints, suggestions.

Often translated by the phrase: Put in remembrance. Looks at recalling what we have already learned.

The Holy Spirit will bring to our memory center, by gentle hints and suggestions, the doctrine we have learned and now need to apply.

APPLICATION: We learn a lot of doctrine over the years. It is assimilated a little at a time.

Isaiah 28:10 For He says, precept upon precept, line on line, A little here, a little there.

Not all of it, not even most of it, is staged and ready for volitional recall. We have to remember, link thoughts, compare memories, when we recall doctrine. God the Holy Spirit does that by gentle suggestion. HOW DOES THIS WORK: You are faced with a problem that demands a decision. You do not have time to go to your doctrinal notebooks, or even turn on your computer. You need a doctrine you know you have learned. The Holy Spirit will bring into memory center a part of that doctrine. Maybe an axiom or pithy statement. That will then lead to the whole category of doctrine that comes into memory center and can be categorically applied.

That is why I try to teach with axioms and categories. Sometimes it will be the short, brief truth that the Holy Spirit will bring to mind and will allow for the stability needed to then recall and apply the whole category of doctrine.

I have received more immediate help in life by remembering that God is in control than the 27 points on the doctrine of the sovereignty of God.

God the Holy Spirit brings doctrine, all aspects, all parts, all forms, to our remembrance.

FOR A PURPOSE: So we can make the volitional decision to apply it.

v 27-29 With the Word guarded in our souls and with the Holy Spirit ministering in us and to us we have the two power options made available.

The first two spiritual skills are in place, the F/HS and the learning of BD residing in the

soul. Now for the third spiritual skill, the use of problem solving applications.

THIS IS THE THIRD WAY THE LORD IS DISCLOSED TO BELIEVERS: Through the application of doctrine to life.

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. You heard that I said to you, I go away, and I will come to you. If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it comes to pass, you may believe.

The disciples considered it a big problem that Jesus was leaving them.

But here they are told to have PEACE. But notice the strong description, not as the world gives.

They are told not to be troubled and not to have fear.

Then they are told to see a perceived loss as a gain.

I go away, and I will come to you. If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced.

THAT IS A CONTRADICTION to Human viewpoint but Human viewpoint is set aside as we use the problem solving application and we think in terms of God's viewpoint based on the Word and the Spirit.

A 2nd cc IF, if and they do not because they are not trusting in what He tells them about His leaving them.

And He tells them this in advance.

Tells them what, that He is going away. They already know that, that is their problem.

NO, he tells then they are going to REJOICE, that is what they do not believe.

I THINK WE CALL ALL UNDERSTAND THIS IF we think back and consider some tragedy in our lives, something that seemed horrible at the time but now is a memory over which to

rejoice. Maybe a lost job that lead to a better one, an illness that disclosed more serious problems that were corrected.

AND IN HEAVEN we will look back over all the adversities of life and rejoice in their results in our lives.

That is part of the reason we must use the spiritual skill of problem solving applications, that we can rejoice when see God's power and might at work.

John 14:30 through 31.

These verses tell of the opposition of Satan, the Lord's hour is almost upon them. They leave the upper room and go to Gethsemane where the Lord will continue His farewell discourse.

LET US BOW OUR HEADS IN PRAYER.

The answer the Lord gave to Judas was also an answer for us. How will you disclose yourself to us and not to the World.

The Lord answers: Through the Word, though the Spirit, and through the abundant life in you. Using the spiritual skills we come to know the Lord **INTRODUCTION:**

I have occasionally told you the story of the Morgan family who live on a mountain in Australia generation after generation in abject poverty. But once the land was sold the new owners discovered that in the land lay the greatest discovery of Gold ever made outside of South Africa. What a pity that they lived in poverty sitting upon untold wealth.

But something could be even sadder, what if they had known about the gold, the wealth it could bring, and refused to mine it or even let others dig the ore out of the ground.

Out thoughts would probably go from pity to accusations of stupidity. But that is where many Christians are today, they know they have the riches of grace and refuse to use them.

Chapter 15

At the end of John 14 we see Jesus and His disciples leaving the upper room and making their way to the garden of Gethsemane. We are told in Matthew 26:30 that they sang hymns prior to their departure.

In leaving the Upper Room Jesus demonstrated considerable wisdom.

1. He knew He was to be betrayed and arrested
2. If he had remained in the upper room the owners of the home, presumably John-Mark's parents, could have suffered harm
3. In an enclosed upper room His disciples would have had no opportunity for escape
4. He needed to go and pray and desired that His disciples pray for Him. So he went to the peaceful setting of the Garden of Gethsemane.

As they made their way through the city to the East gate just south of the Temple mound, across the brook Kidron to the gentle slope of the Mt. of Olives where even today olive gardens dot the landscape, He taught them.

Now the context of chapter 15 really goes back to the mandate of chapter 13. Remember that John 14, which we just concluded, was a chapter of comfort and questions. A lot of truth is given but now as they walk, Jesus will elaborate more on the New Commandment He gave the disciples.

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

NOW LOOK AT John 15:12 This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.

The TWO statements of the mandate of spiritual love are connected by comfort, by promises of power, by the procedure of

spiritual skills, and by this extended metaphor of the vine and the vinedresser.

v I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every {branch} that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit.

Jesus is going to illustrate the work of God the Father on behalf of believers by using a metaphor drawn from the grape vineyards.

A vineyard requires harder and more regular labor than any other form of agriculture. Thus, it becomes a fitting analogy for the process by which the Father brings His children to maturity in Christ.

THE QUESTION answered in this analogy is How does God my Father deal with me?

THE CHARACTERS OF THE ANALOGY IS STATED.

1. Jesus, in His humanity, as our precedent, is the true vine.

TRUE is the fem, adj ALJQINOS

The fem. form does not look at gender. It looks at the fact that Jesus Himself is the true vine because the Father has established Him as such.

Hence, we see this is the humanity of Christ who was empowered by God the Father with the two power options of the Word and the Spirit. He is true God in and of himself, but he is the true vine because of His humanity and that is what relates to us.

The word ALJQINOS looks at the one who has chosen to be conformed by and conformed to the TRUTH, and this Jesus did in His humanity.

2. My Father is the vinedresser: This is the one who goes into the vineyard to care for the vines. The objective of the vinedresser is to achieve maximum production.

v 2 The Work of the Vinedresser.

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit.

The BRANCHES refer to the believer. This is evident by the statement of verse 3 were the analogy is drawn to the disciples.

In verse 2 we have two types of branches, those who do not bear fruit and those who do bear fruit.

Both are connected to the true vine, both are believers who are connected or as we will see later in the analogy, both abide in the true vine, Jesus Christ.

BUT ONE IS BEARING FRUIT AND ONE IS NOT.

Bearing FRUIT is production in the Spiritual Life.

1. Production is the result of the application of Bible Doctrine

2. Production includes the use of the three Spiritual Skills of the F/HS, metabolizing BD, and the use of the Ten problem Solving applications.

3. Production includes the self-analysis in the face of BD in the soul we have examined in James 1.

4. Production also includes Christian Service.

LOOK DOWN TO verse 8: We demonstrate that we are disciples to Jesus Christ that we are His followers of when we bear much fruit.

We cannot be active followers of Christ apart from the entire process, learn, think, and apply the Word. It is in the application stage that we bear much fruit.

BUT WHAT OF THE BELIEVER who does not bear fruit?

The English says: Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away -

Now in the English text this would seem to indicate that God the Father takes away the believer who does not produce. Some have

even used this to argue against our security in Christ.

But this branch is, as Jesus stated, IN ME.

Well, upon closer examination of this verse, something very important and wonderful is revealed.

The word TAKES AWAY is AIRW a verb in the present tense.

The Lexicon meaning of this word is To lift, to bear, or to carry.

Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament defines this word by saying to lift up from the ground.

So what the Father does to the branch, the believer, who is not bearing fruit, producing, is to lift it from the ground.

In Israel, even today, grape vines are down on the ground during the unproductive season. When the time comes for the vine to bear fruit, the vinedresser will lift the branch from the ground.

Usually a large rock is used, eight to ten inches in diameter, and the vinedresser carefully put the rock under the branch. Then several days later the vinedresser returns and moves the rock under the branch closer to the main vine, this process is repeated until the entire branch is lifted up from the ground.

THE VINEDRESSERS DOES THIS FOR two reasons.

1. The lifted branch has a greater exposure to the sun. In the same way, the believer who is not bearing fruit but is destined to bear fruit much have a greater exposure to the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

To many believers have no application of doctrine in their lives because they are lying with their underbellies in the dust and are not fully exposed to the Son of God.

Their are aspects of their lives that are hidden in darkness, and Jesus Christ the light of the world is not shining on them.

If we are to fulfill the destiny God has for us we must be lifted up from the earth, exposed to the light of Jesus Christ.

2. The second reason the vinedresser takes the painstaking time to lift up the branch is to keep it from sprouting tiny roots that sink into the top soil of the earth. If this happens the branch will produce grapes but they are tiny, hard, and sour.

In the same way the Father lifts us up so we will not set our roots into the earth. When we are lifted up we are still in the world, but not setting our roots into the world.

When the believer who is rooted and grounded to the world try to produce, the fruit will be sour, tiny, hard. Certainly not the much fruit that Jesus talks about in this analogy.

Later on in Jesus High priestly Prayer He would ask of the Father on our behalf: John 17:15 I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil.

There a form of AIRW is used but in the aorist tense to show that we must be lifted up, away from evil, and that the Father will do this for us.

In John 15:2 the word LIFTED UP is a present tense verb indicating that this is something the Father keeps on doing for the believer who does not apply the Word. This is a ministry of the Father every one of us will benefit by at times in our lives. He will, when necessary, lift us up.

v 2Continued: The second part of this verse deals with the branch that is bearing fruit.

And every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit.

The branch that is bearing fruit, the Father PRUNES.

This is the word KAQAIRW and it too is a present tense verb.

But to translate this as PRUNE does not make sense. No vinedresser is going to go into the

vineyard and start cutting off branches once the vine is producing fruit. Do that and the branch will bleed to death because that is when the sap is running through the vine and the branches.

The SAP could be analogous to the ministry of the Holy Spirit running through the branch.

This word means to cleanse, and the vinedresser will go into the vineyard and keep the branch and its fruit clean from all the pests and diseases that plants, grape vines, are susceptible to.

Today we keep the fruit clean with dusts and sprays but back then, in Israel, this was the laborious job of the vinedresser, to keep the branch free from disease.

But in the next verse we are given the parallel of this to us.

v 3You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

All the promises and principles that Jesus has been giving to His disciples in the Upper Room was what would keep them clean.

Throughout this Farewell Discourse Jesus is constantly bringing these disciples back to the importance of the Word of God.

But this is nothing new, this has been God's program for the ages.

Proverbs 4:7-9 Solomon states: The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; And with all your acquiring, get understanding. Prize her, and she will exalt you; She will honor you if you embrace her. She will place on your head a garland of grace; She will present you with a crown of beauty.

In Psalm 119:9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word.

Later, in the Lord's prayer Jesus will request of the Father: John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.

v 4-10 We now have our part in this process. We have seen what the Father will do, now, what must we do?

Abide in me - NINE times in verses 4 through 10 the Lord uses the word abide.

That is what we must do, abide in Christ our Savior, our Friend.

SO SAY THAT IS TOO EASY. They even call it easy believeism, they want to get their human effort into the picture.

But the vinedresser works on the branch, the branch receives the benefit and bears the fruit.

I appreciate the response one Pastor gave to the criticism that he taught a system of easy believeism, he said easy, it is not easy, it is totally free.

It is all a part of God's wonderful grace plan. OPEN YOUR BIBLES IN JOHN, CHAPTER FIFTEEN, VERSE 3 (vv 3-8).

Last week we study the beginning of the vine and branch metaphor given by the Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples as they were leaving the Upper Room and walking through Jerusalem to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Now in these last words that the incarnate Christ spoke to His disciples He is telling them of the ministry of God the Father. He is preparing them for the C.A. and as believers in Christ in that age we can take this information, this truth, and apply it directly to ourselves.

v 1-2 Review.

The metaphor looks at production, the application of the Word of God that we have in our souls to life.

In this we have two types of believers, the one who is not applying and the one who is.

For the one who is not applying the Father Lifts him up.

We looked at the word AIRW which is translated take away but should be translated

lifts up. This sees the vinedresser lifting the branch off the ground to expose it more to the sun and to keep it from putting down roots into the earth.

As believers God the Father will lift us up to His Son and do His work to keep us from being attached to the World. We are a heavenly people.

For the believer who is applying the Word the Father will clean. This includes pruning but also see the vinedresser keeping the destructive bugs and fungus from the branch.

For us the Father will clean us and we now see in verse 3 how we are cleaned. No chemicals or powders are used but the Word.

v 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

These disciples have the Word which Christ has spoken in two ways.

1. They have the Word of Christ that saved them. As believers they had, at a time in the past, received the truth regarding Jesus Christ and believed in Him as their Savior.

2. Secondly, they were, as believers, receiving the Word of God that Christ spoke to them even that evening.

These two possessions of the Word show us how we are clean before God in two ways.

1. First, at salvation, when by faith alone we trusted in Christ alone, we cleansed by God, forgiven of all sin, all scar tissue removed, we were in Christ.

2. Secondly, as we learn the Word we learn to confess our sins and then as we walk in the Spirit the Word of God cleanses us from scar tissue that can build up on the soul. The things of the World, man's viewpoint, thinking in terms of the temporal rather than the eternal, are all flushed out as we attend to the learning and thinking of the Word.

When Christ says you are already clean He uses a present tense to show that this is an ongoing position.

When He talks of the Word spoken to them He uses a perfect tense to show that it was spoken in the past and the effects continue to the present.

We hear the Word in a point in time but we must not limit the work of God to only that point. When we leave the place of learning the Word continues in our souls and continues to have its powerful effect upon us.

The word SPOKEN is LALEW . Now there are two words for spoken communication, one is LEGW and looks at the contents of the teaching. This word looks at the process.

Had He used LEGW we might seek some specific contents that will do this work of cleansing in us. But it is not a specific topic, it is all the Word, the full counsel of God that we learn, think, and apply.

He is emphasizing the process not a specific contents.

v 4 Having been cleaned and continuing to be clean looks at the one who has believed by faith alone in Christ alone and who has the potential of fellowship with God from the Word He has learned. Now that is a position and potential can be used to fulfill a command.

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

Up to this point we have seen what God is doing for us, lifting us up, pruning away the dead works, cleansing us, now we look at our part.

ABIDE IN ME: This is the aor, act, imp of MENW And as an imperative it is a command.

Now a command from God indicates two things.

1. It is something we are to do, the active voice sees us making the decision to ABIDE in Christ

2. It is something we can do. All Christians can abide in Christ. There is no special ability required to do this, it is something that can be accomplished by every believer.

This word ABIDE or MENW in the Greek text is the key that unlocks the production application that is the subject of this chapter.

Jesus uses the word in one form or another nine times in the next seven verses (vv 4-10).

TO ABIDE IN CHRIST IS to depend upon Him. To shift our live into neutral so we can see His power in our lives.

When you are in car and you are going down hill you can shift into neutral and another force takes over, the force of gravity. If the hill is steep enough you can even go faster than you would in the power of car. And you use no fuel, you are depending on a greater power, gravity.

The Holy Spirit speaks to and guides the neutral heart. By that I do not mean passive or indifferent. God has given us the ability to dream dreams and think thoughts and make plans. We are to be a people of vision and ambition.

Bu being neutral I mean being consumed with discovering God's power and then letting that power rule in us.

Remember II Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves.

That is call to us to shift into neutral and discover the power of God that can work in us.

John the Baptist understood this when he said that he must decrease and Christ must increase (John 3:30).

When the Lord gave His disciples a model for prayer He included the statement: Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. The implication of that statement is Father,

whatever you want, that is ultimately what I want.

In the garden of Gethsemane on the night of His betrayal Jesus Christ shifted into neutral.

Matthew 26:39 My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt.

Jesus had very strong feelings about what He wanted and He did not want to suffer and die and be separated from the Father and experience the penalty for sins. But even with all this before Him He remained neutral and accepted the Father's plan.

WE RECENTLY STUDIED A SYNONYMOUS CONCEPT to shifting into neutral - point W. Our point of weakness before God.

When we hit that point of weakness we given a clear choice to depend upon Christ or Self. When we shift into neutral we are declaring dependence upon Jesus Christ.

We shift into neutral when we go before the throne of Grace with confession of sins. Grace recovery is shifting into neutral.

THE APOSTLE JOHN DID NOT KNOW about cars and transmissions and shifting into neutral. But he knew very well about the need we as believers have to depend upon Christ and the Spirit.

In JOHN 15:4 and following we see the repeated use of this word ABIDE, to shift into neutral.

The Greek word MENW which means to take a stand with another, to be and remain united with another, to be one with another in heart, mind, and will. It is equivalent to remaining steadfast and is the root of the word for perseverance and endurance.

v 4 Abide in Jesus Christ

The branch must abide in the vine to bear fruit

Again: Believer cannot bear fruit unless he abides in Jesus Christ,

v 5 He who abide in me, and I abide in him bears much fruit

v 6 The one who does not abide at any time abide in Christ is the unbeliever

v 7 If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it shall be done for you.

v 9 Abide in My love

v 10 How? By keeping My commandments you abide in My love.

Christ has done this and abides in the Father's love

Now lets see how John builds upon this word in a later context.

TURN TO I JOHN, CHAPTER 2:

v 6 If we abide in Christ we should walk (order our lives) in the same (KAQWS) manner in which He walked.

v 10 Spiritual love can only exist when we abide in doctrine (the light).

v 14 The Word of God abides in the growing believer

v 17 When man obeys God regarding salvation he will abide forever

v 24 Let truth abide in you as a believer, and you then will abide in Christ and in the Father.

v 27 The anointing, which is a ministry of the Holy Spirit as He leads us towards our destiny, abides in us.

This is directed towards the Gnostics who were fond of telling others what God's destiny for them was.

We are to abide in Him

v 28 Abiding in Him leads to confidence in life and at the BEMA. Abiding in Christ removes shame at the BEMA

1 JOHN, CHAPTER 3.

v 6 When we abide in Him we do not sin: Hence, being in fellowship is synonymous with abiding in Christ

v 9 Here the Lord is referred to as the SEED which abides in the believer. The verbs are present tense and see the one who life is characterized by production of the sin nature.

The believer has had that cycle of production broken at salvation and will be broken once and for all at physical death

v 14 The unbeliever who is incapable of spiritual love abides in death

v 15 Again we have present tense verbs. This is an unbroken status of the unbeliever who hates and murders.

The unbeliever does not have eternal life abiding in him

v 17 If spiritual love is not expressed there is not evidence of the love of God abiding in him.

v 24 When we abide in Him we keep His commandments. And we know that He abides in us by the Holy Spirit resident in us.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit creates in the believer an abode for Jesus Christ.

1 JOHN, CHAPTER 4.

v 12 When we have spiritual love for one another, we express the fact that God abides in us.

v 13 Again: The evidence of our abiding in Christ and His abiding in us is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

v 15 Faith in Christ results in God abiding in the believing sinner

v 16 When we abide in spiritual love, we abide in God and God abides in us.

THINK JOHN IS DONE: Turn to II JOHN, verse 9.

Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

SUMMARY OF ABIDING IN CHRIST.

Col. R.B. Thieme states: The fact that abide is so often used by John as a command means that it is an experience after salvation and not a reference to positional sanctification. We are never commanded to be in union with Christ.

This is a command to remain in fellowship with God through the use of I John 1:9, so that believer can live the spiritual life. The spiritual life can only be a reality for the believer when he abides in Christ, abides in truth, abides in spiritual love.

This command then looks at both the entrance into the spiritual life though confession of sins and the subsequent F/HS and then the living of the spiritual life according to our precedent Jesus Christ. INTRODUCTION:

In His farewell discourse, Jesus is preparing His disciples to be the leaders of the Church. The church is the only organization in the world in which membership is based upon the qualification that the candidate for membership be unworthy of membership.

That unworthiness is what Jesus is dealing with in John 15 and it is because we are unworthy and unable that we must be in Christ and abiding in Him.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER FIFTEEN, VERSE 4 (vv 4-10).

v 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

Last week we examined the word ABIDE. We found that it looks at our place and our potential in the power of Christ.

This is our shift into neutral in which we depend upon God the Holy Spirit to enable us to live the spiritual life.

ABIDE which is the Greek word ΜΕΝΩ is a verb, it is an aorist, active, imperative.

Something we make a decision to do in a point in time. And it is commanded of believers in Christ.

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This command then looks at both the entrance into the spiritual life through confession of sins and the subsequent F/HS and then the living of the spiritual life according to our precedent Jesus Christ.

[Overlay Abiding in Christ = The F/HS and Walking in Spirit]

THEREFORE: Abiding in Christ enables us to live the Spiritual Life.

The Spiritual Life includes learning the Word, Thinking the Word, and Applying the Word.

At the Learning Stage we have the ability to understand the very mind of Christ, the Word of God.

At the Thinking Stage we, by faith, believe the Word and progress from Human viewpoint to Divine viewpoint

At the application stage we apply the Doctrine we have to reality in our relationship with God, to ourselves, and to others in Spiritual Love of other believers, and in service and sacrifice to all others.

So abiding in Christ sets up the potential for production and that is the CONTEXT of this vine and branch metaphor.

v 4Continued.

As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

The adverb AS is ΚΑΘΩΣ which indicates that this is an exact parallel. Branches that are separated from the vine wither and die. They do not bear fruit or have any production.

In exactly the same way, the believer who is not abiding in Christ, F/HS and Walking in the Spirit, will bear no fruit, will have no production of doctrine in their lives.

They may be involved in the Learning Stage and a semblance of the Thinking Stage but their is no faith decision to believe and then trust is the Word. So the thinking stage becomes an exercise of academics rather than faith and application cannot come out of academics, application can only come out of faith.

v 5Makes our relationship to Christ very clear.

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

What can we do in the Spiritual Life a part from Christ? NOTHING !!

WE ARE NOTHING MORE than a branch that has chosen to separate itself from the vine.

We may try to learn the Word, but we do not learn the Word the way God wants us to learn His Word. We may even be thinking the Word, but never accepting it by faith nor applying it to self. We live a mere pretense of what the Spiritual Life should be.

As James would say: We are hearers of the Word but not doers of the Word.

NOTICE ALSO that the Christian abiding in Christ, F/HS and Walking in the Spirit, will bear MUCH fruit.

The Holy Spirit enables the believer to apply the Word, to make decisions from Divine viewpoint, to live by the Word.

The Holy Spirit reminds the believer of the Word as he encounters the trials that come with living in a fallen world with fallen men.

Doctrine in our souls seeks its own application. When we are F/HS and Walking in the Spirit we are enabled by the two power options, the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, to deal with life.

But a part from the vine, Jesus Christ, the branch, the believer, can do nothing.

His only power options are self and Human viewpoint so the SEVERED SAINT will revert to living according to man's standards and worse yet, turn the life of God into a life of religious pretense, legalism, ritual without reality, form and no function, symbolism with no substance - and that will not endure. There is no endurance for the branch that is severed from the vine.

v 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

There is no doubt that this is a warning. But to who?

From John 15:2 we know that the branch, the believer in Christ, who does not bear fruit is lifted up by the Father.

But here we have the branch that chooses not to abide in the vine. The believer who by volitional decision chooses not to abide in Christ. This believer is not F/HS nor is he Walking in the Spirit.

For many years, even here, I have taught this as a reference to the unbeliever. But careful exegesis proved to me that this is a warning of divine discipline to the believer.

First we have EAN a 1st cc conjunction which sets up a possibility for those Jesus is addressing and He is addressing His disciples, believers.

It would seem very odd indeed for Jesus to reference the unbeliever in the presence of all believers.

The one spoken of chooses not to ABIDE in Christ: This is a present, active, subjunctive verb. They actively, by volitional decision, chose not to abide in Christ, they chose not to confess their sins.

John shifts from a metaphor to a simile. We know this because he shifts from the adverb KQWS to the adverb WS.

On one side of this adverb we have: And if anyone does not remain in Me, he is cast out.

Then the Adverb WS

In a manner similar to the branch that was dried and gathered and cast into the fire and they are burned.

In this passage John has been using the adverb KQWS but now switches because he is showing (as he quotes the Lord) a similar situation, not an exact situation.

FIRST PHRASE: The one who does not remain in Christ is cast out.

CAST OUT is the aor, pass form of BALLW from which we get the English word BALL. It means to remove from one place to another.

As an aorist passive the word BALLW is used of many inanimate objects, of Satan being cast out of heaven, of the DRRE and the DP being cast into the LOF, of the mountains and rocks and things.

But only in two places is this form used of a type of person, in Revelation 20:15 it is used of all unbeliever being cast into the LOF at the end of the Mill reign.

And then in Matthew 5:13 You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

Where it is used of the believer who has become so ineffective that he is no longer the

salt of the earth. He is good for nothing except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

Back to John 15:6 then, THROWN or CAST OUT then does not refer to a loss of salvation nor does the simile of the branch being gathered up and cast into fire mean that the branch that does not abide in Christ is cast into the L.O.F.

The FIRE into which the severed branch is cast pictures destruction, similar to the believer who suffers the final stage of D/D, the sin unto death.

The simile then describes what happens to the believer who chooses to not abide in Christ.

1.Warning Discipline: This is what we have in this verse, it is a warning

2.Intensive Discipline: Drying up spiritually and then being gathered up with others who are trying to live as Christians a part from Christ. Living in a fallen world as a believer but without the enabling power of Christ.

3.Dying Discipline: The fire, destruction of the believer. He is taken out of the world, to heaven before his time is up. **OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER FIFTEEN, VERSE 7 (vv 7-12).**

Last week we saw that we must abide in Christ if we are to have Christ Centered Production in our Spiritual Lives.

[See overlay: Abiding in Christ = F/HS + Walking in Spirit]

We saw a warning of D/D in v 6 but now in v 7 we come to a promise.

v 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.

Two pre-conditions: Abide in Christ and Christ's words abide in us.

We are abiding in Christ, F/HS and walking in the Spirit, and we have His Words in us and

from that we ask whatever we wish from God, and it shall be done.

NOW THE CONTEXT is production and on FIVE occasions in the farewell discourse Jesus makes this same statement.

Believers are promised in this to have whatever they might need to serve Jesus Christ, to have the enabling power of the F/HS, to be able to bear fruit.

When we have the Word of Christ in us we will know what we need and what we do not need to bring glory to our Father in Heaven and to His Son, our Savior.

When Jesus speaks of His WORD he uses RJMA and this word for WORD looks at doctrine that is resident in the soul producing wisdom and understanding, the word that is ready to be applied and poised to be used.

And it is from that WORD and its wisdom and understanding that we ask of God and He will give.

v 8 Looks at the results and at what will be proven by our abiding in Christ.

By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

BY THIS looks at our abiding in Christ.

The result is that we will bear much fruit. This is the application of the Word from our souls to reality.

The emphasis is on ABIDING in Christ. The bearing of much fruit comes as the result. If the branch abides in the vine the branch will bear fruit.

The error that is made by many is they try to bear fruit while being a severed saint, not abiding in Christ, a branch severed from the vine.

The last phrase literally translated is: *And you will be to Me, disciples.*

IF WE ARE TO CLAIM THAT WE ARE CHRIST'S DISCIPLES we must abide in Him.

Abiding in Him will result in the fruit of application and production from the Word in our souls.

If are not involved in the process of learning, thinking, and applying the Word, we will not be to Jesus Christ His disciples.

We are saved, we are believers. But this looks at something more. It looks at being a follower, a disciple of Jesus Christ.

The distinction is well observed when Christians go to foreign lands to minister. In Belarus, for example, the people see any westerner as a Christian. So believers who go there need to be more specific. They tell the people that they are *followers of Jesus* or that they *personally have a friendship relationship with Jesus Christ*.

In our church we understand that being a Christian is a position. Being a disciple of Christ is something more. It is abiding in Him, being F/HS and Walking in the Spirit and the production application that follows.

A disciple then is more than a Christian.

Commonly the word is translated to mean a learner or a student. But it really is much stronger than that.

A disciples was devoted to his master. A disciple gave unhindered loyalty and obedience to his teacher.

The ancient Greeks held this word in such high esteem that Socrates refused to have his students take the title disciples, believing himself to be unworthy.

A disciple could only be a disciple to a DIDASKALOS, which in secular Greek was a master teacher of the highest regard - higher even than Socrates.

Even philosophers who used this term later abandoned it for other words such as friend, follower, child.

THE QUESTION WE MUST EACH ASK OURSELVES IS: IS THAT WHAT WE WANT TO

BE? Do we want to be Christ's Disciples? If so there is something we must do.

WE MUST ABIDE IN HIM, LEARNING, THINKING, APPLYING HIS WORD

v 9 In verses 9 through 12 we first have a statement, followed by a condition, then a promise, and ending with a command.

In these few verses, Jesus will bring his message to His disciples back to the New Commandment first given earlier that evening in the upper room in John 13:34-35

That they love one another just as He has loved them.

Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.

We have in this verse the Divine Love the Father has for the Son and then the Spiritual Love the Son has for us.

There is an exact parallel using the adverb KAQWS

This love is not from human power or ability. It is divine in its source and character. Is exclusive of the unbeliever and for the Believer only.

We are to abide in Jesus Christ's love.

v 10 Looks at the mechanics of how this is done.

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.

REMEMBER: This statement is made to believers, who are abiding in Christ, the F/HS and Walking in the Spirit by learning, thinking, and be willing, ready, and able to apply the Word of God is a prerequisite.

The IF is EAV 3rd cc with an aorist, subjunctive verb. This sets us a future potential.

The future potential sees this as a potential for all believers in Christ. Regardless as to where we have been spiritually up to this

point, regardless of what we have done, we have this as a real potential. We can keep His commandments.

The verb KEEP is TJREW and is translated keep, observe, reserve, preserve, watch over, protect, hold fast. It carries two concepts.

First, to guard and protect something of value. Second, to hold that which is of value for future use.

Jesus states that we are to keep HIS COMMANDMENTS. These are distinct from the Old Testament commandments often called the commandments or law of Moses.

These are commandments or mandates for us, the believer in Christ in the C.A.

In KEEPING these we guard them as something of great value. We protect them. And we preserve them for future use.

This looks then at doctrine in our souls, guarded, protected, and ready to use. This is very different than just following a list of rules. This is living with and by the words of Christ which become an intricate part of our souls.

v 10 Continued.

Jesus then draws a comparison to show how this is done.

Just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.

Again we have the comparative adverb KAQWS, exactly as.

The verb changes from a future potential to a past perfect action. Jesus at all times volitionally chose to keep, guard, protect, and preserve for future use His Father's commandments.

In doing so He was abiding in the Father's Love.

In this statement, Jesus is saying: *Look, I did this, so can you.*

And it is because of statements such as this, in which Jesus Christ is set before us as an example and precedent, that we know that he did what He did, He accomplished what He accomplished, out of the same sources of power that is now OURS!!.

This cannot be looking at our Lord's deity because we are not divine, we cannot function as gods. But we can imitate Christ, as men and woman enabled by the power of the Spirit and the power of the Word.

v 10 makes it very clear both by statement and example that we cannot say we love God without also being obedient to His Word.

PRINCIPLES.

1. Professions of love for God are too often as hallow as our professions of love for others.

2. In human relationships words of love are only valued if they are accompanied by actions of love

3. Words of love from someone who is a faithful friend are of great value

4. Words of love from someone who is unfaithful, vindictive, mean, cruel, abusive, neglectful, are hallow is have no value

5. When a Christian says he loves God but does not obey God's Word, the words of love have no value.

6. We love God by obeying His Word and when we do we will abide in His love and abide in Christ.

7. God's will and destiny for us is revealed in His Word and is fulfilled in our obedience. But with that comes something even greater, we come to love the Lord our God.

v 11 When many think of COMMANDMENTS they think of the *Thou shall not's* - but the New Testament commandments given to C.A. believers weigh more heavily towards the things that we should do.

And whenever we are given commandments of things we should do they are given that we might be blessed.

The greater number of commandments are given to us not to restrict us, but to advance us in the love of God.

v 11 Places emphasis on our advance, on the benefits, and the blessings of obedience.

These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

We cannot escape the fact that in John chapter fifteen the Lord Jesus is laying a foundation for the first three fruits of the Spirit mentioned in Galatian 5:22.

We have Love mentioned, now Joy, and in the last part of this chapter and in chapter sixteen, we have peace in the midst of persecution.

When Jesus says *These Things* He looks back upon our abiding in Him, our relationship to Him, our love for Him and His love in us, our obedience to Him.

All these things were spoken that His Joy may be in us.

Consider that here we have a man who is about to be betrayed, who is about to go through six illegal trials, to be beaten beyond recognition, to be nailed to a cross to die, and yet He speaks of HIS JOY.

A characteristic that is uniquely Christian is the characteristic of looking beyond the adversities of life to the Joy that awaits us.

This was accomplished by Jesus Christ in His humanity and as our precedent we see that we can approach life the same way.

Hebrews 12:2 Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

And for us, James 1:2 *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials.*

The Joy that we can have is not the happiness of circumstances because circumstances come and go, they change. But this Joy is forever.

THIS JOY IS FOUND IN OUR FUTURE, a future that is as secure and sure as the love that God has for us. God loves us and has for us a wonderful plan for our lives and our eternity.

In the DARKEST HOURS of our existence we can know with faith assured that God has a perfect plan.

Jesus says it is HIS JOY, and that when we have HIS JOY our JOY is made full.

The word FULL means to overflow and is a verb in the passive voice. We receive this sense of Joy, we do not earn it nor work for it.

The world hustles for happiness, and yet in Christ, abiding in Him, we receive a Joy that overflows.

But notice the little words MAY BE IN YOU, that is also a verb but it is an subjunctive mood indicating that while this is a potential for all believers, it may not be the reality.

THE PRINCIPLE IS SIMPLE: If we go out searching for joy we are not going to find it. But if we know Jesus Christ, and we abide in Him, we will receive a Joy that is so full that it can even face the gravest of circumstances.

This JOY comes as a result of five prerequisites.

1. That we abide in Christ: The F/HS and Walking in the Spirit
2. That we abide in the Word (v 7)
3. That we bear much fruit: The Application of the Word
4. That we abide in His Love: A constant understanding that God loves us
5. That we keep His commandments: Obedience to the Word

With the prerequisites in place we will have a Joy in life that overflows and with that overflowing of joy we can then fulfill the new commandment: We can love one another just as He has loved us.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER FIFTEEN, VERSE 11 (vv 11-12):

Last week in our study of verses 9 and 10 we discovered how we can love God. We love God by obeying God's Word.

1 Peter 1:8 And though you have not seen Him (Jesus Christ), you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.

We have a difficult task before us. We are love God, we are to love His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. But how do we love one who we do not see. It is easy to display expressions of love to those we see, to give a gift, to give a hug, a smile, a kiss, and to say the words I love you. But we do not see God yet we are to love Him. And the only way we can do that is to obey Him.

v 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.

Now we continue our study this morning hearing from our Lord of the results of that obedience and that love.

v 11 Places emphasis on our advance, on the benefits, and the blessings of obedience.

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5. That we keep His commandments: Obedience to the Word

With the prerequisites in place we will have a Joy in life that overflows and with that overflowing of joy we can then fulfill the new commandment: We can love one another just as He has loved us.

The pain of yesterday is past, The Joy of the present will last, Life may deal us a harsh blow, But in His Joy our future will glow, As brightly as His enduring grace, That allowed our Savior to finish His race, And this now reminds us that we too, Can have His joy to see us through, The past may hurt and the present may sting. But the thought of God's Joy will let our hearts sing.

v 12 Now we see what we can do with His joy in us.

This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.

In this verse the Lord returns to what He had stated in the upper room, John 13:34-35

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

When He made that statement He was interrupted by Peter, then by Thomas, then Philip, and finally Judas (not Iscariot). He gave comfort and answered questions but now return to this new commandment.

And what follows in vv 13 through 17 is a description of what this love is like.

BUT FOR NOW, LETS look at the commandment.

To see the mechanics of Spiritual Love we must examine FIVE things: The WORK OF THIS LOVE, THE CAUSE, THE MEANS, THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THIS LOVE, AND THE PERSON.

REVIEW.

1. The WORK of this love is a work of sacrifice. Spiritual love is a sacrifice to the one loving and a benefit to the one being loved.

This love is an environment that includes magnitude, direction, and impact or effect. ILL: John 3:16.

MAGNITUDE: It can be measured, how great is it? How much do we love as Christ loved?

For God so loved the World that He gave His only begotten Son.

IT HAS DIRECTION: Spiritual love must have direction, God so loved what? The World.

In Spiritual love we are to love other believers.

FORCE OR EFFECT: What is it going to do. In John 3:16 the effect is eternal life. What is the effect of our spiritual love to other believers?

Spiritual Love is never defined but is described in I Corinthians 13 by the sixteen environment of Spiritual Love.

When a conflict occurs between believers, their first thoughts must not be of themselves but of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He loved from His humanity as a precedent for us. He had the power of the Word and the power of the Spirit to Love and we have that same power.

2.The CAUSE of this love is the Holy Spirit.

If we desire to love as Christ loved us we will have to depend upon God the Holy Spirit to produce that love in us.

Jesus Christ did not make a decision to love, He made a decision to trust in God the Holy Spirit to lead Him, to empower Him.

Luke 4:1 tells us that He was led by the Spirit, and He made a decision to Walk by the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit and to live by the Spirit.

This is the only way we as believers can exist in both the seen and unseen world in which we find ourselves.

We cannot see what is going on in the unseen world, the Holy Spirit can and as God He is in control.

Romans 5:5 The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. When something is poured out it goes everywhere, every area of your life is affected by this love.

3.The MEANS of spiritual love is faith: Here is where we come into the picture. Do we believe by faith that God the Holy Spirit can overcome our human nature, our sin nature, and produce this love in us?

Do we believe it? We might understand it, we might be able to explain it, describe it, dissect it, but do we believe it?

Hebrews 11:6 tells us that: Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to

God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Faith is not a technique, faith has no power, the power is in the person in whom we place our faith.

We are to walk by faith just as we were saved by faith we are to live and to love by faith.

4.The CONSCIOUSNESS of this love: We come to an awareness of spiritual love as we study the Word of God.

There is so much in the New Testament about this love. And we need everything God has revealed to us about this love. We need examples, illustrations, mandates. methods.

We need to know how Christ loved because that is the standard, love one another just as I have loved you.

We need to know how this was done so that we can love as Christ loved.

This is impossible a part from that other source of power that was available to the Lord Jesus Christ and to us - the power of the Word.

The fellowship of the Holy Spirit is our learning of Jesus Christ as our precedent and that includes how He loved us.

5.The PERSON of this love is Jesus Christ: Spiritual love is Jesus Christ himself in you.

We are to be conformed to his image, complete and whole in Him, mature in Christ, able to love one another just as He loved us.

v 12Continued.

Now Spiritual Love is commanded of us, but in the previous verse JOY is something we can have as a result of loving God.

So in these two verses, John 15:11 and 12, the Lord Jesus has dealt with two of the three most important concepts of Christianity, Love and Joy.

And in John 14:26 and John 16:33, both part of the farewell discourse, Jesus told His

disciples about spiritual peace. A peace that only God can give.

LOVE, JOY, PEACE - While we see our context as being the challenge Jesus Christ gives His disciples to bear fruit, it will Paul the apostle who will later talk of the fruit of the Spirit.

In Galatians 5:22 he states: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace.

The foundation for this production of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian was set by our Lord.

PRINCIPLES.

1.Spiritual Love is commanded. As believers we are to love God which is the greatest commandment and love one another which is our new commandment.

2.To love God we must obey God and to obey God we must first know His Word.

John 15:3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

3.Spiritual Joy is promised by the Lord as a result of loving and obeying God.

When we walk with God, obeying Him and loving Him, we can walk with a joy that transcends emotions, that goes beyond circumstances, and focuses upon the destiny of our journey rather than the difficulties of the journey. This is the Joy that goes before us, the Joy that Jesus Christ had as He looked beyond the Cross to the Crown.

4.His Joy in us becomes the basis by which we can then love one another. If you joy in life is vertical (in your relationship with Him) it is easy to have horizontal joy with others.

A person who has joy with Christ will not be self absorbed, they will not live behind the mask of pretense, they will not be demanding, they will be able to love others as Christ loved them.

And on the receiving end of this they will be able to receive the love of others without

making demands that come out of unrealistic expectation.

5.This then results in peace. We have a peace with God and then we have the peace of God and we have that peace with others.

You see peace with others, peace in life, does not come by way of contract or treaty. It comes by way of what you are and what you have on the inside.

Peace, is not just that brief and glorious moment in which everyone is standing around reloading.

Peace is a deliberate adjustment of my life to the will of God.

And only when I love God by obeying Him, have His joy in me, and am willing to follow His commandment and His example of loving others will I know anything about peace.

6.These three fruits of the Spirit, Spiritual Love, Spiritual Joy, and Spiritual Peace, are applied in everyway in the Christ Centered Life.

1)Loving God is a response to the application of doctrine we learn and accept by faith to our relationship with Him. We love Him because we learn of Him and we obey Him.

2)Joy is the application of doctrine to ourselves as we apply doctrine to our lives and recognize the tremendous assets of grace.

3)Loving one another is the application of doctrine of others. We treat others with mercy and grace without at any time compromising the principles of doctrine by which we live.

7)The result of all this is peace. As Jesus said: Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

We so often say that Christmas is a JOYFUL time of the year. But why do we say that. For many it is a time of heartbreak and sorrow, a time of pressure and even stress, a time when

we see almost everything else, but very little joy.

Your JOY must be greater than circumstances and season, your joy must be from His love and your love for Him.

If we are to have His joy and share in His peace we must love Him, obey Him, and love one another. INTRODUCTION:

It was William Penn who said of the avoidance of suffering that No Pain meant - no palms. No thorns, no throne. No gall, no glory. No cross, no crown.

In our efficiency of the spoken language we have shortened this to merely no pain, no gain.

This morning we will look at the suffering of the believer, especially that suffering that comes when we take our stand with our Lord Jesus Christ.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN CHAPTER FIFTEEN, VERSE 17 (vv 17-25).

The last time we were together for our study of the Gospel of John we found Jesus, on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane walking with His disciples.

In Chapter 15 He tells them of Spiritual Love, Spiritual Joy, and now Spiritual peace.

Note verse 17: This I command you, that you love one another.

One of the greatest reasons we have for loving one another, loving others who are in the body of Christ, is the opposition we will receive from those outside the body.

There is a song that talks about Looking for Love in all the Wrong Places. And if the child of God is looking for love outside the body of Christ, he will not find it.

The following verses tell us what we can expect from the world. The ones who hated Christ, who nailed Him to a Cross and left Him to die will also turn their anger against those who chose to follow the Savior.

SO IN VERSE 17 SERVES AS A LINK to verse 18 and establishes the first of six principles that we find in verses 17-25.

FIRST The love we have among the brethren will stand in marked contrast to the hatred of the World.

In John's Gospel the idea of Spiritual Love is assumed. Later in his first epistle, John explains that Spiritual Love is the first of three tests that validate a believer's spiritual life.

1. In I John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

2. The second test of our living faith is obedience to Christ's commandments.

1 John 3:22 Whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

3. The third test is our belief in the doctrines of Christ.

1 John 3:19 We shall know by this that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before Him,

And the passing of these tests brings us into fellowship with other believers in the sphere of spiritual love. But that is not what the world has in store for us.

v 18 If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you.

The nature of the world is to hate the Christian because it hated Christ.

Now this passage does not eliminate love on the part of the unbeliever, but it does eliminate from the world spiritual love, the love that Christ has for us and that we can have for other believers.

That is an exclusive privilege of the Christian, Spiritual love is exclusively ours.

The world, on the other hand, by nature hates. Even the most liberal of men who profess to open their minds to a variety of ideas will

react with hatred when exposed to Christian absolutes.

Listen to what Dr. D.A. Carson of Trinity Seminary near Chicago has to say about the love of the liberal.

D.A. Carson, The Farewell discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus, pages 116-117.

v 19 Brings us to the second of our six principles.

If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

THE SECOND The world hates because the world and the church are mutually exclusive and the world resents any lack of conformity of itself.

This point was later mentioned by James.

James 4:4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

The world will exclude the believer because the believer does not go along with the world.

We live in a time of many special interest groups who push their own sometimes hidden agendas upon others. Their strength, their validity and even their self-supposed right to exist comes not from truth, not from God, by numbers. The more who will be like us, they say, the more right we will be. Raw secularism, greedy materialism, immoral special interests who seek privilege, and alternative lifestyles that resent and even hate the believer who says Thus saith the Lord.

But Jesus tells us and we can apply this so directly to our culture, don't be surprised, they all hated Me first. And if you belong to Me they will hate you also.

AND HOW VERY SAD IT IS TO SEE the church acting like the World and rejecting and even hating those who do not conform.

Remember when we examined exclusion and separation. The only basis for exclusion we can ever find with our Lord was based upon whether or not people were positive or negative to his teaching.

And that is the only basis for exclusion today.

IS THE CHILD OF GOD learning the Word? Are they exercising that first privilege, the privilege of learning about Christ?

v 20 Gives us the third The World hates us because it hated Jesus Christ first.

Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

More than just chronology is in view. While it is true that nearly 2000 years ago the hatred of man was directed at Jesus Christ, this hatred is found today because we obey the risen Christ just as Christ obeyed His heavenly Father.

The heart of this principle is found in the phrase No servant is greater than his master. The first time Jesus said this was during the washing of the disciples feet.

There the phrase communicates the idea that we who follow Jesus should be humble in our service as He was in His service.

Philippians 1:29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.

And then Philippians 2:5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.

And with that attitude you will suffer at the hands of the World.

Now today we have a new kind of Christian in the World, one who demands his rights and is willing to rely upon Christ, when it is

convenient or upon the world system when it is more convenient.

This is the Christian who will be heard loudly demanding his or her rights.

Yet Jesus Christ never demanded His rights, and He was God, and had all the rights granted to the one who created the heavens and the earth and all therein.

If we understand that the servant is no greater than his master we will then come to the conclusion of humble service as illustrated by Christ. We will suffer at times, giving place to others when it may have been our right to be first. We may take the low road when high road would seem to be more appealing. We may suffer because we chose to be no greater than our master.

Let me illustrate this from a passage in the Old Testament Turn with me to Genesis 13:5 through 13.

Now Lot is the nephew of Abraham (Abram at this time) and has come with his uncle to the promised land.

v 5-7 The Problem.

Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together. And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land.

The land was not big enough for both Lot and Abram, for both their herds and herdsmen. Also, the strife put them in a dangerous position. They were so busy fighting among themselves that the Canaanites and Perizzites could have wiped them out.

NOW HOW IS Abram going to solve this problem. He was the elder, he was the leader of the clan. He would have had every right to tell Lot to leave. After all, it was Abram to whom God spoke, not to Lot. But notice how

he takes the low road. He puts himself in the position of a servant.

v 8-9 Abram's Plan:

Then Abram said to Lot, Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers. Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me: if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left.

Abram would let Lot chose the land he wanted first. Now we might think that Lot, having an appreciation for the benevolence and age of his uncle would have deferred the decision back to Abram, or chosen the less appealing land - but he did not.

v 10-11 Lot looked around at what was available and chose the very best land he could find.

And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere -- this was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah-- like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar. So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other.

Lot chose the best which left Abram with the worse. And in this Abram suffered. His flocks would have had to be smaller because there was less water. His herdsmen had to spend more time in this more barren environment caring for the sheep. To just keep an eye on his herds he had to cover more ground. Abram and his family were farther from the cities where they could trade. Life would be much more inconvenient for them as a result of Lot's choice.

In all this Abram would suffer because he chose to defer the advantage to Lot. He took the low road.

BUT GOD HAD A PLAN AND THAT PLAN WAS greater than Lot's selfish decision.

v 12 Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom.

v 13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the Lord.

The lure of evil in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah would be too great for Lot. He would end up in Sodom and in sin. While Abram was separated, separated from the evil and the sin and being greatly blessed by God.

NOW LET'S GO BACK TO JOHN 15:20

Remember the word that I said to you, A slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

Jesus, eternal God, chose to be a servant and He suffered. As Christians we chose to be servants, and we too will suffer.

1 Peter 4:16 But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God.

LET'S SUMMARIZE THESE FIRST THREE PRINCIPLES.

1. Spiritual love can only come from fellow members of God's royal family
2. By nature the world will hate what it does not accept and does not understand
3. The world will also hate anyone who does not conform to its standards or practices
4. If we stand with Jesus Christ and follow His example as servants we will suffer
5. But our suffering for Christ is nothing compared to His love for us and what He alone can provide for us for ever.

II Corinthians 4:17-18 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER 15, VERSE 21 (vv 21-27):

Last week we saw the first three of six principles found in this chapter regarding the attitude and action of the unbelieving world towards the child of God.

REMEMBER WHAT JESUS IS DOING in these chapters (John 13 to 17). He is preparing his disciples to be the pillars of the church.

But right now they are frightened, timid, and full of doubt.

These are men who will end up turning the world upside down with the gospel of Christ - but right now, about the only thing that is turning is their stomachs.

They have been with the Lord Jesus for the better part of three years. They had followed him, the one they came to know as the King of Israel, the Lord over God's Old Testament nation, but now He is going to leave them and the kingdom has not come and instead of reigning from a throne, their Lord will be raised upon a Cross and left to die.

So here they are: Fearful, argumentative, boastful at times and bashful at others, doubting and disputing. And Jesus has one night to give them doctrine that later on God the Holy Spirit will bring to their minds and they will apply in boldness and courage as they proclaim Christ, risen from the dead.

PART OF WHAT JESUS IS doing in preparing them is to COMFORT them. And in this comforting He tells them that World will hate them because it hated Him first.

Jesus Christ is not painting a rosy picture that will never be a reality. No, He is telling them that they will have opposition, that there will be those who will hate them, and that they will suffer.

In describing the Christ Centered Life of the Christian, God, in His Word, is very straightforward with us. He tells it like it is and like it will be. He doesn't pull the punch,

He doesn't hide the horror, He doesn't side step the suffering.

But with this sometimes harsh honesty come both explanation, and more than that, the empowerment that allows this suffering to serve a purpose.

YOU SEE HERE HE GIVES THEM DOCTRINE
ON THEY DAY OF PENTECOST THEY WILL
RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

AND IT WILL BE UNDER THE PRESSURE OF
SUFFERING THAT THEY WILL COME TO
KNOW THEY DYNAMICS, THE SUFFICIENCY,
THE TOTAL DEPENDENCE THEY CAN HAVE
ON THESE TWO SOURCES OF POWER.

Without the pressure, apart from the suffering, they would never know the splendor of the Word nor the sufficiency of the Spirit.

LAST WEEK WE SAW THREE PRINCIPLES.

[Refer to overlay]

TODAY WE SEE THREE MORE.

v 21But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.

And v 23: He who hates Me hates My Father also.

The World hates because it does not know the Father nor recognize the revelation of the Father in the Son

OR: The world will hate you because the world is ignorant.

We hear that ignorance is no excuse and it is not an excuse for those things that have been freely explained.

Just because we did not see the speed limit sign that read 25 mph is no excuse when we are clocked and stopped at 65.

But if we claim a lack of responsibility because of ignorance we may have a valid claim if we were not told of our responsibility.

A parent cannot punish a child for that which was not done because it was not explained. We are not mind readers, we do not know what is expected of us unless we are told.

Romans 10:13-14 Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

But in this passage, Jesus leaves mankind with no excuse. Because He did come and He did preach and He did tell the world of the salvation of God in Him.

But mankind still tries to use the excuse of ignorance yet he does not have that excuse.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE HEATHEN? The bushman or businessman who has never heard about Jesus Christ. Does he have a good excuse?

Romans 1:18 through 23

v 18For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

v 19because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

v 20For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

v 21For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

v 22Professing to be wise, they became fools,

v 23and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

They become conscious of God, an all powerful creator God, but reject at God consciousness and chose to worship the thing created rather than the Creator of all things. They are without excuse.

But what less of an excuse for those who, like Israel, had received the word of the prophets concerning Messiah, and then, when Messiah comes in the flesh, they reject with scorn.

And their scorn turned to hatred and their hatred to led them to conspire against Him, arrest Him, and nail Him to a Cross - but they lost, He rose from the dead and ascended to be seated at God's right hand.

WHEN JESUS WALKED OUT OF THE TOMB He validated everything He had said, and everything the prophets had said about Him.

But He then turned His attention to His disciples and their work in the building of His body the Church.

Israel, the ones who rejected, hated this and hated the one's who were called by His name - Christians.

APPLICATION: When ignorance is exposed as being no excuse, anger follows.

v 22The Fifth principle we see is found in v 22 and v 24.

If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin - If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well.

The world hates because its sin is exposed.

The word SIN is singular and looks at the specific sin of rejecting Jesus Christ as the Messiah of Israel and as their personal Savior.

The word EXCUSE means to cover with a cloak and in the Old Testament this is what Israel had done with the promises of the Savior. They accepted, they believed to a point. But until He actually came their faith was verbal and not vital. They gave

intellectual assent, but were not about to really believe and trust in the Promised One.

BUT THEN HE CAME and they rejected.

Now what Jesus is saying is that had he not come they could have continued to play the game. Continued to say they were anticipating the Messiah while going on their own merry way.

BUT THEM HE CAME and they rejected.

AND WHEN HE CAME THIS SIN OF REJECTION was exposed.

AND PEOPLE DO NOT LIKE TO BE PROVEN WRONG - Just like the child who reacts in anger rather than remorse when he is proven wrong.

The Lord tells the disciples that this anger and hatred will be directed at them as it is now directed at us because we have had this sin of unbelief exposed and we repented, changed our minds about the Savior. While the world has not.

v 25SIXTH The world hates without cause yet even this irrational hatred is under the control of a sovereign God.

But they have done this in order that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their Law (Psalm 35:19 and 69:4), They hated Me without a cause.

A thousand years before this night the Psalmist wrote of ones who would hate without cause, who hate without reason other than their hatred.

By referring to Their Law Jesus is taking a firm poke at the Jews. They were the one's who zealously guarded the Old Testament Scriptures and yet it was these very Scriptures that condemned unwarranted hatred, that condemned hating without a cause.

NOW IF ONE WAS TO DROP in on that situation in Jerusalem at that time and if they were to observe the controversy and antagonism and even hatred of Jesus by these

Jewish religious leaders they would seriously wonder what was going on.

Some people have in them a cause for hatred, Hitler, Stalin, Edi Amine, Mao, the Drug Lord and the Child molester. But why were these people hating Jesus? A man who ministered to them, healed the sick, caused the lame to walk and the dumb to talk. Why hate Him?

But they did and their hatred was without cause.

But even this hatred did not fall outside the control of a sovereign God. Even the actions of Herod and Pontius Pilate were under the control of a Sovereign God whose plan it was to let Jesus go to the Cross and die for the sins of the human race.

THE WORLD WILL HATE WITH EVEN IRRATIONAL HATRED but God is still in control.

v 26-27 READY FOR SOME GOOD NEWS?

When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, and you will bear witness also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

After hearing of how the unbelieving World will shift its anger from the Savior to His Saints, these disciples, and even us today might be wondering if we really want to join this army of believers.

When Garibaldi (Italy: early 1800s) recruited men to fight off a horde of invaders, he made it clear that he wanted only soldiers who were true patriots. In reply to the question What do you offer? he said, I give you neither pay nor quarters nor provisions. I offer only hunger, thirst, forced marches, battle, and possible death. Yet he gave them something to fight for, when he said, Let him who loves his country with his whole heart, not with his lips only, follow me. That brave leader knew that an army made up of men whose main concern is to stay alive and enjoy themselves

will never be able to withstand the rigors of battle. But soldiers who are well trained and believe in their cause will become warriors of renown.

AND WITH THIS PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT all the suffering that may come from the world is wiped away.

We need not think that Jesus has left us in the world to merely experience hatred - we are left to bear witness of Him.

The HELPER or COMFORTER is God the Holy Spirit whom Jesus has already said will come and indwell the believer.

The word for HELPER is PARAKLITOS, and while this word has many applications the most common is to an advocate or defense attorney.

AND HERE IS THE GREAT PROMISE OF THIS PASSAGE. Although suffering awaits the one who takes his stand with Jesus Christ and is willing to witness, tell others, about Him, we have in us a defense attorney.

Now in I John 2:1 Jesus defends the believer before God's throne when the child of God is accused of sin by Satan.

Here the Holy Spirit is our defender when the World turns against us with its antagonism and hatred.

If you have ever had to go to court you will understand very well what this means. Regardless of the problem, when you have a good attorney, who knows the law, who believes in you at your side, you are comforted, confident, knowing (if this is the case) that you are innocent and will be exonerated of any charges.

THAT IS THE COMFORT AND CONFIDENCE we can have in the face of the suffering and even the haters the Lord has just described. We have God in us in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

And so, even in the midst of irrational antagonism, we can bear witness of Jesus Christ.

NOW IN THIS PASSAGE WE SEE three things.

1. The Lord tells the believer that there will be times when the unbelieving world will hate the Christian because it hates Christ.
2. The Lord explains why. Why this hatred will be directed towards us.

But explanation is not all that is provided. We often think that if we understand we will be able to stand. But that is not the case. We need power to stand especially when the injustice of antagonism comes against us. But we have that power.

3. The Lord promises His disciples and us that we will have in us and advocate, even the Holy Spirit Himself, who will be the power in us that will make us bold.

WAS THIS THE CASE, WAS THIS WHAT HAPPENED.

Remember that later that night these frightened and doubting disciples would run away from the garden fearing that the fate that was to befall Christ would fall upon them. By morning's light Peter would deny His Lord three times. While Jesus hung on the Cross all but one of the eleven were hiding in fear of their lives. On the following Sunday night they are huddled together behind locked doors terrified of the future.

But then Pentecost and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And these once timid and frightened followers of Jesus stood with boldness and testified to the World, a world from which would come hatred and antagonism, about the Lord Jesus.

Acts 4:31 explains the change: And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

Let us not allow any difficulty of life, any adversity, problem or antagonism to rob us the boldness we can have because we have in us the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 16

The Lord Jesus has been talking to His disciples about the adversity they will face. The irrational hatred of the unbeliever.

Last week we looked at this word for HATRED and found that of the three Greek words that convey the concept of HATE this is the most mild. It can run the gambit from verbal rejection and insult to physical violence. We may never suffer physical violence for our stand with Christ but I am sure that all of us have to some degree suffered verbal attacks and insults.

Jesus is preparing us for the worse. He has to prepare His disciples for the worse because they are going to face persecution. Everyone of the eleven except for John will die a horrible death refusing to renounce Jesus Christ.

NOW WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT we will face for the faith. But it is good to be hope for the best, prepared for the worse, and be ready for anything.

v 1 These things I have spoken to you, that you may be kept from stumbling.

Here we see the reason for the explanation of antagonism. Jesus tells these disciples and us that we will face the adversity of the unbeliever. This is not a warning to avoid but a warning to endure.

When we are the OBJECT of OPPOSITION or the TARGET of ADVERSITY there is always the possibility that we will stumble.

STUMBLE is the Greek word SKANDALIZW and looks at that which can cause the believer to stumble, to be offended to the point of sin, to be lead astray, and to fall away from that which is true.

From a Sanskrit noun referring to that which slams forward and back. To slam around.

The verb form is strictly biblical and looks at the process by which something can slam the believer into sin and reversionism.

OR IN SOME PLACES the unbeliever who is offended or stumbles because of the preaching of Christ and is thus removed from his pretentious behavior.

In the LXX of Deuteronomy 7:16 And you shall consume all the peoples whom the Lord your God will deliver to you; your eye shall not pity them, neither shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you.

What was at issue in the Old Testament use of this word is what is at issue when Jesus used it with the disciples and that is their relationship of dependence upon God.

Anything that would cause them to stumble causes them to stumble away from depending upon God.

Implied also in the word is the element of SURPRISE.

And that is usually what will cause us to stumble away from our dependence upon Christ, something that catches us by surprise.

In Matthew 13:20 and 21 the Lord used this word as part of His explanation of the parable of the soils: And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

SO WHEN WE COMBINE THE statement of Matthew 13:21 with the explanation of adversity that we see in John 15 and 16 we can conclude one of the two things that are required to keep us from stumbling away from Christ when adversity and opposition surprises us.

And that is the Word of God firmly rooted in us.

These extensive explanations by our Lord prepare the us in four ways.

1. Knowing that persecution can come eliminates the surprise factor.

Peter, who was stumbled away from Christ that very night later on wrote in I Peter 4:12-13 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.

2. Knowing why persecution will be directed at you will eliminate the personal factor.

When you suffer for Christ you are suffering for His sake, because of Him not because of you. The haters of this world hate not because they hate you, you just happen to be the easy target. They hate the Lord Jesus.

II Tim 3:12 And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

John 16:3 And these things they will do, because they have not known the Father, or Me.

When we suffer for Christ sake, because of our faith in Him, and we know that, we can remain objective and calm even in the midst of adversity and opposition.

3. The explanation of adversity and opposition that Jesus gives allows us to turn the sorrow of suffering into a Joy that can march on before us in life.

When you are prepared for the worse anything less than that is great.

Look at John 16:2 They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God.

That is what we might call today a worse case scenario. And if you are prepared, inside, spiritually, for the worse, then you can have a joy that will go on before you in life.

James 1:2-3 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

4. Look now at John 16:4 But these things I have spoken to you, that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

One part of this verse should give us great calm even in the face of calamity - When their hour comes.

THEIR HOUR looks ahead in time to the judgment that is sure to come upon those who hate Christ and the Christian.

We can know, with confidence, that we will be vindicated and the antagonists will be judged. This is our destiny and this is their fate.

There will be a time, when the hour for judgment comes, when these who hated Christ and those who continue to hate Christians, will be judged - and we, you and I, will be there with Christ the righteous Judge.

What we might consider to be advantageous in life may be of no advantage at all. Have you ever waited and hoped to get something and then when you get it, find out that, well, it wasn't really worth the wait. No illustration is necessary. It has happened to us all. But that should tell us something. We always do not know what is best for us.

OPEN YOUR BIBLE TO JOHN, CHAPTER SIXTEEN, VERSE 5 (vv 5-7).

As Jesus says goodbye and prepares His disciples for what is to come as they continue the work that He began, He warns them of impending danger and promises them impending power.

In verse 4 we see that until now there was no need for Him to warn them of persecution to come. He has been with them and the antagonism of the Jews has come against Him, not them. But now He is leaving and all the hatred and hostility that has come against Jesus will now come against them.

Until now He has protected them. But once He leaves He will provide another comforter, another defense attorney, another helper, and that One is God the Holy Spirit.

In John 14:17 Jesus told His disciples and us that the Holy Spirit will come. He who in the Old Testament has come along side believer to strengthen them will not, in the C.A. come inside the believer to empower them.

This empowerment will provide two things for us.

1. When we hit adversity, especially persecution, we have the power, by way of the Word and the Spirit, to endure and to be victorious.

2. The empowering of the Holy Spirit will allow us to be witnesses for Christ.

And just like these early century one believers we will have the motive, the means, and the opportunity to represent Christ in the World.

v 5 But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, Where are You going?

v 6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.

The connection between what has been said and what is now stated is threefold.

1. They have sorrow because they do not understand

2. The Holy Spirit is the one who will give them the power to work through the sorrow and see the advantage of what is going to happen

3. They are hitting a saturation point and are not able to take in much more. So Jesus will

promise them the Holy Spirit who will teach them all things (John 16:13).

And that ministry of the Spirit continues even today.

And in John 17 we will see that the Lord follows the promise with prayer.

v 5 and 6 continued.

But here the Lord His disciples that His journey is going to take a turn away from them.

But now I am going to Him who sent Me.

1.He is focused on His purpose. He is to go BEFORE the Father. The word is PROS, face to face with the Father and He will return having fulfilled His mission.

And to the humanity of Christ the Father will proclaim, Well done, my good and faithful Servant.

2.He looks to the eventual goal of His journey. He looks through the horror and to the honor. Before He return in the resurrection and ascension to the Father He will go through the most server suffering anyone has ever endured. Yet He looks beyond that.

3.He is not allowing the sorrow of His disciples, His friends, to dissuade Him from His purpose.

As we examine how our Lord approached His return to Heaven we can see three applications.

1.Are we focused on our purpose? Perhaps more important: Do we even know what our purpose is?

Our purpose is both collectively and individually defined. As Christians we are to minister, all of us, in evangelism, in encouragement, and in the communication of truth.

But also we have an individual purpose, and individual path to trod that is defined by our spiritual gifts and by our level of maturity in Christ.

God has a plan for each of us and the only way we will ever know what that plan is and what our purpose is, is to be learning, thinking, and applying the Word under the power of the Holy Spirit.

He will guide us in all truth.

2.Do we have our eyes on the prize? That prize, that reward, the whole goal of our being is in heaven face to face with God.

Are we looking at life in the light of eternity.

Jesus talked in His farewell discourse of joy, of victory, of glory. His only mention of adversity was in warning His disciples of what they might face.

How often do we let the pressures of the moment take our eyes off the prize? How often are we distracted by things which seem so immense for the moment that we fail to consider the eternal blessing and rewards that are laid up for us in heaven?

We are told in Hebrews 12:2 that Jesus endured the Cross because of the Joy that was set before Him. That joy was His victorious return to the Father.

Will there be suffering, yes. Will there be adversity, yes. Will there be opposition, yes. Will there be times when the tears of the night will not end with morning's light, yes.

But Peter, who had taken his eyes off the prize and succumbed to the pressures of the night and denied His Lord and His friend, Jesus Christ, spoke of goal when he said.

II Peter 1:11 2PE 1:11 [Our] entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

Have you considered how much of the things of life will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace when we behold Him, face to face?

To get to where God wants you to be there will be some pain. But the pain will be worth it.

3.The third application: Do we allow others to distract us from our purpose and our goal?

Now Jesus Christ loved these disciples. Look back to the very first words of this farewell discourse in John 13:1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

And yet, for all the love He had for them, He did not allow them to distract Him from His purpose and His goal.

Look at verse 6: Sorrow had filled their hearts.

With that in mind, look back to John 15:11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

SORROW is the opposite of JOY. He had prepared them for JOY, they could have His Joy right now. but they chose SORROW.

Have you ever been moved by the sorrow of another?

Friday afternoon during our memorial for Tom I was pretty much in control until Drue sat down beside me and cried. He was very close to Tom for many years and his tears were tears of love for a friend. Who was not moved when Ward, Tom's best friend, wept at the loss of one he loved and enjoyed so much.

We are often moved emotionally by the sorrow of others and when it is in our power to alleviate the pain we want to do just that - but we must refrain if it takes us away from God's goal and purpose for us.

Now these disciples had a direct route to Joy. It had been promised them, they had Jesus with them.

v 5continued: And none of you asks Me, Where are You going?

Rather than ask question, these disciples chose ignorance and opted for sorrow.

Many times sorrow and tears are appropriate responses, but not here, not on this night.

They could have asked, they could have been enlightened, and yet they refused. And sorrow filled their hearts.

WHY DID THEY DO THAT? WHY DO WE DO THAT?

They thought that what they were going to lose was more important than what they were going to gain.

Jim Elliot (first missionary to contact the Auca Indians of South America) No man is a fool to give up that which he cannot keep to gain that which he can never lose.

And while they wanted to stay in the physical presence of Jesus Christ, His departure would give them, and us a greater gain.

v 6But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.

Let's consider where these disciples were coming from because it is where we so often come from.

1.Their sorrow was based upon self absorption: Their focus was on their loss, what they would miss rather than upon what they would gain.

They were more concerned with themselves that they were with their Savior.

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself.

2.Their sorrow was subjective: They evaluated the situation only in terms of their benefit and what they wanted.

But they forgot a very basic principle and we so often forget this also: God know better that we what is best for us.

Isaiah 55:9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

3.Their sorrow was born of stubbornness:
The Lord had told them they could have Joy
yet they selected sorrow.

In their self resolve and stubbornness they
refused to let go and see the wonder
unfolding plan of God.

How often do we, even knowing what God has
for us, refuse to listen. Joy is staring us the
face and we say NO, we would rather pout
like the little child who realizes he doesn't live
in a Burger King World of having it your way.

v 7While they are absorbed in themselves,
Jesus give them a dose of reality.

But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage
that I go away; for if I do not go away, the
Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will
send Him to you.

People who are all wrapped up in themselves
need to be jolted and brought back to reality.

In the midst of their sorrow this would have
been an awfully harsh statement - BUT AS
JESUS SAYS - IT IS TRUTH.

God never confuses His provision.

He wants to give these believers and
continuing generations the power of the Holy
Spirit.

These disciples have been in the physical
presence of the power of Jesus Christ, but
there is something even better to come.

IT IS TO YOU ADVANTAGE: It may be great to
be in the presence of divine power but how
much greater it is to have divine power
present in us.

And for this to happen, Jesus must return in
victory to the Father.

SO IT IS TO THEIR ADVANTAGE AND OUR
ADVANTAGE that the Lord return to the
Father.

And listen to what the Lord says: for if I do
not go away, the Helper shall not come to you;
but if I go, I will send Him to you.

JESUS TELLS THEM that there is something
better in store for them.

WILL THEY WAIT, WILL THE ANTICIPATE
WITH JOY or remain locked in their selfish
sorrow?

AND CHRITIAN, WHAT ABOUT US: Will we
allow our self-absorption, our subjectivity,
our stubbornness to keep us from the
advantage that God wants for us and has
provided for us?

Sometimes our comfortable present must be
dramatically altered. Sometimes must lose in
order to gain.

BUT No man is a fool to give up that which he
cannot keep to gain that which he can never
lose. We all, at one time or another, have had a
time when words have failed us. Those times
when we try to explain something and just
know we are not getting through.

In many ways this is what we see happening
as Jesus is saying goodbye to His disciples.
Words are failing Him because His disciples
are quickly coming to a point of saturation of
truth. In our passage this morning we are
going to see what the Lord does when Words
fail because we cannot understand.

Look ahead to John 16:12 I have many more
things to say to you, but you cannot bear them
now.

I think that even today, because of our limited
capacity, this same situation occurs. What do
we have when words fail?

LET'S RETURN TO VERSE 7 (vv 7-15).

Last week we saw that God knows far better
than we what is best for us.

v 7 But I tell you the truth, it is to your
advantage that I go away; for if I do not go
away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if
I go, I will send Him to you.

The great advantage we have in this
dispensation, the CA, is the indwelling of the
Holy Spirit.

This indwelling of the Spirit could not occur until Jesus Christ won the victory at the Cross and then was seated at the right hand of the Father.

During the incarnation of Christ, the Holy Spirit indwelled the humanity of Christ and empowered Him in His obedience and service to His Father.

Now this same Spirit, God the Holy Spirit, indwells us and that is indeed to our advantage.

The word ADVANTAGE is the verb SUMFERW and when followed by a dative it means that the advantage is coming from one to another. Here, the Lord Jesus Christ, who had the advantage of the power of the Holy Spirit now gives this power, this advantage, this edge, to us.

THE THINGS WE MAY THINK TO BE to our advantage might be very different than the things that God declares are to our advantage. This word SUMFERW is used of eight things that benefit us.

1. That Jesus died on the Cross for our sins: John 11:50
2. That we were saved through faith in Christ: I Cor 10:33
3. That we are taught the Word of God: Acts 20:20
4. That we have spiritual gifts: I Cor 12:7
5. That we give graciously and out of sp love: II Cor 8:10
6. That we not distracted in our focus upon Christ: I Cor 7:35
7. To receive D/D: Hebrews 12:10

And then our passage: It is to our advantage that Jesus left, returning to the Father by way of the Cross, that we would have, in us, the Holy Spirit.

v 8 Beginning at verse 8 and extending to verse 15 we have this advantage of the Holy Spirit outlined for us in two categories.

AND HERE IS WHAT WE HAVE WHEN WORDS FAIL, when we come to a passage, a principle, that is beyond our present capacity. What we always have, even we fail to understand, is the PROMISES of a God who loves us and a Savior who died for us.

JESUS GIVES HIS DISCIPLES TWO PROMISES REGARDING THE Holy Spirit.

1. They both deal with growth
2. The first is growth of the body by way of evangelism. God the Holy Spirit is in charge of this ministry, this out reach, this growth of the body of Christ. He is the executor of regeneration.

This is a promise to us regarding the unbeliever.

2. The second promises looks at growth also. The growth of the individual believer in the Word of God.

This is a promise to us regarding ourselves.

And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment.

The Lord first tells what the Holy Spirit will do and then tells, in verses 9-11, the reason for this convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit.

This ministry of the Spirit is to CONVICT THE WORLD.

1. When the Holy Spirit comes, on the Day of Pentecost, He will convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. And this ministry continues through this current age.

The word CONVICT is ELEGCW and in Classical Greek meant to shame or disgrace but in Koine to convict, to reprove, or to prove one as being wrong and bring shame that brings action. It can also refer to bringing to light that which is hidden, to detect or make manifest.

Now shame can be both positive and negative. Here is to be positive and to bring to a decision.

This is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the unbeliever. To convict of sin, of righteousness, of judgment and then to draw them to God through Christ.

We have three prepositional phrases describing the areas of convicting. Each begins with PERI connected with KAI .

This would mean that the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, or of righteousness, or of judgment.

The unbeliever is faced with one or a combination of these things which separate him from God.

Convict concerning sin OR righteousness OR judgment.

What will grab the attention of the unbeliever concerning his need for something he cannot fulfill? For some of us it was our sin. For others our lack of righteousness and for still others the dread of eternal judgment.

Whatever it is the unbeliever is faced with a reality about his own insufficiency.

2. The Holy Spirit convicts the unbeliever of sin because they do not believe in Christ. They fail to trust in the only one who could go to the Cross and die for their sins.

He convicts of righteousness because Christ alone, in His humanity, without sin or the guilt of sin, was able to go before the Father. It was to the victorious humanity of Jesus Christ that the Father said sit thou at my right hand. The only way we can ever have the righteousness required to stand before a Holy God is to have the righteousness of Christ.

II Corinthians 5: 21 He (God the Father) made Him (Jesus Christ) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

And He also convicts of judgment because Satan, the ruler of this world, was judged for sin and all who remain in their sin a part from Christ will share in Satan's judgment.

Matthew 25:41 Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones,

into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.

3. Knowing that the Holy Spirit is the one who convicts the unbeliever, the believer can then concentrate on being a witness for Christ. We are not given the job of telling the unbeliever he is a sinner, unrighteous, and destined for judgment.

The Holy Spirit does that, we tell the unbeliever the good news, the Gospel. That Christ died for their sins, that He is there righteousness, and that there is no judgment for those who have faith in Christ.

We tell the unbeliever that there is one who did for him what he could not do for himself and that one is Jesus Christ.

NOTE: If the Holy Spirit has not convicted the unbeliever, all the arguments in the world will not change their mind.

4. Understanding this allows us to concentrate on Christ. Remember what Paul said to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 2:2-5 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

APPLICATION: Many believers put themselves at odds with the world not because of a stand for truth, but because they try to do the job assigned to the Holy Spirit and more involved with telling the world how sinful it is than proclaiming Christ and Him crucified.

Now in John 16:12-15

This second promise is for our growth in the Word of God.

I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the

Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose it to you.

1. This promise of the Spirit relates His ministries of revealing Truth to believers.

2. Even though Jesus Christ was present with them they could not bear the advanced doctrine of the C.A. That would require the ministry of the Holy Spirit illuminating truth to us.

Revelation, Inspiration, Interpretation, Illumination, and Reminding are all ministries of the Holy Spirit even in the Old Testament

Acts 28:25-26 And when they did not agree with one another, they began leaving after Paul had spoken one parting word, The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers saying, Go to this people and say, You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; And you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive.

Isaiah 6:8-9 Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us? Then I said, Here am I. Send me! And He said, Go, and tell this people: Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.

3. The Holy Spirit does not speak out of harmony with the Father and the Son. Just as Christ obeyed the Father, the Holy Spirit is obedient to the Son speaking only what He hears.

4. We are also told in this verse that the Holy Spirit does not glorify himself but glorifies the Son, Jesus Christ.

It is God the Holy Spirit who is at work allowing us to understand spiritual truths.

Empowering us to apply that truth in the world.

WHAT WE HAVE SEEN HAPPENING HERE as Jesus and His disciples spent their last hours together happens today also.

We see Words fail or, perhaps more accurately, we fail the Word. And we do not understand. We are even as Paul who said on a number of occasions that he was perplexed - but he also said he was in despair.

You see, when we do not understand we have something that holds us over until we do. Just like these disciples in the garden. We have the promises of a God who loves us and a Savior who died for us.

LET'S BOW OUR HEADS IN PRAYER.

How often do we not understand. But don't despair. God wants you to understand and one day, maybe it will not be until eternity for all things, but you will see clearly.

Job was perplexed, he did not understand. But his one true friend, the fourth comforter Elihu reminded him to remember the promise

My words are from the uprightness of my heart; And my lips speak knowledge sincerely. The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

And that was all Job needed for the moment. To know that god had made him and promised that He had a plan for his life.

Remember that Christian. You are never beyond reach of the promises of God. OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER SIXTEEN, VERSE 16 (vv 16-33):

Last week we saw that Jesus had filled these disciples up with truth. So much so that they were unable to take in any more. They had hit a point of doctrinal overload.

So Jesus promised them that the Holy Spirit will come and when He does, many of the things he has said will become clear and many new things will be understood.

WE NOTED WHAT God provides when our understanding lacks, as it does so often as we progress towards maturity in Christ and evaluate life in the light of God's Word.

We always, in every situation, even when explanations seem to fail, have the PROMISES of our God who loves us and our Lord who died for us.

SO WITH THIS IN MIND we see the Lord Jesus shift from instruction to comfort. And through to the end of the chapter He talks of his leaving them, of his death, and their sorrow.

In many ways this farewell discourse has come full circle. Back in John 14 the Lord began with comfort and now He ends with comfort.

v 16A little while, and you will no longer behold Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me.

In the upper room, in the streets of Jerusalem, and now in the garden, Jesus has taught doctrine that is epic in proportion. He has, in one evening, laid a foundation for the C.A.

Often He has looked beyond the Cross to the Crown, beyond the shame of the Cross to the glory He will have in heaven.

But now He turn His attention to the immediate crisis. He is leaving His disciples, they must at last face that fact. And the relationship He has had with them for the last three years is changing.

He is leaving and they are to remain behind and be His witness and they are to do this in the power of the other comforter, the Holy Spirit who will indwell every C.A. believer.

What He tells them in v 16 is almost like a riddle. And it begins a discussion that carries itself to the end of the chapter. The discussion is one in which the Lord Jesus, who has prepared them to be His witness, men of whom it will be said will turn the World upside down, now need to be individually

prepared to face the events that will unfold that very night.

God will prepare us as a people, as a church, but His most profound work is very personal as He prepares each and every one of us for the problems that lie ahead.

The disciples know that Jesus is leaving but that have not sorted out the various promises of His return.

v 17-18 So this statement confuses them -

Some of His disciples therefore said to one another, What is this thing He is telling us, A little while, and you will not behold Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me; and, because I go to the Father?

In their perplexity, why they did not ask Jesus is unclear. Perhaps like many believers today they felt that a question would reveal their ignorance.

Winston Churchill said: That things do not get better when left in ignorance, they only explode with shattering detonation.

v 19 Jesus perceived their ignorance.

Jesus knew that they wished to question Him, and He said to them, Are you deliberating together about this, that I said, A little while, and you will not behold Me, and again a little while, and you will see Me?

It is interesting to see how the Lord challenges them even though they do not seek His knowledge.

The Lord wants them to understand what is going to happen, and in the same way the Lord wants us to understand.

In the paragraph that begins at this verse and extends to verse 24 Jesus explains that their confusion will turn first to grief but that their grief will be replaced by Joy.

v 20 Jesus responds to their need rather than to their question.

Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you

will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned to joy.

They are wondering what Jesus meant by his statement of leaving and returning.

But their need goes far deeper than that. They are upset, confused, and ill-prepared for the acute grief they will have over the next three days.

We all have questions, at times even the most mature believer is perplexed. And it is in those times, when we think the answers to our questions will solve all of our problem, that God goes deeper into our souls and fulfills our needs.

We endure some tragedy in life. We ask why thinking that if we knew why everything would be okay. But God knows better so instead of answers He provides a pathway to peace . . . a peace that passes all understanding.

A man who learns he has terminal cancer could be told of all the reasons why, the problems of chromosomes, the problems with the cells of his body, the way cancer can spread - but will that fulfill his need for a peace in the midst of the problem?

In our information age we too often think that information, the facts, are a panacea for all that troubles us. But they help very little.

We need a comforter, for these disciple that was Jesus Christ, their Lord (yes), their Savior (yes), but more importantly right now, their friend.

We too have a friend, a comforter, God the Holy Spirit, who in times of trouble can give us a peace that goes beyond understanding, beyond the facts and figures of tragedy.

BUT THIS PEACE IS NOT ONE OF DENIAL.

Jesus tells them: You will weep and mourn - you will be filled with sorrow, and the world will be rejoicing.

Jesus causes them to face their grief head on. He pulls no punch, he doesn't tell them it won't hurt.

One has well said that The soul would have no rainbow had the eyes had no tears.

Billy Graham noted that Tears shed for self are tears of weakness but when shed for a friend they are tears of strength.

We live in a world which tries to cover up the pain, to do away with the hurt, to deny the fact that somethings are tough to take.

Jesus was not teaching some form of denial. He was bringing these disciples to reality.

NOW NOTICE SOME VERY IMPORTANT WORDING: Jesus says: Your sorrow will be turned to joy.

We have the preposition EIS then the word JOY followed by the future tense of the verb will become.

This construction shows us that the SORROW must be there first in order to have the JOY.

**SORROW IS NOT REPLACED BY JOY,
SORROW TURNS INTO JOY.**

In our self-absorbed impatient pragmatism we so often call upon God to take away the pain and give us the gain, right now.

But that is not the way God works: He takes the sorrow that is so real in our lives and from that, building upon that pain and grief, turns the pain into great gain.

Psalm 30:5 Weeping may last for the night,
But a shout of joy comes in the morning.

ANYTHING SHORT of this wonderful way that God works in our lives and in the midst of heartache would be a denial, a pretending, a telling of ourselves that everything is okay when it really isn't.

With a relationship with God we are not divorced from reality, we are living in reality and we have the doctrine, we have the Holy Spirit, we have the use of the problem solving applications that will bring joy in the morning.

v 21 In the analogy that Jesus gives we see that the very thing that generates the sorrow also generates the joy.

Whenever a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she remembers the anguish no more, for joy that a child has been born into the world.

This is an analogy that you ladies who have given birth can easily understand and those of us who have not (can not - thank you Lord) can at least understand.

Child birth, as I have observed, in tough, it is painful, labor pains are just that, pains. The birth of a child in spite of all the breathing and other techniques, can cause a woman to scream out in pain. The agony is very real.

And after the child is born, the mother takes the one who has caused all that pain and agony, to her breast and tenderly loves it.

NOW IF ANYONE ELSE had caused you such pain, you wouldn't love him, you would loath him. How dare you do that me, you hurt me, I screamed out in pain because of you, take him away - but that is not the response is it.

And that will not be the response of these disciples.

v 22 Therefore you too now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy away from you.

And just like the woman giving birth, you will have sorrow, Jesus says. But when I see you again you will rejoice, and no one will take away that joy.

The applications are endless. We need this perspective in our lives because in our lives there will be times of sorrow and grief and tragedy.

But joy comes in the morning.

In a very simple illustration, we know that the discipline imposed by a parent on a child may not be appreciated by that child at the time. Yet is often that very discipline that the child

will look back upon as being of great value in the formation of his character.

Hebrews 12:11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

Many of our losses and grief, though painful for the moment, generate great spiritual growth and stable joy in our lives.

AND LOOKING AGAIN AT VERSE 22 what is it that will bring joy out of sorrow - Jesus says: I will see you again.

While this was historical applied to these disciples, it can also be applied to us today.

We grieve and we sorrow and we face loss. But Paul put a name to all the suffering we face.

II Corinthians 4:17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

Our morning may not come until we are face to face, But when, in His presence, we our lives will trace, All life's sorrow set aside along with all the pain, We will know His love and grace, our eternal gain,

YOU SEE, ITS NOT THE PRESENCE OF THE SORROW THAT COUNTS, ITS OUR PRESENCE WITH THE SAVIOUR THAT REALLY MATTERS.

Apart from Him our sorrow just degenerates into more sorrow. But with Him our sorrow generates joy.

v 23-24 Describes part of the reason for that Joy.

And in that day you will ask Me no question. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you in My name. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full.

We have here a description of two blessings that will accompany the departure of Christ and their seeing Him again.

1.The first is a fullness of understanding that will eliminate the need for the type of questions they have been asking.

The word ASK in v 23a means to ASK A QUESTION.

In that day looks ahead to the day of the resurrection of Christ and His exaltations in the heavens at the right hand of the Father.

There He is right now. Seated at the right hand of the Father's throne.

We cannot ask him any questions and we need not ask him any questions - He has given us the answers in the Bible and He has given us the Holy Spirit so that we can learn, think, and apply the Word of God.

That is a joy that would not be ours had the Lord not set His face to the Cross.

2.The second blessing we see that brings great joy is that this new relationship with the risen Christ will bring prayer-answering power.

In v 23a and 24 Jesus tells His disciples: Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you in My name. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name.

Here, the verb ASK means to ASK FOR SOMETHING and these disciples have not yet asked for anything in the name of Christ.

But when Christ is risen he will be the mediator between the Father all who put faith in Christ. He will have more to say about this in vv 26 and 27.

This promised blessing is a promise of immediate access by prayer to the throne of God.

Later Paul would write in Hebrews 4:16: Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the

throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

To ask IN JESUS' NAME is not a formula or even a mechanic of our faith. The NAME of a person in those ancient days look at their reputation, their character, their integrity.

So we ask of the Father in Jesus' name whenever we ask for that which will build His character in us and allow us to present His reputation as the only name given under heaven by which man must be saved to the World.

The context of this blessing emphasizes the work of Christ as our mediator and.

NOTICE THE LAST PART OF v 24 That your joy may be made full.

There is a joy that is related to effective prayer and here is the promise that because of Christ our prayers can be effective in our lives and in the lives of those around us.

AND FROM THAT WE CAN HAVE OUR JOY MADE FULL.

SHALL WE PRAY.

We have seen it many time as we have studied this words of Christ to His disciples. He wanted them to have Joy.

Is too great of a task for a God who has created us, for a Christ who has saved us, for the Spirit who indwells us to give us great Joy.

No, of course not. God can even go one better than that. He can cause great joy to come out of sorrow.

There may be tears at night, but joy comes in the morning.

Not because the sorrow is not real, but because the presence of Christ your Savior is more real. And in His presence, as the Holy Spirit manifests His live in you, as Christ is formed in you, you can know with confidence that any sorrow in life means a joy also. And that is eternity with him there is no sorrow, no pain, only joy.

What we studied today are promises, from God to you, will you believe them? Dwight Moody said: God never made a promise that was too good to be true.

In our passage today we are going to see some promises.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER SIXTEEN, VERSE 23 (vv 23-33).

In the past two weeks we have noted that Jesus, in this Farewell Discourse, has, in the last half of John 16, left teaching and has moved to comforting the disciples and providing promises.

This shift in presentation occurred because the disciples were not able to bear any more teaching.

v 12 I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

This then shows us what we have when we come to a point when we fail to understand.

THE DISCIPLES are being faced with a set of circumstances in which adversity is preventing them from seeing the advantage.

THEIR SOULS ARE RUNNING ON FEAR AND DOUBT rather than on faith and doctrine.

So the comforting and the promises are intended to move them from fear and doubt to faith and doctrine.

v 23-24 The First Promise.

And in that day you will ask Me no question. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you in My name. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full.

The reality of any promise rests upon three factors.

1. First: The integrity of the one who promises. This includes the ability of the one who promises to fulfill the promise. Here is where we go to the essence of God and we know that God is omnipotent and that in His

veracity and immutability He will not promise that which He will not fulfill.

Hebrews 10:23b For He (God) who promised is faithful.

If a man makes you a promise it may or may not become a reality. It all depends upon the integrity of the one who promises.

2. Second Factor: The one to whom something is promised must receive that which is promised. There are conditions set upon most promises even if the condition is nothing more than the requirement to receive what is promised.

Hebrews 4:1 Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it.

Hebrews 6:11-12 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

I knew a young man whose brother-in-law promised him a new car if he graduated from college. By the time he did earn his BA his sister and this brother-in-law had divorced. He never mentioned it, did not even see his brother-in-law for years. Then about fifteen years later meet him and jokingly reminded him of the promise. The former brother-in-law said he would have honored his promise, if the young man would have asked.

The promise was good, but it was not received. And one thing we should fear is that we let a promise from God go unclaimed.

3. The Third Factor is Timing: Often a promise is made and that reality of that promise is for a time yet future.

Habakkuk 2:3 For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal, and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay.

When we come upon a promise of Scripture we have to ask ourselves, it is for this time? Is it for this dispensation? Is it for me?

TIMING also includes OPPORTUNITY: In life circumstances determine the need to trust in the promises of God. Different circumstances determine different needs.

AND IT IS THAT TIMING AND OPPORTUNITY THAT IS VERY GEMAIN TO OUR PROMISES IN JOHN 16.

v 23 Note the introduction: In that day - And this refers to a time after their sorrow in v 22 and when He will see them again.

In other words, after the Cross, the death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation of Jesus Christ.

So this applies to a time in the very near future for these disciples and the time in which we live right now.

SO WHAT DO WE HAVE? The one who promises is the Lord Jesus, and we know that He is faithful. For us the timing is right just like it will be very shortly for these disciples.

WHAT IS LEFT? Their faith in the promise. And that is what is left for us, our faith in the promise.

Simple question: Do we believe the promises of God?

AND PROBABLY THE BEST ANSWER TO THAT IS: I DON'T KNOW.

We will know when we have opportunity to claim the promise but before that, is there a way can, right now, with confidence know that we believe the promise?

IN OUR PASSAGE WE ARE SHOWN HOW WE CAN KNOW, RIGHT NOW.

v 23-24 Two Promises.

1. And in that day you will ask me no question. We have a negative particle, a future tense verb, followed by a negative adjective. This is a double negative which is permissible for emphasis in the Greek text.

The verb looks at asking a question, not making a request for something.

This promise is directed at their lack of understanding, their confusion, their perplexity regarding Jesus' death and departure.

The promise tells them that there is coming a time when they will not question Him. Three reasons.

1) He will not be here: He will be exalted at the right hand of the Father.

2) The Christian will have the Holy Spirit indwelling them. Look back to the promise of the Spirit in John 16:13.

3) They will have the completed Word of God, the Bible.

If we could ask Jesus a question right now He would answer with Scripture, chapter and verse.

LET'S SEE THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS.

1 Corinthians 2:12-16

v 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God,

Paul begins with the fact that we have the Holy Spirit, part one of the promise of John 16.

v 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

Expanded: In doctrine taught by the Spirit (re: John 16:13) we compare or combining the words of doctrine with the thoughts of doctrine.

This allows us, if we have been taught, to take words of doctrine and combine them with the circumstances (present of future) and understand them and make appraisal.

This is the building of Divine viewpoint. v 14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

v 15 But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man.

The word APPRAISED means to examine discriminately. And was used in classical Greek for pre-trial investigation.

HENCE: The thinking of doctrine prior to the need of the application of that doctrine.

In Hebrews 5:14 we see the next stage: But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

There the word DISCERN is a different word and means to distinguish between different things. Between good and evil, and even better and best. And the believer who has doctrine and has been thinking doctrine is prepared to draw a conclusion when faced with different things.

The ALL THINGS recognizes that the Word of God as taught by the Spirit deals with every category of life. v 16 For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

The critic may ask, how can we know what God thinks? How can we know the V/pt of God? The answer is very dogmatic.

We have the mind of Christ.

Which also relates to a promise in the Farewell discourse.

John 15:15 No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

[Also compare Romans 11:34 through Romans 12:2]

LET'S RETURN TO JOHN 16:23

So the promise is that there is coming a time, which now is, in which we will have no need to ask Jesus any questions.

We will have questions. If anything, as you combine the spiritual with the spiritual, as you examine the Scriptures you have even more questions. But the promise is that you also have ANSWERS!

v 23b-24 Second promise.

Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you in My name. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full.

Here the word for ASK means to ASK FOR SOMETHING.

This promise looks at our access to the Father by way of petition and request in prayer.

These disciples have not yet asked for anything in the name of Christ.

But when Christ is risen he will be the mediator between the Father all who put faith in Christ. He will have more to say about this in vv 26 and 27.

This promised blessing is a promise of immediate access by prayer to the throne of God.

Later in Hebrews 4:16 we read: Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

To ask IN JESUS' NAME is not a formula or even a mechanic of our faith. The NAME of a person in those ancient days look at their reputation, their character, their integrity, and their power.

So when we ask of the Father in Jesus' name we do so according to His power not ours.

When we ask of the Father in Jesus' name whenever we ask for that which will, by His power, build His character in us and allow us to present His reputation as the only name

given under heaven by which man must be saved to the World.

This is not some Aladdin's Lamp passage that says say the right words and you will get that bigger house, new car, better job, or more money.

What is going to build in you the character of Christ and what is going to present His reputation to others? Ask for that with His divine provision of power, and it will be a reality.

The context of this blessing emphasizes the work of Christ as our mediator and but that must also be understood.

LOOK AHEAD TO VERSES 26 and 27.

In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request the Father on your behalf; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father.

These disciples and us must recognize that while the Lord Jesus Christ prays for us, we have immediate access to the Father. It is because God love us, because we love Christ, that we can pray directly to God.

v 24b NOW NOTICE THE LAST PART OF v 24 That your joy may be made full.

Now Jesus has been talking a lot in the future tense, looking ahead to the C.A. But not here.

We have a present tense now. These things are being said, these promises are being made for a time yet future but that they might have an immediate purpose and that purpose is JOY.

AND IS THAT NOT THE way a promise works? It brings joy even prior to the fulfillment of the promise?

These disciples have very little joy as they are being confronted with the death and departure of their friend.

But their friend gives them promises and in those promises which are yet for an appointed time, they can find great joy.

AND HERE IS THE WAY WE CAN KNOW RIGHT NOW if we are trusting in the promises of God - do they bring to us JOY?

JESUS HAS PROMISED and we know He can keep the promise.

THE APPOINTED TIME HAS COME. We are living on this side of the cross, the resurrection, the exaltation of Jesus Christ.

WHAT IS LEFT? What is the one factor that remains to be fulfilled?

YOU, DO YOU BELIEVE THE PROMISE, DO YOU TRUST IN THE ONE WHO HAS PROMISED?

If you do you will have the JOY of that promise right now.

Joy can march on before us, even, as with the disciples, in the face of death.

But this joy does not come as an independent gift. It is a result, a production in the life of the believer.

Indeed the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace.

This Joy is ours because we trust in Christ, He who promised is faithful. It comes because we know that we can understand all things, and we have set ourselves to that task. And this joy is ours because we have access to the Father, to the very throne room of God. OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER SIXTEEN, VERSE 25 (vv 25-33):

We now come to the end of the Farewell Discourse.

1.This discourse, John 13 through 16, took place in one evening. The evening of the Last Supper, the night prior to the Crucifixion.

2.It took place in the upper room, while walking through Jerusalem east towards the Mt. of Olives, and while in the Garden of Gethsemane.

3. Jesus is preparing His disciples for both His death and departure and for the part they will play in the beginning of the Church Age.

4. Jesus is comforting His disciples by giving them promises, precepts, and by praying for them (John 17).

5. In these chapters we see a foundation of truth being set for the C.A. Here is the doctrine that the writers of the epistles will build C.A. doctrine upon.

6. Every truth that pertains to our relationship with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit finds its inception in these chapters.

NOW IN THE FINAL PARAGRAPH OF THIS MESSAGE we see that Jesus is comforting His disciples and He does so in three ways.

1. Making them face the reality of the situation. No denial, no ignoring.

2. Giving them specific promises that are to be claimed later and yet will give them Joy right now.

3. By using Himself as an example. Jesus Christ is our precedent for our existence as believers. We function in the Christian life by the same power He used in the incarnation.

v 25 This is one verse we skipped over last week on purpose. Last week we looked at the two promises of vv 23-24, and 26-27. But here in v 25 we also find a promise. This is specific to these disciples and with application to us.

These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming when I will speak no more to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father.

In the Gospel of Luke we can see when this promise became a reality.

In Luke 24, after the resurrection, we are told that on that glorious Sunday, as Jesus walked with the two disciples to Emmaus that.

v 27 Beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

Then in Luke 24:45 with His disciples we see that: He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

BACK TO JOHN 16: Why was He not able to do this on this on this evening in Jerusalem. Two reasons.

1. The disciple's self absorption and fear and doubt served as a doctrine blocker and they were not able to learn, to think, to apply with faith what would have been said.

2. Secondly, the very event that would give these believers a full picture of what God is doing had not occurred. The tapestry was not complete.

To try to break through there fears and explain this truth now would take far more than just waiting, three days, and showing them.

PRINCIPLES FOR US.

1. Do our fears and doubts and self absorption prevent us from learning, thinking, and applying the Word of God?

2. In our impatience do we fail the tests of faith by wanting to know everything right now. Do we not have the faith and trust to wait even three days?

The Lord knew they could not handle it now so He gave them some basic doctrine and some promises to see them through.

LET'S MOVE ON TO v 28.

I came forth from the Father, and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again, and going to the Father.

Here we see a basic statement of a doctrine that is often emphasized in the New Testament but rarely dealt with today.

We place emphasis on the resurrection of Jesus Christ and on His ascension. And we should. But we should also place emphasis on

the fact that He alone came from heaven to earth.

John 1:9 There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

John 3:13 And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

It is the fact that Jesus alone, ever existing God, came to earth to save sinners, that establishes His deity. That He is God who has come to save us.

No less than ten reference are found in John's Gospel that tell us that Jesus alone came from heaven to earth.

John 3:17 For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.

The application of this doctrine is that we cannot go from earth to heaven until we are identified with the one who came from heaven to earth. Salvation is in Him alone and man cannot expel any effort of work to secure his place in heaven. Faith alone in Christ alone.

v 29 We now have a response from the disciples. Remember back in verses 17 and 18 when they questioned among themselves? Jesus responded to their need for comfort rather than the specific answers they thought they needed. They have been listening and they now come to a conclusion.

His disciples said, Lo, now You are speaking plainly, and are not using a figure of speech.

They are right in that He has been giving them specific promises and comforting them regarding His death and departure. But they are more impressed with form than fact.

v 30 Now we know that You know all things, and have no need for anyone to question You; by this we believe that You came from God.

There are five things wrong with this statement.

1. They are claiming to understand and to know more than they actually know.

They have fallen into a trap we fall into today. Today we live in a society in which knowledge is power and to admit ignorance is to lack power.

They even used the verb OIDA indicating they understood PERFECTLY and had complete and full understanding.

Yet back in v 12 the Lord told them they did not.

2. Their attention was focused upon that which was the least significant of what Jesus had said.

He knew they had questions (v 19) and he responded to their doubt. This impressed them and they focused on that.

In doing so they missed the promises and they missed the reality of what was going on.

Even today we too often focus upon minor points of doctrine and miss the broad sweep of biblical truth.

3. They believed that Jesus was from God but they did so based upon the experience of the moment rather than the Words that were spoken.

Note v 30: By this we believe that You came from God.

The basis for our present faith and trust in the Word of God is that God has said it, and that establishes it once and for all and for ever. If the experience of our Christ Centered Walk strengthens that, then good, but our faith must not be found in experience but in the Word of God.

4. Their focus on this minor point and on the miracle of Jesus knowing they had questions ignored the encouragement they could have had as they would soon weep and mourn at the arrest and conviction of their friend, Jesus Christ.

They will shortly be facing a very difficult time and a very difficult test. But they are not listening to the words of promise and comfort that will get them through.

How often do we fail to hear the Word of God that is preparing us for what God has placed ahead of us?

5.Their statement of v 29 contradicted what the Lord just said.

v 25An hour is coming when I will speak no more to you in figurative language but will tell you plainly of the Father.

But in v 29 they say that this is now occurring. But that hour has not yet come.

They are trying to get out ahead of the plan of God rather than follow God in His plan.

It is perhaps a sad commentary in the Gospel of John that the last thing said to incarnate Christ by those who were closest to Him is a statement that attempts to bluff their way into understanding and faith by way of pretense.

v 31Jesus will not allow this pretense to go unchallenged.

Jesus answered them, Do you now believe?

We have the adverb ARTI which introduces a question. We might expand this by saying.

Because of this and just now are you finally professing that you believe?

After all that has been said, and taught, and seen, they are just now, because of this minor point, this insignificant insight, saying they believe that Jesus came from God?

v 32Jesus tells them that this professed belief is not going to do them much good in the test that they will face.

Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

What would have given them great strength was the words of comfort, the statements of reality, the promises that Jesus had just given them. But these were overshadowed in the souls of the disciples by their testimony of now having faith, trust, belief in Jesus Christ.

But their faith was misplaced. Faith was to be in the Words that Jesus spoke, not in their own understanding or in some minor miracle that impressed them.

And because their faith was misplaced when the hour of Jesus arrest comes, they will run.

PRINCIPLES:

1.All the testimonies of great faith mean nothing if faith is not in the person of Christ and the Word of Christ.

2.Faith is only as strong as were it placed.

3.Faith in self, faith in the wrong object, will never us you through the difficulties of life.

v 32Continued.

Jesus now uses Himself, in His humanity, as an illustration.

And (you will) leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

Jesus shows these disciples and us another way of thinking. Not faith in self but faith in God.

They are going to be scattered, Jesus will be arrested, go to court, endure illegal trials, be beaten and abused, be nailed to a Cross and left to die - alone.

BUT HE IS NOT ALONE. The Father will be with Him.

THESE DICIPLES COULD HAVE TAKEN THAT SAME TRUTH and applied it to themselves. Jesus would be leaving them, He will be going to His home, in heaven, but they will not be alone.

The Father, the Spirit, and the Lord Himself would be with them.

AND JUST AS THEY COULD HAVE APPLIED THAT PROMISE OF truth, so can we.

This promise that Jesus makes in this verse becomes the basis of His prayer in John, Chapter 17.

Look ahead to John 17:23 I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me.

Jesus will face the trial of the Cross with the confidence of His faith that the Father is with Him and we can face all the adversities of life with the confidence of faith, knowing that God is with us.

v 33 In this verse these disciples are given the two objects of faith that they must have. These two objects of faith remain the same forever and must be the objects of our faith also.

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

1. The First Object of Faith: These things I have spoken to you. Not our evaluation of them, not our impression of form but the facts of what Jesus said.

Our faith must rest in the Word of God. Spoken to us through the Scriptures.

2. The Second Object of Faith: The person and work of Jesus Christ.

He declares even prior to the Cross, with faith in what the Father will accomplish in Him: I have overcome the world. The victory is in Jesus Christ

NOW ONE LAST THING.

Last week we saw how we can know if we are trusting in a specific promise even prior to the opportunity to apply that promise.

We saw from v 24 that if we are believing the promise we will have JOY right now.

This is a mental attitude of Divine Happiness or Joy that goes out before us in life. It is a confident Joy in which we know that when the problems come and the adversity is about to overwhelm us we will have a divine promise and provision from God in which we can rest in Him.

BUT HERE IS a second way in which we can know that we are trusting in the promises even prior to the need to apply the promise.

JESUS SAID: These things I have spoken to you that in Me you may have peace.

NOT ONLY DOES JOY ACCOMPANY THE PROMISES OF THE Word of God BUT ALSO PEACE.

And that peace is not dependent upon circumstances. In the world you have tribulation. This peace and this joy rests upon the Word of God.

John 15:11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. While very ill, John Knox, the founder of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, called to his wife and said, Read me that Scripture where I first cast my anchor. After he listened to the beautiful prayer of Jesus recorded in John 17, he seemed to forget his weakness. He began to pray, interceding earnestly for his fellowmen. He prayed for the ungodly who had thus far rejected the gospel. He pleaded in behalf of people who had been recently converted. And he requested protection for the Lord's servants, many of whom were facing persecution. As Knox prayed, his spirit went Home to be with the Lord. The man of whom Queen Mary had said, I fear his prayers more than I do the armies of my enemies, ministered through prayer until the moment of his death.

Chapter 17

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER SEVENTEEN, VERSE 1 (vv 1-5).

Having taught the disciples, having given them promises, challenges, comfort, and examples, Jesus now prays for them.

This prayer that takes up the entire seventeenth chapter of John has been called the Lord's Prayer and the Lord's High Priestly Prayer for His Saints.

This prayer is different than the prayer of Matthew 6 and Luke 11 which is often referred to as the Lord's Prayer. That prayer, which is much better known, is a model prayer for the disciples at a time when the Kingdom was in view.

Today, in the C.A., we still anticipate the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom following the Second Advent of Christ but our emphasis is not on the immediacy of the kingdom.

We anticipate with confident assurance the return of Jesus Christ for His church. We are pre-millennial but we are also pre-tribulational in that we believe and can show from a literal interpretation of the Scriptures that there is a return of Christ for His Church and then, after the Tribulation, a return of Christ to earth to establish His Kingdom for a thousand years.

It is in light of that anticipation that we have that Jesus prays this prayer.

Not that the Kingdom come, because that is not to be the next event in the unfolding of divine history, but that we who are left in the world are to be kept by divine power from the evil one (v 16).

And that we would be set apart, sanctified, by the Word of God (v 17).

And that we have a unity that reflects the unity that Jesus, in His humanity, has with the Father (v 20-21).

This prayer divides itself into three parts.

v 1-5 Jesus prays for Himself

v 6-19 Jesus prays for His eleven disciples. Who are hearing this prayer of their Lord and Friend.

v 20-26 Jesus prays for us. The one who will believe in Him as a result of the word of these eleven disciples.

We will take a look at the first this morning: John 17:1-5

v 1 These things Jesus spoke; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee,

THESE THINGS refers back to all that Jesus had said in the upper room, while on the way out of the city, and in the garden of Gethsemane.

This whole evening as the Lord and His disciples eat the Passover meal, the last supper, the first Lord's Supper, was taken up with the Lord talking to men.

It was now time for Him to talk with the Father.

So much had been promised, so many principles taught and challenges given. He could say no more.

John 16:12 I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

More instruction was needed but it would have to wait until after the resurrection and until after they had the Holy Spirit in them.

He had them challenged them to face the reality of His death and departure and has given them promises and offered Himself as example.

He even gave a victory shout at the end of chapter 16: Take courage, I have overcome the World.

Everything that could be said had been said. What now? He prays for them.

The humanity of Jesus Christ had done all He could do for them. It was now up to them and their individual volitions.

Would the next day find them running like frightened rabbits back to the safety of Galilee.

OR WOULD THEY take courage, and wait for the promise to be fulfilled: John 16:22
Therefore you too now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy away from you.

Jesus finds Himself in very human circumstances.

HAVE YOU EVER come to the end of a conversation knowing that you have said all you could say, explained all you could explain. That nothing more could be done?

Haven't we even said at times: I have done everything I can do? But have we? If we have not prayed for that person, be they a child, a student, an employee, a boss, a parent, a Pastor, we haven't done everything.

Sometimes we get frustrated trying to get through to others. We even say, I just can't get through to them. And maybe you cannot but as a Christian you can always get through to God, that line is never busy when in the Spirit we say - Father.

With that call you are friends and family, the call is collect and the charges are always accepted, its a clear voice, and you can call at the drop of a pin. You always get the low rate, there is no reason to wait for evenings and week-ends.

Consider the disciples in this picture. Here they are having been taught all this great doctrine and promised all these great promises and now they hear their Lord and their friend Jesus praying for them.

Can we even begin to imagine what it was like to overhear the Lord Jesus Christ praying - for them.

But we do not have to imagine this. In the last part of this prayer the Lord prays for us and then in the Epistles we are told that Jesus is our High Priest.

Romans 8:34 Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Hebrew 7:24-25 But He (our risen Lord) because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Jesus Christ is praying for us right now and that is just as real as if we were there in the garden overhearing the words of our Lord, our Friend Jesus Christ, as He prays for us.

v 1Continued.

And lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee.

Jesus lifted His eyes to heaven: This is a posture of prayer that is very different than the posture we have today. But it was even different than other postures for prayer recorded in the Bible. At times we read of

Bowed knees in Ephesians 3:14. Lifted Hands in Psalm 28:2. Kneeling down in Luke 22:41. Bowing of the head in II Chronicles 20:18. Laying flat on the ground in Mark 14:35.

In Luke 18:13 we are told that as the publican prayed at the Temple he would not lift up his eyes to heaven.

WHAT ALL THIS SHOWS us is that there is not, in the Bible nor in the Church today, a set, approved posture for prayer.

A POEM OF PRAYER POSTURE.

The proper way for man to pray, said loudly deacon Keyes; The only proper attitude is down upon his knees.

Nay, I should say the way to pray,' said Reverend Doctor Wise, Is standing straight

with outstretched arms with rapt and upturned eyes.

Oh, no,no,no,' said Elder Snow, such posture is too proud. A man should pray with eyes fast closed and head contritely bowed.

It seems to me his hands should be austere claspd in front, With both thumbs pointing to the ground,' said Reverend Doctor Blunt.

Last year I fell in Hodgkin's well headfirst, said Cecil Brown. With both my heels a stickin' up, my head a pointin' down; And I done prayed right then and there; best prayer I ever said, The prayin'est prayer I ever prayed, a standin' on my head.

What is at issue is the posture of the heart.

Do we go boldly before the throne of grace and yet do so with an attitude of humility? Do we pray with the attitude of David who said.

Psalm 10:17 O Lord, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble; Thou wilt strengthen their heart, Thou wilt incline Thine ear.

v 1Continued: We are told that Jesus addressed His prayer to the Father.

All prayer in the Bible and for us today is addressed to the Father, in the name of the Son, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

His address: By saying FATHER alone demonstrated an intimacy the Lord had in His humanity with the Father.

The common practice for the Jews at this time was to address the God as the Father of Israel - as in Our Father who art in heaven.

But Jesus here shows us the intimacy we can have with God in prayer, we can go to Him as a child would go to a Father. The relationship is personal, not collective. The relationship is close, not distant. The Father is with us.

v 1The first petition in this prayer.

Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee.

In any prayer of petition there are certain aspects of what we ask for that must be considered.

1.Reason for the request: The hour has come

Many times in the Gospels we have seen that the hour had not come, but now, as the plan of God for His Son unfolds we see the timing is right.

This hour is the hour of the Sacrifice of the Savior and encompasses the betrayal, the arrest, the illegal trials, the physical punishment, the Cross, Spiritual death, physical death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.

Timing and Opportunity make this an appropriate request.

2.The Request: Glorify Thy Son

3.The Rational for the Request: John 17:4-5

I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do. "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.

4.Results of the Request: In order that the Son may glorify Thee: Jesus Christ looks through the horror of the Cross and beyond the pain to the time of glory.

This is very similar to what He said to His disciples in the upper room: John 13:31 Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.

The glorification of the Son and His glorification of the Father is the theme of this part of Jesus prayer.

The idea of GLORY and the desire to GLORIFY God is something that we talk about as Christians but often do not really understand. Glory, glorify, glorification are just some of the many Bible words we use but their meaning escapes us.

1.Dr. Charles Ryrie in his book Transformed by His Glory provides a definition for GLORY.

He writes that God is glorified when His awesomeness, His splendor, His importance is in some way seen by man.

He adds that the glory of God is what He seems to be and which in His case is what He really is.

2. Therefore, when we see God's glory, understand Him, come to know Him, we then return glory to Him.

Spiros Zodhiates defines this aspect of the glory, the Christian glorifying God, by saying that we form an opinion and then we give honor, praise, to God and invests Him with dignity and an honorable position (as Lord).

3. We bring these two descriptions of glory together when we learn about God and observe and experience Who and What He truly is and then, from that fact formed opinion, honor Him in our attitude, in our words, and in our actions.

Jesus prays that the Father would GLORIFY Him. This request is an aorist, active, imperative indicating that it is something only the Father can do.

NOW WE DO NOT pray for that which we already have and yet in the Gospel of John, more than any of the other accounts, we see that the incarnate Christ had in Him the glory of God.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

But other statements indicate that GLORY would not be His until after the resurrection.

John 7:39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

John 12:16 These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these

things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.

The difference in the GLORY of life and His GLORY following the resurrection and ascension (which He prays for here) is that the GLORY of His life was not evident apart from the faith of the ones around Him.

John 11:40 Jesus said to her (Martha), Did I not say to you, if you believe, you will see the glory of God?

Jesus' glory was hidden in His humanity and only became apparent when those around Him put faith in Him and what He said.

But after the resurrection of the humanity of Jesus Christ and once He is seated at the right hand of God, His glory as the unique person in the universe, the first fruits of the resurrection, becomes a historical fact. That glory is not hidden but on full display for all creation to see.

NOW FOR US ON THIS SIDE of heaven we still must apply faith but there will be a time when faith in that which is not seen will give way to the fact of what is now apparent to God and the angels - the absolute glory of Jesus Christ, fully God, fully man, forever.

v 1Continued: And that is what Jesus is praying for. An absolute, eternal, glory that is not hidden, that does not fade away, that is brilliant throughout eternity.

Now the second rationale for this request is found in what Jesus will do with that glory.

Glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee.

This GLORY is not request so that Jesus will be benefitted but that the Father will be glorified.

Even in His humanity He did not seek His own plan, His own purpose, His own prerogative, His own promotion.

He desired glory, honor, so that He could glorify the Father.

WHY DO WE DESIRE GREAT THINGS FROM GOD? Is it to promote ourselves, to heap to ourselves the applause of men? Or do we desire great things of God so that God will be glorified?

IT IS AN AMAZING THING THAT we who deserved nothing have received so much by way of Grace and Truth and that now we can bring glory to God by the decisions we make, the words we say, the actions we take, and even the things that we pray for.

We can glorify and bring glory to God A fisherman who was a Christian but who had been out of fellowship with the Lord for a long time was at sea with his unbelieving friends when a storm came up which threatened to sink their ship. His friends begged him to pray. He refused saying it had been years, decades even since he had prayed. But his friends insisted and finally he agreed to pray. Bowing his head he said: Lord, It's been a long time, I haven't asked anything of You for fifteen years, and if you help us now and bring us safely to land, I promise I won't bother you again for another fifteen years.

Well, Christians are to pray and we never bother God when we do. And we can see this need for prayer when we see that our Lord Jesus Christ needed to pray.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER SEVENTEEN, VERSE 2 (vv 2-5).

Last week we looked at the introduction to Jesus prayer.

As Jesus prays for himself, or perhaps we should say that He prays that He might glorify the Father, we noted that there was reason, a request, a rational, and a result.

The Reason: The hour has come

The Request: That the Father would glorify the Son

The Rational: He has glorified the Father and completed the Fathers Work

The Result: That the Son might glorify the Father

v 1 Again: These things Jesus spoke; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee,

The word GLORIFY shows us one of the contradictions of God's view point and man's viewpoint.

Man saw the Cross as a instrument of shame and humiliation and indignity.

But to Jesus the Cross would be the place of glory and it would lead to even greater glory, the glory of the Father.

In the circumstances and events of life we have the option of these two viewpoints. We can see life through the eyes and estimation of man or of God. What distinguishes us from the wisdom of the world is that we know that the glory of God can shine forth even in the most difficult of circumstances.

AND THAT IS A MIGHTY MESSAGE TO a lost any dying world.

Out of what the world sees as the worst, God can bring great glory.

AND THIS NOT SOME MEAR wishful invention or positive thinking - it is the power of God.

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WE SEE THEN THAT the glory of God is revealed and acknowledged by us in the circumstances we face. And it takes only one thing to see the glory of God - Faith.

John 11:40 Jesus said to her (Martha), Did I not say to you, if you believe, you will see the glory of God?

A few principles.

1. In facing the Cross, Jesus was facing the most difficult circumstance of His incarnation. Not only physically (some men have faced worse) but spiritually as our sins were imputed (poured out) upon Him.

2. Jesus did not pray that the circumstances be changed, He prays in one place for the Father's will over His will and here - for the Glory of the Father.

3. We at times will face difficult situations in life. When we do we have a choice. Will we come the point in our understanding in which we know God can bring His glory into even the worst of times or will we panic?

4. It will be in those tough times that we will see the awesome splendor of God and we in turn will glorify God. Just like with Jesus in His humanity, the choice is ours.

v 2 At verse 2 Jesus looks back at His life and ministry and draws a parallel.

Even as Thou gavest Him authority over all mankind, that to all whom Thou hast given Him, He may give eternal life.

This verse begins with the adverb KAQWS, indicating an exact comparison.

We could reword this by saying: Just as thou has given Him authority - glorify Him at this hour.

Jesus is praying and telling God that He has passed the test of His ministry and is now ready to pass the test of His death.

NOW WHEN JESUS CAME into the world, the Father gave His Son authority.

1. He had the authority over His own life and death and resurrection. Which He did not exercise.

John 10:17-18 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I

may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.

2.He had the authority to execute judgment, which He did not exercise.

John 5:26-27 Just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.

3.Jesus had the authority to give eternal life, which He did do.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.

SO NOW, AS JESUS PRAYS, He reviews the authority He has had and tells the Father, I have used this authority wisely.

Not to bring honor to himself, but to bring honor and glory to the Father.

APPLICATION: Each and every one of us has authority. This authority is in the family, in our jobs, in our church.

HOW DO WE USE THAT AUTHORITY? Do we use it wisely to bring honor and glory to Father?

AND IF WE DO, THIS BECOME ANOTHER RATIONAL for making our requests to the Father.

v 3And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.

Eternal Life is not described in terms of time or chronology but in terms of relationships.

What is eternal life? It is knowing the Father and knowing the Son.

KNOW is a verb, a present, act, subjunctive. This is a potential for all mankind, and it is present tense, to keep on knowing God.

This word is not a mere knowing of but a knowing in an intimate way, a friendship with the Father and with the Son.

APPLICATION: Too often we describe eternal life as something we anticipate, something that is yet to come. Or we describe eternal life in terms of time.

But eternal life is a relationship with the one who is eternal. Knowing the Father and knowing the Son whom He sent in an intimate way.

v 4The Success of the Son: I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do.

Can I take a little be license here and paraphrase this using a modern idiom - SO FAR SO GOOD.

Now Jesus is stating that to this point He has glorified. But He is also stating that that He is prepared to complete the Work the Father has given Him to do.

TO DO is a verb and is an aorist, act, subjunctive. This anticipates the future and the completion of the Father's salvation plan.

This is really a statement of tremendous confidence. The Lord, in His humanity is saying that He has completed the Father's plan thus far, that so far He has glorified the Father in everything the Father gave Him to do.

AND NOW, AS HE FACES THE UNKNOWN OF THE CROSS, He declares with confidence that He will finish the work.

QUESTION FOR US: Can we have that same confidence as we anticipate a future that we do not know?

YES!! IF WE HAVE BEEN consistent and faithful in a the past then you have every reason to be confident of that same consistency and faithfulness in future things.

MAT 25:23 The parable of the talents: His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few

things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.

Luke 12:48 And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

AND GOD NEVER REQUIRES of us that which He has not provided for us the authority, the ability, and the power to complete.

SO OUR LORD provides as a rational based on past obedience for the glory he requests of the Father. He has both glorified the Father and will continue to do so completing the Father's work.

v 5 Jesus restates the request of v 1 but then adds an additional thought.

And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.

To the glory He requests He now adds a definition of that glory.

With the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.

The glory that the humanity of Jesus Christ desires is the glory that pre-existed the incarnation, that was found even prior to creation itself, and can be found only in an ever existing God.

In many ways this request brings us back to where John began this sacred account of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

BUT JESUS IN HIS HUMANITY AND IN THIS PRAYER could not even anticipate that what the Father had in store would be even more.

Upon the RESURRECTION and ASCENSION of Jesus Christ, the God man, the unique person of the universe, a glory that was His before the World began and a new glory of the Savior who has defeated sin and death will reign as Lord of lords and as King of kings forever.

THROUGH THIS PRAYER THERE IS ONE very subtle truth that we must remember.

James 5:16 The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

The righteous man Jesus is praying, and His prayer will be answered, even in greater measure than His request because the Father loves the Son - but remember when you pray, the Father loves you.

C.S. Lewis said, No one in his senses would reserve his chief prayers for bedtime obviously the worst possible hour for any action which needs concentration. My own plan, when hard pressed, is to seize any time and place, however unsuitable, in reference to the last waking moment. On a day of traveling...I'd rather pray sitting in a crowded train than put it off till midnight. On other and slightly less crowded days a bench in a park or a back street where one can pace up and down will do. OPEN YOUR BIBLE TO JOHN, CHAPTER SEVENTEEN, v 6 (vv 6-19).

In this second part of Jesus' High Priestly Prayer we find Jesus praying for His disciples.

In verses 6-8 He explains His RELATIONSHIP to them.

Then in verses 9-19 He makes His REQUEST for them.

v 6-8 The Relationship Rational.

I manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me, and they have kept Thy word. Now they have come to know that everything Thou hast given Me is from Thee; for the words which Thou gavest Me I have given to them; and they received them, and truly understood that I came forth

from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me.

The case for the request is given in these verses and notice what the issue is - the Word of God.

v 6I manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me, and they have kept Thy word.

Jesus begins by stating what He has done, then what the Father has done, and then, what the disciples have done.

1.Jesus manifested the Father's name to His disciples.

In His humanity and in His ministry, the Lord Jesus Christ focused attention on the Father.

The NAME of the Father refers to God's reputation, His essential nature.

APPLICATION: As Jesus Christ focused His ministry upon the Father, we must focus upon Christ.

When we manifest what we believe to others, which means to make apparent or to show openly, we must stay Christ centered.

2.The Father had given these disciples to the Son and He gave them out of the world.

Jesus Christ, although He was eternal God and perfect man, was a person who had a need. God provided Him with what He needed, the Word, the Spirit, and a few close friends.

Jesus Christ was a person who needed others, He developed and maintained relationships with others and He served others and was served by others.

APPLICATION: Just as the Father gave the Son a few close friends to help Him, encourage Him, comfort Him, the Father will also provide for us those relationships which will greatly add to and aid our Spiritual Life.

We see here that the Lord Jesus appreciated the ones the Father had given to Him.

NOTICE how He repeats this appreciation: The men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me.

3.Thirdly, in v 6, we see what the disciples did. This is like their report card. Jesus Christ is giving a report to the Father on the disciples.

And they have kept Thy Word.

In spite of the many failings of the disciples, Jesus cuts to the bottom line and unhesitatingly states that they have kept the Word of the Father.

The word KEPT is a verb and it is perfect tense. Now that doesn't mean that they kept the Word perfectly, no man does that. It does mean that somewhere in the past they made a decision, each one individually, that the Word was it. And that the Word would be their rule and their guide for faith and practice.

Have we made that decision? Have said in our souls that the Word is it, it is God's Word and it will be my rule for faith and practice in Life?

The word KEPT which is used four times in Jesus prayer for His disciples, means to guard, to keep an eye on, and can also mean to keep in store.

We keep an eye on the Word. We guard the Word in our souls, and we keep it in store so that when opportunity comes, we have God's Word to apply to life.

v 7Jesus continues the report card: Now they have come to know that everything Thou hast given Me is from Thee.

NOW is an adverb indicating that this is now the disciples understanding.

HAVE COME TO KNOW is also perfect tense.

And what they now know is that everything the Son has, has come from the Father.

In His Report Card Jesus has indicated two things.

1.The disciples now understand what the Word of God is.

2.They now understand Who Jesus Christ is.

The report card indicated they have made the grade. And that same scoring system is applied to every believer.

1.Do we pass the test of the Word?

2.Do we know that Jesus is God and all He had and did was from the Father?

NOW v 8 implies that the disciples came to understand that the Son was dependent upon the Father, that He did nothing out of His own initiative, that trusted in and relied upon the will and Word of the Father.

IN THIS, JESUS BACAME AN EXAMPLE AND A PRECEEDENT for them and that is really what is being stated here.

And that is what we must come to understand also. Jesus Christ in His incarnation, in His earth walk, was our precedent. That is why nearly half the New Testament deals with His incarnation (89 chapters in the Gospels and 87 chapters in Paul's epistles).

Do we know that Jesus is our example and precedent? Have we made the grade in that test?

v 8For the words which Thou gavest Me I have given to them; and they received them, and truly understood that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me.

Jesus restates His relationship to the disciples, their relationship to Him and to the Father.

In this verse Jesus summarizes His rational for His upcoming request.

1.The disciples received the words of Jesus: This is in contrast to others of their day who rejected what Jesus taught.

The verb RECEIVED has no stated object indicating that these men BELIEVED and thus RECEIVED.

Their willingness to be taught, their objectivity is what is commended.

2.Secondly, they understood the significance of His word: They understood that what was spoken by Jesus was not mere opinion but was from God.

3.They believed those words: They had open minds, true understanding, and genuine faith.

To BELIEVE means to be willing to put what is learned into practice, to trust it, depend upon it.

SUMMARY OF HIS RATIONAL.

Jesus will next request of the Father on behalf of the disciples. His request is based upon His relationship with them.

If the Father were to ask Why should I do this for them? The Son of God, their Savior, our Savior would respond by saying that they had believed, trusted, understood, and had been faithful to the Word and to Him as the Son of God.

John 17:9-19THE REQUEST.

Jesus begins by limiting His request and then becomes very specific in His request.

v 9-10The Request Limited.

I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine; and all things that are Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I have been glorified in them.

Jesus limits His request to His disciples. He does not pray for the World. He does not pray for the unbeliever. He prays His high priestly prayer for those who have believed in Him as their Savior.

The pronoun "I" is both emphatic in form and in position in this sentence. The Lord does this, this way because the one praying a

prayer is every bit if not more important than the prayer that is prayed.

Remember in the previous chapter Jesus told His disciples that they had access to the Father not because of what they would say or some special formula they would follow, but because of who they were and because the Father loved them.

John 16:26-27 In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request the Father on your behalf; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father.

Jesus does not pray for the World but for the ones who will turn the world upside down. The ones through whom the world will be reached with the saving message of Christ.

HERE IS AN APPLICATION FOR US: If we are praying for the salvation of an unbeliever friend or relative, we should pray for those believers who are around this unbeliever. Pray for them that when opportunity comes, they will be ready to give an answer of the hope that is within them.

When Jesus says Thine are Mine He makes a statement that can only be said by Him. Any of can say Mine are Thine, but to turn it around makes it unique. Only the Lord, who is truly God and perfect man can say that all that God has belongs to Him.

The people of Jesus day would have seen nothing eminent about the disciples. But Jesus Christ made them eminently eminent and states this by saying.

... and I have been glorified in them.

v 11-19 The Specific Request.

Three parts to the Request.

1. A positive statement for Protection
 2. A negative statement for Protection
 3. A request for the disciple's Sanctification
- Protection, Protection, Sanctification.

v 11-14 Jesus Requests protection for the Disciples.

v 11 And I am no more in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, the name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are.

v 12 While I was with them, I was keeping them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

v 13 But now I come to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy made full in themselves.

v 14 I have given them Thy word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

v 11 The need the disciples have, which they were perhaps very unaware of, rises out of the fact that Jesus will be leaving and going out of the world.

His job is to leave, to go to the Cross, to die for man's sins, and be seated in heaven at the right hand of the Father.

Their job is to stay. And they will need the protection of the Father.

v 12 Jesus protected them while He was with them. They were given to Him by the Father as previously stated and the Son ministered to them and honored this gift of the Father.

He guarded them - but then we have an exception.

Not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.

Jesus goes from the eleven disciples who were present back to the twelve, including Judas, here called the son of perdition.

PERDITION means RUIN or LOSS and normally looks at a state after death where salvation is never to be obtained. Here it is

used while Judas is still alive, but so hardened in his soul that salvation is unobtainable. No, Judas was never saved.

But NOTICE, even this tragic event fulfills the Scriptures.

Psalm 41:9 Even my close friend, in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me.

v 13-14 The Means of this Requested Protection.

Both verses call attention to the fact that Jesus has left the disciples with His Word.

Previously He has stated in the Farewell discourse that He would leave them with another Comforter, the Holy Spirit.

So with this the arsenal is now complete. The Spirit and the Word, the two sources of Power used by Jesus Christ in His incarnation will be given to the disciples and to all who believe in Christ in this Age.

Three prepositional phrases are used here (and a fourth one in v 18) to describe the relationship of the believer to the World.

1. First, the believer is in (EN) the world
2. Secondly, the believer was once of (EK) the world
3. Thirdly, they are not now of (EK again) the world
4. Fourthly, they are sent to (EIS) the world

In verses 13-14 we see two results of this.

1. The world has hated them: I recall speaking with a man once who spent a number of years in prison. I asked what was the toughest time. He said the last few weeks when the other prisoners knew he was getting out.

The world hates us because we were once of the world and now are set free in Christ.

Jesus is here praying regarding what He has already taught His disciples in the previous chapters.

2. But there is a second result and this result comes along with the Word of God - that they may have My joy made full in themselves.

The repeated and resounding theme of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who was preparing to suffer, to die, to taste death for every man, speaks of JOY.

And now prays that Believers will have His joy complete, made full in them.

v 15-16 Protection requested with a negative statement.

I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

The Bible records a number of times great men of God prayed that God would take them home - Moses did in Numbers 11:15, Elijah did in I Kings 19:4, and so did Jonah in Jonah 4:3 and 8.

But in not even a single cause was the request granted. God's timing is perfect concerning our life and concerning our death. That is why all the people who support the death with dignity idea are wrong. Who says you cannot have dignity even in the midst of pain and suffering. One of the greatest believers I ever had the opportunity to meet was June Roberts who died a long and horribly crippling death from Lupus and yet was a beacon of light and joy to all who were around her.

No, the request is not to take them out of the World but to keep them from the Evil One.

This is Satan's world and once we are saved he sees us as trespassers. He hates us, despises us, and yet we have the Father protecting us.

We need never fear Satan when we are walking with the Lord.

v 17-19 In this final request for His disciples, Jesus prays that they be set apart or sanctified.

Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth. As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

Do you see them? The two precedents of power we have observed over and over again? The same two things that Jesus commended His disciples for earlier in His prayer.

Thy Word is Truth - And I sanctified Myself for their sakes.

HOW DID THE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST DO THIS? By the same two sources of power that are now available to us. The power of the Word and the power of the Holy Spirit.

And our Lord prays for His disciples that they will be set apart, in the world but not contaminated by the world.

His prayer assures this of the process and the potential, what is left? Our decision to use what the Lord prayed for that night in the garden. To be set apart not by actions, by dress, by what we do but by what we think - the very truth of God and that Truth is in Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:21 If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, The following experience illustrates a The closer we are to Christ the less concern we will have with the problems of this world: A pilot said that as he was flying his small plane one day, he heard a noise which he recognized as the gnawing of a rat. Wondering what its sharp teeth were cutting through, he suddenly realized with horror that it might be an electric wire. Then he remembered that rodents can't survive at high altitudes. Immediately he began climbing until finally he had to put on his oxygen mask. Soon the gnawing sound ceased, and when he landed he found the rat dead.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER 17, VERSE 20 (vv 20-26).

We have heard our Lord pray that His Father be glorified in what He was about to do in going to the Cross.

We overheard as did the disciples that night in the garden the Lord pray for them that they may be kept from the evil one, that being in the world they would not be of the world.

Now at verse 20 the Lord Jesus Christ prays for you and for me.

This portion of the Lord's prayer can be divided into four parts.

1.v 20 Jesus' prediction of the future body

2.v 21 Jesus' purpose for the future body

3.v 22-23 Jesus' provision for the future body

4.v 24-26 Jesus' petition for the future body

v 20I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word.

The request Jesus refers to is found in v 17

Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.

That is at the heart of His prayer. That believers are set apart from the world and set a part unto God by the truth, the very Word of God.

As He prayed that for His disciples He now prays it for us.

TO THIS POINT the disciples have effectively taught no one. but that will soon change.

In the books of Acts we read of the hundreds who listened to the disciples message and believed in Christ as their savior.

Church history shows that from their message given to others who gave the message to others millions have come to put faith alone in Christ alone.

All the way down through history to that place and point in time when you believed.

Although He prays for those yet future, we are there, in the garden, with Him.

NOTICE ALSO how simply salvation is described.

EXPANDED: Those who believe through their word in Me.

The emphasis is on the Word, as it is throughout this prayer.

1. Faith, believing, is the means of salvation, v 20

2. The Word is the means of faith, v 20

3. Truth, the Word, is the means of growth, v 17

v 21 What purpose those who believe and are saved have?

That they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me.

This verse contains three purpose clauses which describe what we are to be about as Christians.

1. The first gives us a purpose towards one another: That they may all be one.

2. The second gives us a purpose towards God: That they may also be in Us.

3. The third purpose clause gives us a purpose towards the World: That the world may believe that Thou didst send Me.

When we consider these three statements as a whole we see that we, as believers, have a relationship with God, with one another, and with the World. In relationship there is purpose.

THE FIRST PURPOSE RELATES US TO ONE ANOTHER.

We have already seen that Jesus gave us a new commandment in John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

In that verse and here in this prayer we see the unity that we are to have as potential.

But later, Paul describes our unity as a position we have at the moment of faith in Christ.

Romans 12:5 So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Ephesians 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling.

THE DISTINCTION IS MADE BY recognizing that unity is positional. We have a unity in Christ by way of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit which places in union with Him at the moment of salvation. We share all that He has and all that He will have - in Christ.

1) Crucified together with Christ (Gal. 2:20)
 2) Dead together with Christ (Col. 2:20)
 3) Buried together with Christ (Rom. 6:4)
 4) Made alive together with Christ (Eph. 2:5)
 5) Raised together with Christ (Col. 3:1)
 6) Sufferers together with Christ (Rom. 8:17)
 7) Glorified together with Christ (Rom. 8:17)

That unity with Christ is the possession of every believer by way of what we call positional truth.

BUT ANYTHING WE HAVE BY WAY OF POSITION also has to it a very practical side.

AND THAT IS WHY JESUS PRAYS THAT WE MAY ALL BE ONE.

Our unity of position is absolute. But our practical unity with one another is relative.

As a believer you will not have the same depth of unity with every believer but with every believer there is a practical unity.

1. Level One: You are fellow believers in Christ. Not much cooperation at this level but you can pray for them and love them (impersonally and unconditionally).

2. Level Two: You agree on the need for and the message of salvation. A lot cooperation at this level specifically in evangelistic efforts.

3.Level Three: You agree on major doctrines, dispensations, the inspiration of Scripture, the F/HS, the local church, on and on. Here is where you can begin to have a depth of fellowship.

4.Level Four: You agree on the applications of doctrines. The practical, functional, applications of truth. Here is where you have close Christian friends who truly enrich your life.

BUT NOTE: No believer is excluded. We all have a positional unity and to some degree, a practical unity. SO THE FIRST TWO PURPOSE CLAUSES look at the practical and positional unity we have with Christ and God the Father and with each other.

THE THIRD PURPOSE CLAUSE looks at our purpose in the World.

v 21b That the world may believe that Thou did send Me.

Our unity, our love for one another. Our position in Christ and our confidence in that position speaks volumes to the World about our Savior and Friend, Jesus Christ.

John 13:35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

We are living epistles and demonstrate to the World that the One in whom we place our faith is the one true Living God.

MORE OFTEN THAN NOT it what we do that draws a person to Christ rather than what we say. We are living testimonies of Christ.

II Corinthians 3:2 You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men.

v 22-23 Jesus' Provision for us.

And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me.

The glory that Jesus speaks of is the glory of God the Holy Spirit and the Glory of the truth of God, the eternal Word.

By these Jesus was obedient to the Father.

And by these two sources of power we can live in obedience to God not out of our own power, but in His power.

BUT HERE ALSO WE HAVE A PURPOSE: That they, that's you and me, may be one, just as the Father and the Son are one.

One in agreement, in mission, in purpose, in perspective, in viewpoint.

We have here also the mention of indwelling of Christ in every believer.

And the purpose for that indwelling, That they may be perfected in unity.

This reads in the Greek: That they may be having been perfected.

While that sounds clumsy in English, in the GNT it stresses that we are to progress to a point where we will be TELIOS, mature believers.

Paul said a very similar thing in Ephesians 4:13 as he describes the function of the local church: Until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

The greatest thing that we can do for the cause of Christ is to reach spiritual maturity.

The statement in John 17:23 also foresees a unity of mature believers.

Colossians 3:14 And beyond all these things put on [spiritual] love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

v 24-26 Jesus' Petition for us.

Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory, which

Thou hast given Me; for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world.

O righteous Father, although the world has not known Thee, yet I have known Thee; and these have known that Thou didst send Me;

And I have made Thy name known to them, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou didst love Me may be in them, and I in them.

Back in John 14 Jesus promised His disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them.

Here the same promise is made a part of this prayer and yet it moves from a place to a person.

We have a place prepared for us, but that is not as important as the very real fact that in that place there is a person waiting for us, and His name is Jesus.

And of all the glory of our Lord that we realize now, it is very little of the glory we will see in presence of our Savior in Heaven.

JESUS CONCLUDES THIS prayer will two promises. One promise is made to the Father.

I have made Thy name known to them, and will make it known;

And the second promise is made to us.

That the love wherewith Thou didst love Me may be in them, and I in them.

A promise spoken in the presence of the Father, Christ is in us and by His presence we can have in us His love.

There is nothing that we have apart from Christ and yet everything is ours with Him.

Chapter 18

Winston Churchill had the responsibility of the War plans for England during the second WW. Often asked about his plans he soon came to answer that one cannot make plans too far ahead, for the chain of destiny can only be handled one link at a time.

We are going to see two men who have a plan, but their plan got them out of the will of God. One subtle way we can get out God's will is to get ahead of God's plan.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER 18, VERSE 1 (vv 1-11).

Over the past few months we have studied the night before the Cross. The Farewell Discourse in which the Lord Himself sets the doctrinal groundwork for the Church. We have examined the Lord's Prayer as Jesus prayed that He would glorify God and then prayed for His disciples and for us.

This has been a busy night, and more is soon to occur. The intensity of this evening is demonstrated in the amount of space the Holy Spirit inspired the Gospel writers to devote to its record.

But as engaged as this evening was in Jerusalem, it was even more so in Heaven.

THE SUPREME COURT OF HEAVEN was in session. And before the bar of a thrice Holy God stood Satan. And Satan was going to call two men who had followed Jesus into the witness box and before the night was out one would acknowledge Jesus and one would deny Jesus. The irony of this is that the one who acknowledges Jesus is the unbeliever and the one who denies Him is not only a believer, He is also a friend.

Let's look at verse 1.

When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, into which He Himself entered, and His disciples.

John deals very briefly with this time in the garden when, according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the Lord was praying for strength to face the Cross - not His will but that the Father's will be done.

The disciples, who could have had the privilege of encouraging the Lord with prayer, were sleeping.

v 2 But John cuts to the bottom line: Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place; for Jesus had often met there with His disciples.

Back in John 13 we saw that Judas left the last supper and did so with a purpose - and that was to betray Christ for money.

Judas was indwelt by Satan and was motivated by his love for money.

Judas had been the keeper of the money bag among the disciples and had even complained about Mary of Bethany anointing Jesus feet with costly perfume. Furthermore, Judas pilfered funds from the money bag for himself.

John 12:6 Now Judas said this (complained about the perfume), not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.

So we begin to get a portrait of Judas' character or lack of it.

1. He was an unbeliever who was indwelt by Satan

2. He was a thief

3. He was one who, according to our passage, kept on (pres, act, participle) betraying Jesus.

But why? Was it merely for money?

We know that the love of money is the root of all evil and when Paul wrote those words to Timothy he probably had Judas in mind.

But was that it, was that all there was behind this most of all evil deeds?

I DON'T THINK SO.

I think that Judas was more motivated by his assumption that he was doing what needed to be done than being motivated by money.

Let me share with you something that perhaps only a few had considered. Judas went to the Jews and not the Romans.

1. When Judas agreed to betray Christ to the Jewish religious leaders he had no idea this betrayal would end in death.

2. If he wanted to see Jesus dead he would have been more sure of this and profited even more by going to the Romans.

3. By going to the Sanhedrin, the Jewish council, he was hoping for what we might call a show down.

4. He had been with Jesus for nearly three years. He heard the claims, he heard the response of the disciples to the questions Jesus asked Who do people say I am . . . Who do you say I am.

5. Judas wondered, could this be the Messiah? But his cynicism, his sin, his doubt kept him from faith.

6. What better way to settle this matter once and for all. Turn Jesus over to the Jewish leaders, let Him go into the courts of law, let Him convince them - and then maybe Judas would believe also.

7. But it did not turn out that way. Through plots and schemes and Roman involvement, Jesus ended up on a Cross.

Turn with me to Matthew 27:3-5

Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned by betraying innocent blood. But they said, What is that to us? See to that yourself! And he threw the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.

He felt remorse, he returned the silver, he admitted that he had sinned - but that is not salvation. It is only recognition of condemnation. And rather than believe that Jesus was the Christ, he hung himself.

What he thought was so right, ended up to be so wrong.

And here is where we see a little bit Judas in every one of us.

Whenever we get out ahead of the plan of God, whenever we begin to think we help God's plan along towards its fulfillment, we share the attitude of Judas.

And then we come to find out that what we thought was so right was really so very wrong.

I have often heard of the great things that some purpose to do for God. The great plans that say we know how God can do this or that and that God really needs our help. I have seen believers do this, churches do this, nations do this.

And all just to end up finding out that man's great plans are outside of the plan of God.

Listen to what some verses that talk about plans.

Psalm 37:23 The steps of a man are established by the Lord; And He delights in his way.

Jeremiah 10:23-24 I know, O Lord, that a man's way is not in himself; Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps. Correct me, O Lord, but with justice; Not with Thine anger.

Proverbs 16:9 The mind of man plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps.

WELL, THE GOOD NEWS is that even though we see this little bit of Judas in ourselves we do not have to go our and hang ourselves. We have the forgiveness of sins because of what Jesus did on the Cross.

But even in light of that: Let us let God order our steps. When we come up with a plan let's not let that plan take us out ahead of God's plan. Commit it to Him and then follow Him in His plan.

v 2Continued: We see that Judas knew where the Lord would be. Apparently it had been his habit to stop at he garden of Gethsemane on His way to Bethany.

It was important for the Jewish Temple guard to find Jesus in this garden. Bethany was outside of the jurisdiction of Temple Guard, the garden was not.

v 3Judas then, having received the {Roman} cohort, and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

You will see that word ROMAN is in brackets or italics indicating it is not found in the original text, and should not be there at all. This was a Jewish cohort comprised of Temple guards and officers of the Temple court.

A cohort is not a small group of men but could have numbered as many as 600 troops. Since the Jewish officials knew of Jesus popular support and they had no way of knowing how many were following Him, they took no chances.

v 4-6 The Confrontation.

Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth, and said to them, Whom do you seek? They answered Him, Jesus the Nazarene. He said to them, I AM. And Judas also who was betraying Him, was standing with them. When therefore He said to them, I AM, they drew back, and fell to the ground.

Jesus was aware of what was to happen: He knew the Scriptures and the Father had told Him what to expect.

KNOWING is a perfect participle indicating that this knowledge had a beginning point and divine knowledge has no beginning. So this is knowledge gained in His humanity.

It is perhaps a bit of sarcasm that Jesus responds to their inquiry by saying I AM.

Back in John 8:58 this was the very statement, which quotes from Exodus 3:14 and states that I AM THAT I AM, the self existing one, which caused the Jews to want to stone Jesus.

Now He states not once but twice, I AM.

In Luke 22 we are told that Judas identified Jesus to the guards by a kiss - a kiss of betrayal.

Here, perhaps after the kiss and in response to Jesus admitting He was Jesus the Nazarene, the Guards drew back and fell to the ground.

Their falling came because they were first surprised to find Jesus so easily and to have Him readily admit that He was the one they sought. They would also have been surprised to find Him alone, remember the disciples were sleeping. But also they fell back because of the boldness with which He stated I AM, indicating that He was deity. This whole situation caught the guards off guard.

v 7-8 Shows us that the guards had to be convinced.

Again therefore He asked them, Whom do you seek? And they said, Jesus the Nazarene. Jesus answered, I told you that I AM.

v 8b-9 But then we see Jesus, the good shepherd of the flock, who will lay down His life for mankind, protecting His disciples.

Let these go their way, that the word might be fulfilled which He spoke, Of those whom Thou hast given Me I lost not one.

This is not a request, this is an order. The Lord commands that the guards let the disciples go.

He uses the imperative form of AFIJMI which is a legal term indicating that no charges are made against another and that any assumed charges are to be set aside.

This amazes me: Here is Jesus, being arrested, heading towards the Cross, and He still is setting the safety and care of others above himself.

Seeing this can we then understand why Paul would later write: Do not look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:4-5).

As the good shepherd, Jesus protected His sheep.

We also are given a link to the previous chapter.

v 9 That the word might be fulfilled which He spoke, Of those whom Thou hast given Me I lost not one.

Jesus had prayed in John 17:12 about His guarding of His disciples and now He pursues His prayer by demanding that the guards let His disciples go.

v 10-11 While that demand was good enough for the captain of the guard, it wasn't good enough for Peter.

Simon Peter therefore having a sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus. Jesus therefore said to Peter, Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?

Where Peter got the sword we do not know. But we do see that he was not much of a swordsman.

He aimed for the head and cut off the ear.

In Luke 22:51 we are told that Jesus healed Malchus and the severed ear was restored.

BUT HERE WE SEE Peter doing a number of things wrong, things very similar to what we do today.

1. He was ignoring the Word of the Lord. Jesus had presented Himself to the guards and even spoke up to protect His disciples. But Peter took matters into his own hands.

2. Peter was depending on the Sword rather than depending upon the Lord.

What do we depend upon other than the Lord?

3. Peter did not understand God's will. So he got out ahead of the plan of God.

In v 11 Peter is rebuked, and asks Peter: The cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?

In many Peter, at this point is not doing much better than Judas. He is taking matters into his own hands. With Judas it was an evil betrayal of the Lord, with Peter it was an over zealous protecting of the Lord.

BOTH WERE WRONG - BOTH WERE OUT AHEAD OF THE PLAN OF GOD.

BUT WHAT WE WILL SEE NEXT is how courageous Peter quickly becomes a coward who denies that he ever even knew the Lord.

But that is for next week.

LET'S SUMMARIZE WHAT WE HAVE SEEN.

- 1.Satan put the pressure on Judas, he betrayed the Lord Jesus.
- 2.Satan put the pressure on Peter, he defended the Lord who did not need to be defended.
- 3.While we might see Peter's actions as noble and Judas' actions as cowardly, both were wrong.
- 4.Satan had not won one victory but two and another victory is just around the corner.
- 5.Both victories for Satan came because both Judas and Peter thought they had a better idea, a better plan.
- 6.But God is still in control, and all the evil of Judas and the misplaced zeal of Peter will not frustrate God's love and God's plan for the human race, for Christ to die for our sins.

A perfect has a perfect plan, let's work His plan, not ours. Next month, May 1994, we will have a Friday the 13th. That day is one of those days that arouses fears of the superstitious. Did you know that there's a special name for the uneasiness people feel on this date? It's triskaidekaphobia. This means fear of the number 13. Actually it is just one of many terms given to various kinds of anxiety. We're familiar with such words as

hydrophobia, claustrophobia, and acrophobia. And then there is phobophobia, the fear of one's own fears.

In our passage today we are going to PHOBOPHOBIC, his name is Peter. And we are going to see what we should not do and what we should do when we face our own fears.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER 18, VERSE 1 (vv 1-11).

Last week we looked at Judas and his plan to press the issue, to get others to prove once and for all whether or this Jesus whom he had followed was the promised Messiah.

In this we saw how human plan can get out ahead of the plan of God. Judas ended up playing right into Satan's hands. Satan had called Judas' name, put him in the witness box in the supreme court in heaven and Judas became a witness for Satan's defense.

But now Satan is going to call another name, this time a believer, and in two times of interrogation under pressure, this believer will fail.

REMEMBER THAT ON THAT NIGHT two men were called upon to testify of Christ. One recognized Him and another denied Him. The one who attested to His knowledge of Him was an unbeliever, Judas. The one who denied that He even knew Him was a believer, Peter.

But in this first part of the interrogation we see Peter standing firm with sword in hand defending the one who needed no defense.

In v 8-9 we see that Jesus demanded of the Jewish guard that they let His disciples go. Using the imperative form of a legal term He states strongly that there is no legal reason to hold them.

We can assume that the captain of the guard got the message. The demand made was good enough for this Jewish officer but in verses 10-11 we see that it was not good enough for Peter.

v 10-11 Peter's defense of the one who needed no defense.

Simon Peter therefore having a sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus. Jesus therefore said to Peter, Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?

Where Peter got the sword we do not know.

The verb HAVING A SWORD is a present, active, participle which would indicate that he had kept the sword with him for sometime. Perhaps since their entrance into Jerusalem earlier that week.

SWORD is MACARIA which refers to the short Roman sword that was easily concealed under a robe.

We do see that he was not much of a swordsman.

He aimed for the head and cut off the ear.

In Luke 22:51 we are told that Jesus healed Malchus and the severed ear was restored.

BUT HERE WE SEE Peter doing a number of things wrong, things very similar to what we do today.

1. He was ignoring the Word of the Lord. Jesus had presented Himself to the guards and even spoke up to protect His disciples. But Peter took matters into his own hands.

2. Peter was protecting one who needed no protection. The Lord would protect Peter, not the other way around.

3. Peter was depending on the Sword rather than depending upon the Lord.

What do we depend upon other than the Lord?

4. Peter did not understand God's will. So he got out ahead of the plan of God.

QUESTION: Why did Peter react this way?

1. Peter's actions in defending Jesus may appear to be noble but they are not.

2. Peter was reacting out of fear, but not fear of Jewish guards but fear of self.

3. This fear of himself began earlier that evening in the upper room when he boasted of his allegiance to Christ.

John 13:36-38 Simon Peter said to Him, Lord, where are You going? Jesus answered, Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you shall follow later. Peter said to Him, Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You. Jesus answered, Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a cock shall not crow, until you deny Me three times.

4. The Lord's response to Peter's boast was designed to get Peter to depend upon Him rather than his own boasting of human strength.

This was a tough thing for Peter to hear. Especially in the presence of the other disciples who looked to Peter as a leader. But it was necessary to bring Peter to a point of weakness, for without our recognition of our weakness we will never depend upon the strength of the Lord.

Have you noticed we heard nothing from Peter for the rest of the evening.

5. The truth regarding his weakness put Peter into a position to make a decision. Either depend upon the Lord's strength, or try to overcome by his own strength.

6. Peter was afraid. He was afraid that what the Lord predicted would come true. So his fear was emotional and irrational and resulted in inappropriate actions designed to eliminate fear.

7. But such actions of human strength and human resolve cannot eliminate fear for the believer. Fear is only eliminated through dependence upon the Lord.

Psalm 46:1-2 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear.

BUT PETER HAD A SWORD and is going to defend the Lord Jesus. One Galilean fisherman who doesn't even know how to use a sword against nearly 600 trained and armed troops of the Temple guard.

Is this bravery? Is this courage? Or is it stupidity?

I think the latter.

But do we often follow in Peter's Path?

LET ME GIVE YOU SOME ILLUSTRATIONS: What kinds of things do we do when we recognize our weakness, our frailty, our failure?

1.The most common is to go to Church. A believers life is a mess and he or she decides that by going to church on a Sunday morning everything will be okay.

NOTE: There is nothing wrong with this if it is a beginning but too often it is approached as a panacea for failure.

2.Give money to the church or to missions. Here the believer thinks if he or she rubs the offering plate the right way with the right amount everything will be good. A lot of TV evangelists use this approach and it is not grace giving.

3.Self Discipline: The believer thinks they can become a better Christian by self discipline.

4.Self Denial: Believers in facing his weakness thinks that if they deny themselves certain pleasures or even certain things common to man that they will become super spiritual.

5.Ritual Religion: Trying to feel holy. Lighting candles, praying some set prayer, participating in some meaningless ritual behind which is no reality.

6.Witnessing: Feel like a failure, go out and witness. Now witnessing is great but it is part of Christian service not a problem solving application.

7.Becoming a defender of the Faith: Pitting yourself against the world or against forces of

darkness so as to prove you are strong and taking a stand for God.

These and many other things are used by believers in their feeble attempts to counter act their weaknesses.

BUT WHAT IS LEFT OUT? Dependence upon the Lord, His Word, the work of the Holy Spirit.

We see in these attempts to eliminate our own fear of our own weaknesses and failures our attempt to get to where we think God wants us to be. We try to meet God half way. But that is not the way God works with us - He meets us where we are.

We are living in the PRESENCE OF GOD and when we realize that we will become acutely aware of our weaknesses.

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And it was this same David, a king who could call the armies of Israel together for battle, who owned 10,000 swords and knew, unlike Peter, how to use them, who said in II Samuel 22:3 My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My savior, Thou dost save me from violence.

And what did Paul do when he came face to face with his weakness and failure? Well, he prayed in II Corinthians chapter 12 but the prayers went unanswered. And then he concluded: Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

And the greatest event that has ever occurred in heaven or earth was done because one man, the humanity of Christ, was weak and therefore dependent upon the Holy Spirit: II Corinthians 13:4 For indeed He was crucified

because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, yet we shall live with Him because of the power of God directed toward you.

What do we see in the weakness of David, of Paul, of our Lord Jesus Christ? One common bond.

In their weakness they became even more dependent upon God and in them and through them was manifest the very power of an omnipotent God.

David, Paul, our Lord Jesus Christ, came face to face with their weakness and did not go out and find a sword.

WHAT KIND OF SWORDS ARE WE CARRYING UNDER OUR cloaks today? What is we using to overcome the weakness we so often sense when we live in the presence of God?

AND WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN we try, with our own efforts and plans, to overcome our weaknesses and failures?

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5.Both victories for Satan came because both Judas and Peter thought they had a better idea, a better plan.

6.But God is still in control, and all the evil of Judas and the misplaced zeal of Peter will not frustrate God's love and God's plan for the human race, for Christ to die for our sins.

Our perfect God has a perfect plan, let's work His plan, not ours.

When we confront our fears, even our fears of our own failure, we must remember what our God said to Isaac, to Joshua, to David, to Isaiah, to Jeremiah - Fear not for I am with thee. Last week we looked at Judas and his plan to press the issue, to get others to prove once and for all whether or this Jesus whom he had followed was the promised Messiah.

In this we saw how human plan can get out ahead of the plan of God. Judas ended up playing right into Satan's hands. Satan had called Judas' name, put him in the witness box in the supreme court in heaven and Judas became a witness for Satan's defense.

But now Satan is going to call another name, this time a believer, and in two times of interrogation under pressure, this believer will fail.

REMEMBER THAT ON THAT NIGHT two men were called upon to testify of Christ. One recognized Him and another denied Him. The one who attested to His knowledge of Him was an unbeliever, Judas. The one who denied that He even knew Him was a believer, Peter.

But in this first part of the interrogation we see Peter standing firm with sword in hand defending the one who needed no defense.

In v 8-9 we see that Jesus demanded of the Jewish guard that they let His disciples go. Using the imperative form of a legal term He states strongly that there is no legal reason to hold them.

We can assume that the captain of the guard got the message. The demand made was good enough for this Jewish officer but in verses 10-11 we see that it was not good enough for Peter.

v 10-11 Peter's defense of the one who needed no defense.

Simon Peter therefore having a sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus. Jesus therefore said to Peter, Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?

Where Peter got the sword we do not know.

The verb HAVING A SWORD is a present, active, participle which would indicate that he had kept the sword with him for sometime. Perhaps since their entrance into Jerusalem earlier that week.

SWORD is MACARIA which refers to the short Roman sword that was easily concealed under a robe.

We do see that he was not much of a swordsman.

He aimed for the head and cut off the ear.

In Luke 22:51 we are told that Jesus healed Malchus and the severed ear was restored.

BUT HERE WE SEE Peter doing a number of things wrong, things very similar to what we do today.

1. He was ignoring the Word of the Lord. Jesus had presented Himself to the guards and even spoke up to protect His disciples. But Peter took matters into his own hands.

2. Peter was protecting one who needed no protection. The Lord would protect Peter, not the other way around.

3. Peter was depending on the Sword rather than depending upon the Lord.

What do we depend upon other than the Lord?

4. Peter did not understand God's will. So he got out ahead of the plan of God.

QUESTION: Why did Peter react this way?

1. Peter's actions in defending Jesus may appear to be noble but they are not.

2. Peter was reacting out of fear, but not fear of Jewish guards but fear of self.

3. This fear of himself began earlier that evening in the upper room when he boasted of his allegiance to Christ.

John 13:36-38 Simon Peter said to Him, Lord, where are You going? Jesus answered, Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you shall follow later. Peter said to Him, Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You. Jesus answered, Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a cock shall not crow, until you deny Me three times.

4. The Lord's response to Peter's boast was designed to get Peter to depend upon Him rather than his own boasting of human strength.

This was a tough thing for Peter to hear. Especially in the presence of the other disciples who looked to Peter as a leader. But it was necessary to bring Peter to a point of weakness, for without our recognition of our weakness we will never depend upon the strength of the Lord.

Have you noticed we heard nothing from Peter for the rest of the evening.

5. The truth regarding his weakness put Peter into a position to make a decision. Either

depend upon the Lord's strength, or try to overcome by his own strength.

6. Peter was afraid. He was afraid that what the Lord predicted would come true. So his fear was emotional and irrational and resulted in inappropriate actions designed to eliminate fear.

7. But such actions of human strength and human resolve cannot eliminate fear for the believer. Fear is only eliminated through dependence upon the Lord.

Psalm 46:1-2 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear.

BUT PETER HAD A SWORD and is going to defend the Lord Jesus. One Galilean fisherman who doesn't even know how to use a sword against nearly 600 trained and armed troops of the Temple guard.

Is this bravery? Is this courage? Or is it stupidity?

I think the later.

But do we often follow in Peter's Path?

LET ME GIVE YOU SOME ILLUSTRATIONS: What kinds of things do we do when we recognize our weakness, our frailty, our failure?

1. The most common is to go to Church. A believers life is a mess and he or she decides that by going to church on a Sunday morning everything will be okay.

NOTE: There is nothing wrong with this if it is a beginning but too often it is approached as a panacea for failure.

2. Give money to the church or to missions. Here the believer thinks if he or she rubs the offering plate the right way with the right amount everything will be good. A lot of TV evangelists use this approach and it is not grace giving.

3. Self Discipline: The believer thinks they can become a better Christian by self discipline.

4. Self Denial: Believers in facing his weakness thinks that if they deny themselves certain pleasures or even certain things common to man that they will become super spiritual.

5. Ritual Religion: Trying to feel holy. Lighting candles, praying some set prayer, participating in some meaningless ritual behind which is no reality.

6. Witnessing: Feel like a failure, go out and witness. Now witnessing is great but it is part of Christian service not a problem solving application.

7. Becoming a defender of the Faith: Pitting yourself against the world or against forces of darkness so as to prove you are strong and taking a stand for God.

These and many other things are used by believers in their feeble attempts to counter act their weaknesses.

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When we confront our fears, even our fears of our own failure, we must remember what our God said to Isaac, to Joshua, to David, to Isaiah, to Jeremiah - Fear not for I am with thee. We have all hear stories about people who are unjustly accused and end up spending time, sometimes years in prison for a crime they did not do. Eventually they are found innocent perhaps when someone else confesses to the crime. They are released, they have suffered an injustice. But that is not the great problem, the greater problem is when these or anyone who has been unjustly treated react to the injustice and end up

living lives based upon bitterness and resentment?

We are going to be looking at injustice today, a passage of Scripture that describes Jesus Christ suffering through a night of greater injustice than has ever been known upon the face of this earth.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER 18, VERSE 19 (vv 19-24).

Beginning at this verse and extending through to the middle of the next chapter, John examines the trials of Jesus Christ the night and the morning prior to the crucifixion.

There were seven trials.

1.Before Annas: The political boss of Jerusalem
2.Before Caiaphas: The High Priest
3.Before the Sanhedrin: The High Jewish Council
4.Before the Sanhedrin: Early morning (tried to make the proceeding of the night before legal)
5.Before Pilate: The Roman governor of Judaea
6.Before Herod Antipas: The Roman Ruler of Galilee
7.Before Pilate Again: The final trial

In the Gospel of John we have the following trials referred to.

1.Pre-trial hearing before Annas
5.First Trial before Pilate
7.Final Trial before Pilate

Each of these trials included a breakdown of legal procedure or and a verdict that was unjust.

But through these trials we will see that God is in control.

JOHN 18:19-24 Before Annas.

v 18The high priest therefore questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching.

We do not have to step too far away from our own legal system to see that this pre-trial interview is illegal.

Even in Israel, under Roman domination, a person had to be charged with a crime in order to be arrested.

There were no charges - but there was already a verdict. This man must die for the good of the nation.

Furthermore, who is Annas? He was High Priest, but not now. His son in law is the High Priest, but so what?

This interview is solely for the purpose of finding some charge that will stick so the pre determined sentence could be carried out.

Eight reasons this trial is illegal.

1.It was at night, trials in Israel were to be held during the day

2.Private pre-trial interrogations were illegal

3.Annas had no official or legal position

4.No defense attorney was present

5.No indictment had been made

6.A witness could not incriminate himself

7.There is violence in this so called court

8.It occurred on a holy day, forbidden under Jewish Law

BUT DO WE SEE JESUS' CRYING OUT against this injustice, NO. He puts the matter into the hands of the Father and is composed and relaxed and making every move and uttering each statement by faith.

In His humanity He see the horrors of what is happening to be just another part of the unfolding of the Father's perfect plan.

v 18Continued.

Notice what is asked: About his disciple: How many people follow you, how strong are they, do they pose a threat to us? Do any people of importance or power follow you?

These are the questions this man wants answered.

He is not seeking truth, he is trying to cover himself and the other religious leaders.

Annas knows that what they are about to do is illegal, that it is evil, and he is trying to determine if they can get by with it.

Evil plans avoid public problems. And evil men will always check the polls to see if they can get by with their schemes.

The second area of interrogation regards Jesus' teaching or His doctrine.

The word teaching is DIDACJ and looks not only at the content of what is taught but its purpose. Doctrine has a purpose and Annas knew this and wanted to see what the intentions of this man were.

Annas wanted to find something that was conspiratorial in nature. Something that was said in secret that could be held against Jesus.

While it is not mentioned by John, Mark tells how the charge eventually became the crime of Temple Desecration.

In Mark 13:2 Jesus had said: Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another which will not be torn down.

He was report a fact of prophecy but it was to be used as a statement of sedition.

v 20 We see how Jesus answered Him: I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret.

Nothing to hid, nothing to keep secret. Jesus tells Annas that everything He has taught, His doctrine is a matter of public record.

He has done what any Rabbi, teacher, was permitted to and that was to teach the Jews in the synagogues and in the Temple or anywhere the Jews came together.

No Annas, there is no violation of the Law here.

v 21 Why do you question Me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them; behold, these know what I said.

The one who is being judged questions the judge.

This is a bit stronger in the Greek text than it is in the English, an interrogative is used with a present tense verb, why do [you] keep on questioning? Then the accusative pronoun is added where there was no nominative pronoun, why do [you] keep on questioning ME?

We might call this grammatical sarcasm. Jesus uses pronouns to refer to Himself, the ones who have heard His teaching, but no pronouns are used to refer to Annas. His presence is only found in the person and number of the verbs.

Then a command, imperative mood: Question those who have heard what I spoke to them.

The word SPOKE is LALEW rather than LEGO and that word puts emphasis on the process as well as the content.

Jesus is emphasizing that nothing was said that violated the Law not did it violate the Law in the manner or setting in which it was said.

Then we have this statement: Behold, these know what I spoke.

These few words are loaded with truth.

1. The word BEHOLD is an interjection that calls out to Annas to Listen up.

2. The word KNOW is OIDA, indicating that these who have heard have an accurate understanding of what was said and can be good witnesses.

3. Then we have the demonstrative pronoun THESE.

And that is interesting. Because a demonstrative pronoun as opposed to a personal or indefinite pronoun looks at a specific person or group of persons who are near at hand.

Now who is near at hand. Well, remember last week w noted that there were two disciples

who did not run away in the garden. Two disciples who were in the court yard while Jesus was in Annas' house. Peter we know for sure and maybe John.

We know that later, when the cock crows, that Jesus looks at Peter.

Maybe He looked at Peter and John at this point. Maybe He was referring to them, These who know accurately what I spoke - question them.

What a privilege it would have been for these disciples to stand and give testimony regarding the Lord Jesus Christ.

BUT THAT IS THE PRIVILEGE WE ALL have as we take His stand in the world in which we live - we give accurate testimony of Jesus Christ for we know with accuracy what He spoke.

IN MANY WAYS the invitation of Jesus to this unbeliever is an invitation that continues today - question the ones who follow me, see what they say.

v 22 And when He had said this, one of the officers standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying, Is that the way You answer the high priest?

This is the first physical violence directed towards the Lord Jesus Christ.

First of all, violence is not now nor was it then allowed in a courtroom.

Secondly, Annas had been a High Priest but he was now nothing, only a political bully.

The real High Priest was Jesus Christ Himself - but these evil men with their evil plot would not recognize Him.

This officer, perhaps assigned to Annas, was focusing on the way Jesus answered Annas.

JESUS FOCUSED ON THE TRUTH: And that is what we see Jesus doing in every instance, focusing upon the truth.

Simply, clearly, stating the truth.

v 23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?

Facts are what should be considered, not emotions. The soldier let his emotions prompt his action of striking the Lord Jesus.

But He spoke no wrong, He spoke the truth, He gave the facts.

Violence has no place in the legal system. Jesus was not yet even accused of a crime much less found guilty. Any punishment was premature especially violence that comes out of emotionalism.

Emotions have no place in court room. Justice must be blind and must weigh the evidence and seek the truth.

There is none of that during these trials and yet we see Jesus standing before His accusers who have no right to accuse and no right judge - and He gives them the truth.

AND THAT IS HOW WE SEE THE humanity of Jesus Christ deal with injustice. He doesn't shout and scream for His rights. He doesn't threaten to sue. He doesn't appeal to the masses for pity. He does none of the things we so often resort to when we think we are being treated unfairly.

His only appeal is to the truth and His trust is in God

1. There is no injustice in life that cannot be better dealt with by God than with us.

2. Jesus Christ was perfect in His humanity yet He was the object of injustice. We must not be surprised when we face injustice.

We will all face the tests of injustice if we are growing in Christ.

Philippians 1:29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.

Immaturity reacts to injustice by blaming God, yet we live in a fallen World that is under

a curse and with fallen men and injustice is a reality.

3. Arrogance, ignorance, abuse of power all combine to use violence to gain more power. Power does not corrupt but abuse of power always results in corruption and injustice.

4. In reacting to injustice we risk rejecting authority because authority proved to be unjust. But no authority other than God is perfect.

5. When we react to injustice we are hurt by the injustice and then again hurt by becoming the victim of injustice. We react, become bitter, carry bitterness, resentment, anger, fear, implacability with us through life.

When this happens we let the injustices of the past break through the doctrine we have in our souls and we lose out on the Joy we are to have in Christ.

6. Jesus Christ never reacted to injustice. He used the power of the Word, the power of the Spirit and focused on the Father. Even in the during the most unjust night in the history of the human race He had a Joy going on before Him.

Hebrews 12:2 Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

7. We must never think that the injustices of this life are greater than the plan of God, the provisions of God, the grace of God and His love for us.

God has provided problem solving application that we can use when we are the objects of injustice. We have a choice, use what God provides or pick up the heavy weights of bitterness and resentment.

Instead we can apply the problem solving applications God has provided.

1. We can Faith Rest knowing that the promises of God are greater than the injustices of life

2. We can be oriented to Grace knowing that God will always treat us in grace

3. We can apply our personal sense of destiny because we will have confidence in God's plan for us being greater than man's injustice

4. We can have an unconditional love even for the unjust.

Remember what Jesus said from the Cross: Father, forgive them.

5. We can have the Joy of Christ made real in us even in the most difficult circumstances

6. We can even use the injustices of this life to draw us closer in faith and friendship to our Savior.

Remember three principles.

You can not change anyone except yourself. Unjust people are out there, you will meet a few in life.

Any problem in life, even the injustices of man, has a biblical solution.

Any problem in life is designed to draw us closer to Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Friend.

James 5:13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray.

We may suffer as the object of injustice, but we have a God who loves us, a Savior who died for us, and a Holy Spirit who fills us. What more do we need? Alexander the Great was not satisfied, even when he had completely subdued the nations. He wept because there were no more worlds to conquer, and he died at an early age in a state of debauchery.

Hannibal, who filled three bushels with the gold rings taken from the knights he had slaughtered, committed suicide by swallowing poison. Few noted his passing, and he left this earth completely unmourned.

Julius Caesar, who dyed his garments in the blood of one million of his foes, conquered 800 cities, went on to be stabbed by his best friends at the scene of his greatest triumph.

Napoleon, the feared conqueror, after being the scourge of Europe, spent his last years in banishment.

We see from history that there is a bleak end to all who grasp for power apart from the power of God.

This morning we will see two powerful men come face to face, Pontus Pilate and the Lord Jesus Christ.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER EIGHTEEN, VERSE 28 (vv 28-38).

John deals only with a few of the trials of Jesus Christ.

There were seven trials of Jesus Christ.

1. Before Annas: The political boss of Jerusalem
2. Before Caiaphas: The High Priest
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In John 18 and 19 we have the following trials.

1. Pre-trial hearing before Annas: John 18:19-24
5. First Trial before Pilate: John 18:28-38
7. Final Trial before Pilate: John 18:38b-19:16

In John 18:28 through 38 we have the first trial before Pilate.

v 28 They led Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium in order that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.

We are not told here what happened when Jesus went before the Sanhedrin here is John.

For that you have to go back to your notes on the Gospel of Mark.

But we do need to mention that things did not go well for the Jesus of for the Jewish leaders. They wanted to get Jesus on a charge of Temple Desecration which was a criminal act both according to Jewish and Roman Law.

But the testimony of the witnesses failed to convict Jesus of threatened Temple desecration and the best they could come up with was the charge of blasphemy which is not a capital offence.

So they haul Him off to the Pilate, the Roman Governor of Judea who had the power to charge Him, convict Him, and crucify Him.

NOTICE THE HYPOCRACY: The Jews are trying to find some trumped up charge in order to execute Jesus and yet they will not enter the Praetorium, or residence of the Roman governor. They did not want to defile themselves by contact with a Gentile.

If defiled they could not eat the Passover feast.

Yet they were trying to kill the One who was the Passover lamb, Jesus Christ. They were concerned with ritual cleanliness while plotting murder.

Religion is hypocritical. Religion is more concerned with form than reality, with symbolism rather than substance.

v 29 Because the Jews would go no further than the courtyard, Pilate came to them and began an informal inquiry.

Pilate therefore went out to them, and said, What accusation do you bring against this Man?

WHO IS PONTIUS PILATE?

1. Pilate, whose name is Latin for one skilled with a javelin, was the Roman counsel for Judea and Samarian for ten years, from AD 26 to AD 36.

He was the fifth Roman counsel in this region and the name Pontius mans fifth and may be more of a title than a name.

2.He was born into the Roman middle class, the Equestrians, and apparently inherited some money that allowed him to qualify for his diplomatic position.

3.Little is known of him prior to coming to Jerusalem but much of his activities there and his subsequent career is recorded by Josephus, Philo of Alexandria, and later Eusebius.

4.The region which he controlled for Rome was considered the most difficult of postings, the combination religious and political differences between the Romans and the Jews made this a volatile region of the Roman Empire.

Under a previous counsel, Roman troop marched into Jerusalem carrying the standard of the Emperor which the Jews saw as idolatrous. The riot that followed resulted in a rule that no Roman emblems were to be worn or displayed in Jerusalem.

5.When Pilate governed Judea and Samaria he was a comparatively young man. Historians of the time gage him to be in his late twenties or early thirties.

6.Eusebius recorded that after Judea, Pilate was reduced in position and served in Gaul (France) where he committed suicide.

The Coptic Church saw that as a result of becoming a Christian and they celebrate June 25th as a day to honor Pilate as a Saint.

Many records do indicate that his wife became a Christian following the crucifixion.

v 29Continued.

Pilate is well aware of what is going on. He had information regarding the Triumphal Entry. He knew the jealousy of the Jewish leaders.

He also knew they hated him almost as much as he hated them.

So his question regarding the charges against Jesus was asked to bait the Jewish leaders.

v 30Notice the evasive answer of the Jewish leadership.

They answered and said to him, If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.

That's a good one isn't it. We brought Him to you so He must be guilty of something.

v 31Pilate was not going to fall for this and be the tool of the Jewish leaders so he at first refuses to hear the case.

Pilate therefore said to them, Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law. The Jews said to him, We are not permitted to put anyone to death.

At this time the Sanhedrin could condemn a person but only the Romans could execute. This would later change after the death of Christ as the Sanhedrin gained in power.

Also, two years after the crucifixion Pilate was relieved of duty and another governor came in who apparently turned a blind eye to the activities of the Sanhedrin.

v 32John steps away from the narrative long enough to remind us that God was in control of this moment as with all the moments regarding the trials and crucifixion of Christ.

That the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die.

In all three of the synoptic Gospels Jesus stated.

Matthew 20:18-19 Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and will deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up.

The Jews would have stoned Him to death if they could but they could not. But even this

fulfills Old Testament prophecy. When a person is stoned to death, bones are broken.

Psalm 34:20 He keeps all his bones; Not one of them is broken.

John assures us by this verse that God is in control even as Jesus, Lord of lords, kings of Kings, the Son of God, is taken into house of Pilate to stand before the one who holds the authority of Life and Death in Jerusalem.

v 33 Pilate therefore entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus, and said to Him, Are You the King of the Jews?

Two men, two men of tremendous power, facing each other. One exercising a power of position, a power of self and the other, standing there in the power of God.

There is a great difference in the power held by Pilate and the power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pilate's power was a power that was achieved at any cost, that was so often abused. A power he had to struggle to keep and would eventually lose.

Jesus power, in His humanity, was a power that was dependant. That was not earned or deserved, that was given to Him as it is given to us by our heavenly Father.

Pilate could lose his power, as he did. The Lord Jesus could never lose the power given Him by God.

HOW DID PILATE GAIN POWER AND HOW DID HE USE POWER:

Remember the statement: Power tends to corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

That is very true of the power Pilate had. A power that was corrupt.

1. Shortly after Pilate took power in Judea, he ordered the Roman Emblem to again be displayed. The previous counsel had wisely taken it down. Pilate's order resulted in a demonstration by the Jews at which time

Pilate had the Roman troops kill a vast number of Jews. This resulted in a riot at which time Pilate gave in.

This incident reveals his poor judgment, stubbornness, and his weakness.

2. Then, Pilate took the Corban, the money given to the Temple treasury, and used it to build a 25 mile aqueduct because, it was reported, he did not like the taste of the water in Jerusalem.

3. Agrippa I said of Pilate and the Jews that the Jews.

exasperated Pilate to the greatest possible degree, as he feared they might go on an embassy to the Emperor, and might impeach him with respect to the particulars of his government--his corruptions, his acts of insolence, his habit of insulting people, his cruelty, and his continual murder of people untried and uncondemned, and his never ending most grievous inhumanity.

Real nice guy.

4. In his decisions regarding Jesus, we see his weakness, his fear, how unstable the power this very powerful man really was.

Mark 15:15 And wishing to satisfy the multitude, Pilate released Barabbas for them, and after having Jesus scourged, he delivered Him to be crucified.

In Mark 15:19-20 the soldiers, Pilate's soldiers, beat the Lord Jesus whereas one word from Pilate would have ended this unjust and uncalled for humiliation. They beat him after he was condemned to die. Which was also contrary to Roman customs.

In John 19:12-13 we see how Pilate feared the people: As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar - When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat.

And in Matthew 27:24 Pilate tried to disclaim any responsibility in the matter: And when Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the multitude, saying, I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves.

5. For all of his power, Pilate was a man who lived with anger and fear, who was cynical and skeptical, a Roman who really lacked the Roman virtues of honor, justice, and integrity.

The Romans had a saying about their law: *Fiat iustitiam ruat caelum* -- Let justice be done though the heavens fall.

Nothing was to come before justice in the Roman mind, but Pilate was thinking for himself, trying to secure the power he had, and giving in to the pressure of the people.

6. Pilate knew Jesus was innocent and sought to release him but only if it would have no adverse effect on him. And when that was not to be he sentenced the Son of God to die.

7. Pilate's desire and demand for power finally caught up with him when a large number of Samaritans gathered at Mt. Gerizim to search for the hidden golden objects of the Tabernacle. Some were armed and Pilate saw this as a threat and had his troops massacre many people.

A formal complaint of this incident was registered with Rome and Pilate was removed from office in disgrace.

And is this weak, frightened, abuser of authority who stands before Jesus with sarcasm states: You are king of the Jews?

Jesus had been beaten, spit upon, humiliated, and there he stood not looking much like a king.

I am sure Pilate looked a lot like a king. Fine robes and sitting in a royal house.

BUT WHO WAS THE KING -

v 34 Jesus was not about to deal in generalities nor is mass opinion. Jesus always,

then and now, deals with the individual. So he asks.

Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?

Is this the popular opinion or is it you asking a question.

v 35 Pilate avoids the question, it could get too personal.

Pilate answered, I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You up to me; what have You done?

Pilate's reaction is just like the reaction many have today when Jesus gets too close - I am not a Christian, I don't go to church, I am not religious - why ask me these questions?

And then Pilate reminds Jesus that it was His own people, His own nation and its leaders who delivered Him to Pilate to be killed.

Even at the beginning of John's Gospel the solemn statement is made That Jesus came to His own and His own received Him not - and now His own have delivered Him up to die.

v 36 Here is the closest thing we have to a defense offered by Jesus during His trials.

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.

Jesus came to offer the kingdom and Himself as King to Israel but Israel rejected and now the shift has been made to the eventual establishment of the Church, the body of Christ.

So His kingdom is not Israel, although He is king of the Jews, His kingdom is a heavenly kingdom.

He assures Pilate that there is not cause to fear a civil insurrection led by Jesus and His followers.

Jesus' kingdom will come but not by armed revolution, but by submission to God and the

new birth that transfers the believing sinner from Satan's kingdom to God's kingdom.

No Pilate, this one who stands before you is a king but you need not fear a revolution.

v 37 Pilate hears the word KINGDOM and jumps on it.

Pilate therefore said to Him, So You are a king?

There was never any denial of this only an explanation which Pilate fails to understand.

Jesus answered, You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.

Jesus Christ came into the world, from heaven, to bear witness of the truth of God that had been set since before the World began.

The Word of God, spoken by the prophets, written down in the Old Testament, proclaimed by John the Baptist, all finds its fulfillment in a person, Jesus Christ.

And how do we tap into that eternal truth? We make a stand for truth and we hear His voice.

What validates our relationship to the truth? We hear Him.

NOW THIS WAS A PERFECT OPPORTUNITY for Pilate to listen, to hear Jesus Christ and learn what real truth is.

But he is not listening, so he fixates upon the word truth and becomes more impressed with his question than with personal enlightenment.

v 38 So he asks: What is truth?

The linking verb is present tense which may give us an indication as to the attitude behind the question.

What keeps on being truth?

And it is that attitude that has come down through the ages and is used as an excuse to avoid listening to Jesus Christ.

The critic and the cynic alike ask What is truth? More impressed with their depth of pseudo philosophy than with listening to Jesus Christ.

And just like Pilate, the world does not even wait for an answer.

Pilate and Jesus, standing face to face. One with the trappings of power, the other with true power. One is afraid, one is confident. One is filled with doubt at best and cynicism at worse, and there is Jesus the way, the truth, and the life.

And one walks away.

We all stand before Jesus, we can all ask the question, What is Truth. And the answer is given to us by the Apostle Paul.

Ephesians 4:21 If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus. Lord Avery of England is credited with saying: Blessed is he that expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.

Lord Chesterfield heard that and responded: Blessed in he who expects nothing, for he shall be gloriously surprised.

Expectation is a very interesting thing. We all have it, we have certain expectations. If those expectations are unrealistic or contradict the truth, there will be disappointment, and even disaster. But if right, according to God's truth, the expectations we have, will be fulfilled by Christ. And then our surprise is more than glorious, it is divine.

We are going to look at some people who have expectations, but they are wrong in what they are expecting.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN EIGHTEEN, VERSE 38 (vv 38-40).

We ended last week with Pilate pondering the possibilities of truth and yet not willing to hear the one who is the very truth of God.

John 18:38 Pilate said to Him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, I find no guilt in Him.

This was the first declaration of the innocents of Jesus Christ.

Now beginning with the last two verses of John, chapter 18 and continuing to the middle of John, chapter 19 we see the record of the final trial of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the second phase of the civil trial before Pilate.

In Luke chapter 23 we find that at the end of the first trial before Pilate, Pilate found out that Jesus was from Galilee. Pilate sees a way out of this mess. He is already in poor review with the Roman senate and he does not want to do anything that will create greater problems - so he sends Jesus off to Herod Antipas who happens to be in Jerusalem.

But in Luke 23:14-15 Pilate reports to the Jewish leaders the findings of Herod: You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Him before you, I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against Him. No, nor has Herod, for he sent Him back to us; and behold, nothing deserving death has been done by Him.

This is the second of what will eventually be eight declarations of the innocents of Jesus Christ. Seven trials, eight declarations of innocents, and still He was crucified. When justice goes forth it goes forth perverted.

v 39 Follows the trial before Herod: But you have a custom, that I should release someone for you at the Passover; do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews?

Having not been able to avoid a decision by sending Jesus to Herod, Pilate now tries to appeal to the crowd. By doing this he hoped to circumvent the Jewish leaders and get the mob to make the decision.

The story that begins at verse 40 is very well known. Every movie that has been made

about the death of Christ includes this episode. But too often the world's media depicts the event and over looks the reason God has revealed this to us.

In I Corinthians 2:10 tells us that God reveals His truth to us.

For to us God revealed them (that which we cannot know by human means of perception) through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

We must recognize that every word of Scripture, every letter, every story, is given to us that we might learn about who our heavenly Father is, who we are, what God has for us, and what we face and what mankind faces as He attempts to see and know God.

It is in that light that we examine this well known story of the people shouting for the release of a criminal and demanding the death of Jesus the Savior.

Our story has five player.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ: Who came to die on the Cross to give life and life more abundantly
2. Barabbas: A criminal, a zealot, who has taken life, a murderer
3. Pilate: Who is into the power game, seeking how he can manipulate this situation to his benefit
4. The Chief Priests: Who want to do away with this troublemaker, this Jesus who presents truth, grace, and love
5. And the people: The crowd, the mob, who not only shouts for freedom for a murderer but for the death of the Savior

When we read that this mob called for the release of a criminal over the Christ we are horrified. We wonder how this could have occurred? How could anyone, looking at the Savior, seeing before them the Son of God, chose a criminal, a murderer, to be released?

In order to understand what happened that morning we have to understand something about this Barabbas.

1.Barabbas was a leader of a group of Jewish revolutionaries called Zealots.

The Zealots fought against the Roman occupation of Israel. They were involved in insurrection, planning covert activities intended to drive the Romans out of Israel.

2.They were zealous in their resolve to eliminate, exterminate, and extricate the Romans. Hence, the name Zealots.

3.The Zealots used the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah crushing the enemies of Israel, as a biblical basis for their rebellion.

Isaiah 13:3 and 9 I have commanded My consecrated ones, I have even called My mighty warriors, My proudly exulting ones, To execute My anger - Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it.

Jeremiah 6:4-5 Prepare war against her; Arise, and let us attack at noon. Woe to us, for the day declines, For the shadows of the evening lengthen! Arise, and let us attack by night And destroy her palaces!

4.But while they had biblical prophecy that they applied to their insurrection, they were mis-applying the verses.

They failed to see that the Messiah would come first as the lamb of God before coming as the Lion.

That He would at the first advent crush the enemy of sin and then at the Second Advent crush the political and military enemies of Israel.

The Zealots were sincere, were enthusiastic, were dedicated, and yet, were very wrong in what they were doing.

5.Throughout the Gospels we see the people, and even the disciples, wanting Christ to be

the Messiah of the Second Advent and lead a rebellion against Roman occupation.

This was all wrapped up in the idea of a literal Kingdom and they wanted that Kingdom right now.

At the feeding of the Five Thousand the people thought they had a formidable force to march on Jerusalem and free it from the Romans. They wanted Jesus to lead them in rebellion. But He refused.

John 6:15 Jesus therefore perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.

Even the disciples sought the Kingdom that spelled freedom from Gentile occupation.

Acts 1:6 And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?

6.When Jesus refused to lead a military rebellion, the people rejected Him.

They had decided what the Messiah was to be like, they selected the Old Testament prophecies they wanted fulfilled by the coming King. When Jesus did not conform to their desires, they rejected Him.

In doing so they ignored the prophecies of the Lamb of God who would destroy the enemy of sin.

Isaiah 53:2-3 and verse 7 For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him - He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.

7. Barabbas was a revolutionary, he was what the people wanted, a military savior. But he was also a criminal, a murderer, a violent man.

John 18:40 Now Barabbas was a robber (Mark 15:7 states that he was also a murderer).

BUT HE WAS WHAT THE PEOPLE WANTED, HE fulfilled the expectations of the people, whereas Jesus did not. Barabbas was more of a Messiah, in the eyes of the people, than was Jesus.

So the people cried out for the release of the criminal they understood and rejected the Christ who they did not understand.

BARABBAS WAS MORE a Savior to the people, in their estimation, than was the Lord Jesus Christ.

SO WITH THAT BACKGROUND we perhaps at least can see the distorted reasoning behind the choice that they made.

AND THEN WE ADD TO THAT the influence of the Chief Priests who are working their evil scheme to get rid of Jesus.

Mark 15:11 But the chief priests stirred up the multitude to ask Pilate to release Barabbas for them instead.

SO WE HAVE THE WRONG EXPECTATIONS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE WRONG INFLUENCE OF THE PRIESTS

BOTH WORKING TOGETHER AND RESULTING IN THE RELEASE OF BARABBAS AND THE DEMAND FOR THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST

And that tells us why that happened then, but would the same thing happen today - and I want you to know that it would, and it happens everyday.

LET ME DRAW AN ANALOGY FOR YOU.

1. As the people were faced with a choice then, mankind is faced with a choice today.

The Christ or some other Savior, some religious leader or spiritual master who happens to be what they want?

2. Jesus was there to give life. Barabbas was one who had taken life. Jesus was there to save the crowd from the enemy of sin. Barabbas was there merely trying to save the people from the enemy of Rome.

3. The people were much like the world today. More concerned with what was seen than unseen. More concerned about what they wanted than what God wanted for them. More involved with their own limited expectations than the true, unlimited expectations of a God who loved them.

4. The Chief Priest with their hidden agenda represent then and now Satan. The Priests saw Jesus taking their control over the people away. They knew the Savior spoke the truth and that the truth would set the people free.

And they wanted to control the people just like Satan continues today to want to control mankind. He will work, he will influence mankind to choose the ones who take life rather than give life. To choose the one who was false over the one who is true.

Satan is wise, he is ever working his hidden agenda behind the scenes of history.

5. Pilate, who was an apparently powerful man, was being used by the religious leaders. In our analogy, Pilate would parallel religion. Controlled by Satan, influenced by man. Always trying to protect its power rather than serve God.

More concerned with doing what is expedient and expected than what is right, just, and fair.

Vacillating, giving in, going along with the crowd, ignoring the truth, and doing what is evil.

6. Mankind today is no different. If Christ and a popular criminal were put before the people, the people would choose the criminal.

All he would have to do is meet some of these preconceived expectations. To conform to their image of what a hero, what a Savior should be. They would reject the Christ.

And hundreds of thousands of people today are making that same wrong choice, they reject the true Savior and go for the religion and the religious leaders that fit what they want.

BUT IT DOESN'T JUST END WITH REJECTION
- Mark 15:12-15

And answering again, Pilate was saying to them, Then what shall I do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews? And they shouted back, Crucify Him! But Pilate was saying to them, Why, what evil has He done? But they shouted all the more, Crucify Him! And wishing to satisfy the multitude, Pilate released Barabbas for them, and after having Jesus scourged, he delivered Him to be crucified.

WHO IS THE VICTIM IN ALL THIS?

We might think it is Christ, the innocent Lamb of God, but His life is in the Father's care and the Father is in control.

Even Jesus had said earlier in Mark 14:49

But this has happened that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.

NO, THE VICTIM IS NOT JESUS, THE VICTIM
is the people.

Influenced by Satan, manipulated by religion, seeking what they think is right - they not only reject the Savior but ask, demand that He is destroyed.

YOU SEE REJECTION NEVER STOPS THERE, it quickly progresses to antagonism. As the heart is hardened, as scar tissue builds up, as reversionism becomes a part of the soul, hatred soon follows.

AND THAT IS WHERE THE WORLD IS TODAY, digressing into antagonism and hatred.

ACCEPTING THAT WHICH TAKES LIFE, THAT WHICH IS EVIL, OVER THE ONE WHO IS TRUE.

THIS MAY BE A VERY WELL KNOWN STORY of something that happened a long time ago that shakes our senses, but it is a story that has been happening over and over again, for 2,000 years, ever time mankind rejects the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

MOTIVATED by their own expectations of what should be.

INFLUENCED by the hidden agenda of Satan to control.

EMPOWERED by the evil leadership of religion.

MAN MAKES HIS CHOICE to reject the Savior

Chapter 19

INTRODUCTION.

Most of us know the children's story about the Emperor's new clothes. How the tailors convinced the king that they wove a thread that only the purest of heart could see. The Emperor could not see but would not admit his inability. When the day came for the Emperor to display his new clothes he walked through the streets in his underwear. It was only when a small child, pure in heart, exclaimed that the Emperor wore no robes that he had been tricked and deceived - that he had also deceived himself.

In a very similar way today the world is putting on robes of royalty and power that are not there. Too often even the believer, who is to be pure in heart by way of the grace of God that has cleansed us from our sins, puts on these robes that are not there. God sees us as being naked.

In Revelation 3:16-18 the Lord spoke to the Church of Laodicea and said.

You are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Because you say, I am rich, and have become wealthy, and

have need of nothing, and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed.

This morning we will see the false robe of royalty the world tried to put upon our Lord Jesus Christ.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN NINETEEN, VERSE 1 (vv 1-6)

JOHN 19:1-16 Pilate continues to try to save himself.

v 1 Pilate is still trying to get out of this mess. So he tries to satisfy the crowd by having Jesus whipped.

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged Him.

Roman flogging was done with a leather whip that had small pieces of rough metal imbedded in the leather. Such torture often killed its victims.

This punishment was used more often in the Roman Empire as a form of interrogation. It was not allowed to be done to a Roman citizen as death by crucifixion was pronounced on a citizen only if found guilty of incest or treason. Beheading (as in Paul's case) was for the citizen, crucifixion for all others.

When a non-citizen was whipped, the condemned man would be stripped of his clothing, his hands would be bound, and he would be tied to a column or pole with the back stretched tight. The initial blows would tear the flesh and subsequent blows would leave the back a mass of torn flesh and blood.

v 2-3 After this Jesus was lead from the courtyard into the Praetorium where the soldiers further humiliated Him.

And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and arrayed Him in a

purple robe; and they began to come up to Him, and say, Hail, King of the Jews! and to give Him blows in the face.

In Mark we are told that these soldiers comprised a auxiliary unit of a cohort which would have been about 200 men.

Here perhaps more than any place else in John's account we see the cruelty of man - this was not only uncalled for and unnecessary, but it served no purpose whatsoever.

Origen in his writings on Jesus of Nazareth sees this as a terrible breach of Roman military ethics. These soldiers, serving in this post, would have been provincial, probably Syrians. They were more bitter and hostile towards the Jews than even the Romans.

The whipping was done in public, but this was done behind closed doors and demonstrates a cruelty that solely for the purpose of venting of hostility, anger, and rage.

And Pilate, weak in the knees as he was, allowed it to happen.

When we include the other Gospel accounts we see that these soldiers did FIVE things.

1. Dressed Jesus in a purple robe
2. They put a crown of thorns on His head
3. They mocked Him and acclaimed Him as King of the Jews
4. They beat His head with a reed
5. They were spitting at Him

Much of what they did they did out of the evil, the anger, the darkness of their own souls. Senseless, without purpose or reason, just to taunt, to be mean.

BUT TWO OF THE FIVE have a significance that was unknown to the soldiers. A significance that looks back to the fall and curse upon man and a significance that looks ahead to what we have as Christians because of all that Christ endured that day.

I. THE CROWN OF THORNS.

1. The Crown of Thorns was not removed from Jesus when He went to the Cross. It was there as He suffered and died for our sins.

2. The thorns that inhabit the earth, are a direct result of the curse on fallen man.

Genesis 3:17-18 God said to Adam: Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you.

3. Every time you get a thorn in your finger you should be reminded that we live in a world that is under a curse.

4. As Paul talks about the work of Christ on the Cross and the very present power of the Lord's victory in Romans 8, he also talks about this fallen world.

Romans 8:20-22 For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

5. These soldiers took a piece of this fallen world and put it on Jesus' head. Jesus took a piece of this fallen world with Him on the Cross.

And it was on the Cross that Jesus Christ provided not only for our salvation from sin, but also the salvation of the fallen world.

6. So without even knowing it these soldiers in their mocking and humiliation of Christ, went back to the fall of man and gave to Jesus that which would proclaim a victory and a future redemption of fallen earth.

Revelation 22:3 And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him.

II. THE PURPLE ROBE.

CHRIST'S CLOTHING.

1. The Roman soldiers put a tattered purple robe on Christ and mocked him, beat him, shoved a crown of thorns on his head, and bowed down to him.

This tattered robe was an old faded robe of the Roman military. These robes were red but after wear and washing they faded and took on a faded purple appearance.

2. But before he went to the Cross they took that purple robe off him and put on his own tunic or garments.

Mark 15:20 And after they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, and put His garments on Him. And they led Him out to crucify Him.

3. He went to the Cross, the greatest test of His humanity, clothed in his own clothes.

By way of analogy, these are the clothes of power that he had from His Father. They were his and he used them to endure the Cross.

4. When he was striped and nailed to the Cross, the soldiers could not divide his clothes among themselves. They were not theirs to have. Cast lots for them.

John 19:24 The soldiers said therefore to one another, Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be; that the Scripture (Psalm 22:18) might be fulfilled, They divided My outer garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.

NOTE: This garment was not a robe but a tunic. Forget the movie The Robe.

5. After the Resurrection, he promised his disciples that they would be clothed with divine power, just as he was so clothed when he walked the way of the Cross.

Luke 24:49 I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be clothed with power from on high.

6. In Revelation 18:11-19 we are told that the world lusts after purple or scarlet robes of

human power. But on Christ they were a target of mockery.

Revelation 18:16 and 19 The Merchants were: Saying, Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls - And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!

But the believers have a different response:

Revelation 18:20 Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.

The world lusts after the tattered robes of human power. In the same way, if the world put on you these robes of human power, you look ridiculous. You will be mocked as Christ was mocked.

7. But if you put on you own clothing (cannot be someone else's clothing) that is from God, you can endure the greatest of tests with power from on high that is yours

Jesus Christ endured the greatest test of history, the Cross, wearing His own clothing, an inner reality that came from God.

8. And then, the Father called Christ to be seated at His right hand and clothed Him in an eternal royal robe.

Revelation 1:12-16 And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lamp stands; and in the middle of the lamp stands one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle. And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. And in His

right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

9. Colossians 3:10-14 describe the clothing Christ wore to the Cross: And this is the same clothing we can now put on.

And have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him --a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

AND WE CAN WEAR THE SAME CLOTHING HE WORE.

Prerequisites: Dependence upon the power of God, His Word and His Spirit.

DO NOT LET THE WORLD PUT ON YOU THE TATTERED FADED ROBES OF HUMAN POWER A few years ago at the Arkansas Youth Camp I had the pleasure of meeting a man who was serving with the US Air Force in search and rescue off the Florida Coast. I remember asking him about hurricanes. I wondered if it really was a calm in the eye of a hurricane as I had always heard. He told me the calm was amazing. After flying though the over 100 mile an hour twisting winds, you come into the center of the storm, and its calm. I exclaimed that it must be great. But Craig told me that it really wasn't so great. You see there was one problem. The only way out was to go back through the storm.

This morning we are going to see Jesus. As the darkest day of history dawns, He is in the eye of the storm.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER NINETEEN, VERSE 4 (vv 4-16).

On the morning of the crucifixion we see in Jerusalem a glimpse of what happens in the world as man approaches the Cross of Christ.

Perhaps the simplest term we can use for what is happening is chaos.

We have seen the people cry out for the release of a criminal while demanding the crucifixion of the One who came to save them from their sins.

Two weeks ago we saw the Syria soldiers who served with the Roman legion violated their own military code of ethics in humiliating and abusing Jesus Christ.

We see Pilate proclaiming the innocents of this man from Galilee while at the same time ordering the beating that brought Jesus to the very brink of physical death.

And we see the leaders of Israel demanding that the Romans crucify the Lord of lords and the King of kings.

BUT WE SEE SOMONE ELSE IN THE MIDST OF ALL THS CHAOS - we see Jesus.

v 5The words of Pilate clearly point to the one we should examine: And Pilate said to them, Behold, the Man!

It is interesting that we have so many of the things that Pilate said regarding Jesus come to us today as popular and important sayings.

He was the one who asked What is Truth? Here he presents Jesus as the Man, Behold the Man. Later in our chapter he presents Jesus again by saying Behold your King. And in a dispute with the Jews regarding the inscription of the sign on Jesus' cross he says, what I have written I have written.

And here in our passage he unknowingly reminds us of the humanity of Christ - Behold the Man.

As we look at the events of this morning that preceded the Cross we must remember that

in the midst of th chaos we see Jesus, the Man in His humanity, and in the midst of panic we see a picture of peace.

v 6Consider the panic of the priests: When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify, crucify! Pilate said to them, Take Him yourselves, and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him.

The priests, who already decided that Jesus must die but failed to come up with a legal or even reasonable excuse to kill him, panicked upon seeing Jesus coming out of the Praetorium. They were afraid Pilate was going to let Him go.

And it is possible that Pilate may have done just that. He had found no guilt in Him, neither had Herod so Pilate's decision would not offend Rome, so why not, let him go.

But the priests and officers of the Temple would have none of that so they begin the chant - crucify, crucify, crucify

Pilate, still trying to save his own hide, tries to pass the buck: Take him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him.

Perhaps Pilate had learned enough about the Jews to know that they would never use crucifixion as a form of capital punishment.

By saying, take him yourself and crucify him, Pilate may have thought that he would get out of this jam and Jesus would live, and all would be well.

If Pilate had just said, go and kill him yourselves, the Jews may have done this, they may have stoned Jesus to death.

v 7But the religious crowd does not want to get their hands dirty.

The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God.

The Jewish leaders have abandoned their general accusation of blasphemy which would not have carried much weigh with Pilate in

favor of the specific charge. That this Jesus claims to be the Son of God.

They want Pilate, the Roman authority, to follow their Law.

Whenever I have read this passage I am reminded of how often Christians want government to carry out their laws.

We decide people should not buy or sell on Sundays so we force the government to pass blue laws. We decide that something is evil, that something is sin, and it may well be, but we then want some humanistic, secular government to come along and do our work.

But here we have people in panic and people in fear and they play against each other. And the results will be disastrous.

REMEMBER WHERE THESE JEWS are coming from: They already decided that Jesus should die because it is better for one person to take the rap, to be the scapegoat, to be the excuse for all the problems of Israel.

But now their well laid plan is coming unraveled. And watch out when the evil plans of evil men go wrong.

They will degenerate even more and more as their plan appears to fall a part.

v 8 Now we turn to Pilate: When Pilate therefore heard this statement, he was the more afraid.

The word STATEMENT is the singular noun LOGOS, he heard the WORD and was afraid.

The Jewish leaders, while making an accusation against Jesus, spoke a word that is true, Jesus is the Son of God.

The WORD when heard summons man to one of two responses, either faith or fear.

Pilate is afraid: And the adverb indicates that he is more afraid than he had been.

He had been afraid of the Jewish leaders, or any more complaint they may lodge against him in Rome.

But now he fears not Roman but an even higher power, GOD.

Greek and Roman myths taught that the gods could cohabit with man and the offspring would be children of the gods. These god like beings could visit men and for man to offend one of them would invoke the wrath of the pantheon.

v 9 It is in light of that fear that Pilate asks the question of v 9.

And he entered into the Praetorium again, and said to Jesus, Where are You from? But Jesus gave him no answer.

Remember that he knew Jesus was from Galilee. He had already tried to turn the case over to Herod, ruler of Galilee.

So this questions is not asked of earthly origin but of possible divine or heavenly origin - Where are you from?

But we see that Jesus did not give an answer.

Back in John 18:36 Jesus, in the previous interview-trial, told Pilate that His Kingdom was not of this world. He had given him truth but while Pilate speculated on What is Truth, he did not seek the Truth.

Again he questions, but he already had the answers.

So Jesus, the Son of God, is silent.

WHEN IS GOD SILENT IN OUR LIVES? When we have the answers, when we need to rely upon the truth that has been spoken and allow the Holy Spirit to bring the Truth to our minds and then rest in what God has said.

KNOWING THAT HE HAS SPOKEN and we have His Word, and we need not be afraid.

When we face fear and pray to God for answers and receive silence, we can know, with confidence that our God who loves us and our God who is good has given us all we need for life and godliness.

We can have faith rather than fear

v 10 Pilate tries to pull rank. He tries to use his authority to get Jesus to talk.

Pilate therefore said to Him, You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?

The pronoun ME is first in word order. The emphasis is upon himself and his position. He threatens Jesus to speak.

HOW OFTEN DO WE APPROACH GOD IN THAT SAME MANNER?

Putting the emphasis upon self, putting ourselves first, telling God in some subtle way that we really deserve an answer because of who we are and the authority of the position we have or the service we have done?

BUT THE EMPHASIS IN THIS is on self, whereas our emphasis in life must be upon glorifying God knowing that even when He is silent it is the very best thing for us.

v 11 I consider this verse to be an opportunity for Pilate to repent. To change his mind regarding his authority and position and to humble himself under the sovereign hand of God.

Jesus answered, You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me up to you has the greater sin.

Pilate had tremendous authority over Jerusalem, but here he is called to reason, his authority is given to him by God.

The word used for AUTHORITY is one that means DELEGATED AUTHORITY.

Pilate used it in verse 10 and now Jesus uses it in v 11.

Pilate recognized his authority as being given to him but he did not recognize the right source. He saw the source as Rome, but Jesus tells him the source is above, it is God.

Whatever position of power, authority, privilege, we might have or aspire to, we must recognize that all that we have is from God.

In this statement Jesus also reminds Pilate of a way out.

He who delivered me up to you has the greater sin.

The reference is to Caiaphas or perhaps his father-in-law, Annas. They are one who have conspired with the Jewish leaders to kill Jesus.

Their sin is GREATER. And Pilate, you do not need to fall into lock step with them.

ARE SOME SINS GREATER THAN OTHERS?

1. In the estimation of God, sin is sin and all sins have been paid for at the Cross.

2. However, some sins are personal, effecting only the one who sins while other sins effect others.

3. The greater sins are the ones who hurt others. And the greater still are the ones who hurt the innocent.

4. The relativity of sins is seen in the effects they have upon the one who sins and the hurt they cause to others.

By telling Pilate that others sins are greater, Jesus is giving Pilate an opportunity to stop all that is going on that morning in Jerusalem.

And in verse 12 we see that he tries to do just that.

v 12 As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him.

But the Jewish leaders have one ace left up their sleeves.

But the Jews cried out, saying, If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar.

One person Pilate feared more than God was Caesar. The term FRIEND OF CAESAR is used

technically to denote a person who was part of the inner circle of power and influence.

Pilate has already raised the wrath of the Roman Senate, and he certainly did not want to get on the wrong side of Caesar.

The Emperor Tiberius was known as one who would grant great favors to those he counted as his friends, Pilate wanted that position more than he wanted justice and to do what was right.

v 13 Pilate is now going to try one last effort. Remember, Pilate does what he does because of fear, he is weak and he wants a way out. He rightly is afraid that whatever he does is going to make someone angry.

When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.

How many times in these passages do we see Pilate going out and then coming in, and then going out again? These are the actions of a man who is afraid and unsure.

v 14 He presents Jesus to the Jews again: But now it is Behold your King.

Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour (6:00 am). And he said to the Jews, Behold, your King!

v 15 The response of the Jews seals their fate as the ones who rejected the promised Messiah.

They therefore cried out, Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him! Pilate said to them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

At this point the theocracy of Israel was terminated. The people had expressed by their actions that Jesus did not measure up to the Messiah, the deliverer, the promised King they wanted but now.

THEY NOT ONLY REJECT GOD'S PROVISION BUT chose Caesar over God.

We have no king but Caesar!!

The history of Israel is checkered with wars that were fought to reject the very concept these people now accept. Other gods were worshiped, the law of God was perverted, but now they accept a gentile ruler as their king, their only king, Caesar.

I think that heaven grew silent at this moment. The angels silent in their shock as Israel rejects God their king and heralds Caesar, their only king.

v 16 So the die is set, and history's darkest day moves towards the Cross.

So he then delivered Him to them to be crucified.

NOW WE HAVE SEEN THE PEOPLE REACTING, THE JEWISH LEADERS PLOTTING, THE SOLDIERS IN THEIR CRUELTY, AND PILATE WRAPPED UP IN HIS FEAR.

But we must also see Jesus - the One Who remains calm in the midst of chaos, the One who is at peace with panic all around Him, the one who sets aside fear and opts for faith.

WHAT WAS IT THAT ALLOWED THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST to have such a composure of mind as He faced the greatest test of His life.

Some would say confidence. But that is a result rather than a cause. Could be a matter of mind over matter, or maybe a denial of reality. Perhaps it was ignorance of what was about to happen.

BUT I THINK WE KNOW IT WAS NONE OF THESE THINGS.

Jesus Christ, in His humanity, was armed with four things as He entered into the eye of this storm.

1. He knew God, His heavenly Father: And He knew the power of God. That God was in

control. He knew that God loved Him and that the God who loved Him was good. And whatever came from this good God of love was good.

And whatever God had for Him, at any moment, was superior to the evil plans of evil and weak men.

Our first thought in the midst of chaos must be that God is in control and that God loves us and that He is gracious and good and whatever is happening is good for us.

2.He knew their was a plan: In knowing God intimately He knew that just beyond the shame of the Cross was everlasting glory.

This allowed Him to have Joy in the midst of pain.

Hebrews 12:2 Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

He looked beyond the horror of the Cross to the Crown.

3.He knew Himself: His test had been passed the night before in the agony of the garden. He knew what was ahead but He chose to use the power of the Word and depend upon the power of the Spirit rather than self to be sustained during this time of trial.

Have we made those same decisions? Have we chose God's will over our will? Have we chosen the Spirit's power over the power of self?

Do we know ourselves?

4.And then lastly, He knew us: And He loved us and it was because of us that He would endure and go to the Cross and die for our sins.

He declared that He wanted to be our friend. He would make that friendship possible by dying for the sins of the human race. No greater love has been known by man than this

- and He did it because He wants to have a relationship with us.

Do we at times endure heartache and trial for the ones we love. Do we sacrifice in our love for us. WE DO, AND WE SHOULD. And that love can keep us calm in the midst of chaos.

The person of God, the plan of God, the power of God the Spirit, the people who we love.

WE CAN HAVE THE PEACE THAT JESUS HAD that morning in our lives. He showed us how it can be accomplished. Not by our might or power but by the person. plan, and power of God. Working together in us to allow us to accomplish His will in our lives and live loving others as Christ loved us.

BUT WE REALLY HAVE ONE MORE THING, one thing Jesus did not have. We have a Savior who has gone through more than we will ever be called upon to endure. We have Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith.

The humiliation, the pain, the abuse, the torture He endured was as much for us the Cross.

1 Peter 2:21-24 (quoting in part from Isaiah 53).

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth;

And while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;

And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

The word HEALED is in many ways trivialized when applied to physical healing.

It is in the Greek Text IAOMAI and is used as a metaphor in much of Greek literature to

indicate being delivered from the consequences of sin.

And the aorist passive form indicates that this is something that has already been accomplished.

SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO US?

When you find yourself in the eye of the storm, chaos, panic, fear, accusation, round about. Consider Jesus - he has been there.

There is no place we will ever be, there is nothing we will ever experience, there is no pain or persecution that we might be called upon to endure that has not first been suffered by Jesus our Savior, our Lord, and our Friend.

We need never say no one understands, He does and He endure the hours that led up to the Cross for us.

Hebrews 4:14-16 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted (and tested) in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER 19, VERSE 17 (vv 17-30).

As we come to these verses in the Gospel of John we come to the greatest and most important event of history. History has recorded many great things that have happened but they all pale in the light of the Cross.

At the Cross Jesus Christ hung between heaven and earth and took upon himself our sins satisfying forever the justice and righteousness of God. Nothing ever like that had happened before and nothing ever like that would happen again. History, mankind, creation, life itself would never again be the same.

As we examine the Cross we are first struck with the fact that we could easily never leave the study of this all important event. One Pastor I heard of when living in Hope said that he used the same topic for his Sunday sermon for thirty years, the Cross. And not two sermons were ever the same.

Well, we will not spend that long at Golgotha but we will take a few weeks to examine these passages in three ways.

1. First, we will look at what was happening that day at the Cross.

2. We will look at the significance of the Cross in eyes of God. What was happening in heaven we might say.

3. Then thirdly, we will see what the Cross accomplished.

So let's begin with John 19:17-18

They took Jesus therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between.

John takes the journey from the city to the Cross very quickly.

Remember that John writes near the end of the first century and by then many of the events that have become even well known to us were well known to the believers of Asia (Turkey today) to whom John writes.

More than in any other gospel, John seems to what to get right at the resurrection and the promised reunion of Jesus and the disciples.

So he spends only fourteen (14) verses of the Cross itself. But in his brevity he reminds us of something that is often overlooked and that is that the true importance of the Cross is not in its horror, not in the pain that was suffered, but that it was a place of once and for all spiritual victory.

v 17 And that place was called GOLGOTHA in the Hebrew and in Aramaic, the place of the Skull.

We normally picture this as a hill but nowhere in the Bible does it tell us Jesus was crucified on a hill. More likely, it was a pit. And just 250 yards outside the Damascus gate at the north wall of the old city of Jerusalem there is a three sided pit with a rock formation that looks like a skull.

The Romans used hill tops as places of honor and it is not likely that they would have executed their criminals on hill tops.

It was the British General Charles Gordon who discovered this site and the adjoining garden tomb in 1842. He, however, saw the site of the Cross as being at the top of the cliffs whereas many today think it was at the base.

v 18 John takes the sum of the pain and suffering of the cross itself and places it in one statement: They crucified Him.

And yet listen to what Merrill Tenney says of the horror of crucifixion.

Archeologists found the skeletal remains of man who has been crucified near Jerusalem. It shows that the feet had been nailed sideways to the cross whereas the body had been facing forward. Such a position would create a twist of about ninety degrees at the waist. The unnatural position, growing thirst, exposure to the weather, some loss of blood, and impaired breathing prevented normal respiration. Soon the lungs would begin to fill with moisture. The victim drowned slowly by internal accumulation of fluids. The action of the heart was seriously affected. Frequently a crucified man might live as long as thirty-six hours, or even longer in increasing agony, unless by exhaustion he finally lapsed into unconsciousness. Crucifixion was probably the most diabolical form of death ever invented.

Yet as much as one should appreciate the agony of the Cross, it must be noted that the

gospel writers do not dwell on it. John uses a single statement to describe this, They crucified Him.

But over the past few weeks, in our study of John's Gospel, we have seen the record of the suffering of our Savior prior to the Cross. Every Gospel writer gave considerable attention to the suffering that led up to the Cross. But then seems to shift gears from the physical to the spiritual.

G. Campbell Morgan also made this observation and noted that this unusual recording of the physical abuse Christ suffered prior to the Cross and the minimal mention of the what would have been the greater physical abuse of the Cross was done so that we would see the deeper fact of the Cross. That there, at the Cross, we have a suffering that greater than the physical, we have the spiritual suffering that was necessary for our sins to be paid for in full.

But we have seen Jesus, the man, in His humanity, suffering the abuse of evil men with evil plans.

It is not inappropriate to ask why?

Why is so much attention given to the pre-cross suffering of Jesus Christ?

The answer is not found in the Gospels but was recognized many years later by Peter.

1 Peter 2:21-24 (quoting in part from Isaiah 53)

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; And while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;

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The humiliation, the pain, the abuse, the torture He endured was as much for us as was the Cross. He suffered and in that we see we have a Savior who is not distant but close, one who understands our every pain, one who stands with us through our weaknesses.

NOW LET'S RETURN TO JOHN 19:18

Here we also told of others who died that day: And with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between.

Many have speculated as to how many were crucified that day in Jerusalem. I think we can take John's Gospel plainly and conclude that there were three.

John mentions the other two but without commentary. Perhaps because the story was so well known to the church by the time of John's Gospel.

We might just look briefly at these two criminals in Luke chapter 23:39-43

And one of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us! But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong. And he was saying, Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom! And He said to him, Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.

On those three crosses on that day in Jerusalem we have a glimpse of the condition of the World. There is the Savior and there are two others. One in his bitterness mocks and rejects. The other repents and believes.

verse 41 Belief in the innocents of Jesus, this man.

verse 42 Belief in the deity of Jesus, your Kingdom.

That is a real simple salvation situation. The thief could do nothing but believe in Christ.

Could not walk an aisle, raise a hand, be baptized.

But Jesus says that very day he will be with him in Paradise.

Paradise was the abode of all Old Testament Saints and prior to the resurrection and the ascension that is where Jesus' soul went to proclaim the victory of the Cross - and that thief was there.

All the world hangs on their crosses along side of Jesus and has a choice to make, many reject and mock but then there are those who believe in Jesus Christ the only begotten of the Father, and trust Him as their Savior.

Now let's return to John 19:19. We have seen the three crosses not we will see the three signs on Jesus' Cross.

v 19-20 One statement made in three languages.

And Pilate wrote an inscription also, and put it on the cross. And it was written, JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Therefore this inscription many of the Jews read, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and in Greek.

It was common although not necessary to put a sign over the head of the condemned man, at the top of the cross, describing his crimes.

Pilate did this but did not describe crimes by rather gave a declaration of sarcasm that expressed his contempt for the Jewish leaders.

This is Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews - who the Jews have rejected and condemned to death.

Pilate was tri-lingual and inscribed the statement in three languages. In doing so, without knowing it, he makes three statements.

1.Hebrew: The title Hebrew declared to Israel that this is their king and their only hope is to believe in Christ as their Savior.

2.Greek: The language of the day for culture and science. This declares that Jesus is the creator of the universe and the one who has authority over even the laws of science. And creation is a testimony of his faithfulness and immutability.

3.Latin: The language of Roman law and administration. This declares that Jesus is the

administrator of God's plan and the fulfillment of God's law and all spiritual law.

v 21-22 The Jewish Leaders did not like the sign.

And so the chief priests of the Jews were saying to Pilate, Do not write, The King of the Jews; but that He said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

The chief priests were upset not that they were crucifying the Son of God but that the sign was not worded the way they wanted it worded.

Religion majors in the minors and ignores their own sins.

Pilate would not change the sign. What I have written I have written. And in leaving the sign there, worded that way, it became a condemnation of these Jewish leaders who had rejected their King, Jesus Christ.

You see they were the ones who belonged on that Cross. And in 70 AD when the Romans sent in Titus with the Roman Armies to destroy the rebellion in Judea, many of the Jewish Leaders, perhaps some who were at Golgotha that day, would end up crucified on crosses.

John 19:23-24 Four Soldiers.

Four legionnaires and one Roman officer (a centurion) would have been in charge of crucifying each of the condemned men. Here we are told of how they divided the property of the Jesus.

The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. They said therefore to one another, Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be; that the Scripture might be fulfilled, They divided My outer garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.

A condemned man usually had five articles of clothing. Head covering of some kind (a small shawl), a belt, the Tallith or outer garment, sandals, and the inner garment.

Normally rank allowed the selection of each one and the inner garment was usually torn into four pieces.

But Jesus' inner garment was like that of the high priests and was without seams. It was woven from the top throughout.

This was too valuable to tear apart so the soldiers cast lots, some kind of throwing of dice or chips to determine who would get it.

Inadvertently this fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy of Psalm 22:18

They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.

This action by these soldiers demands three observations.

1. These unbeliever soldiers were fulfilling scripture showing us that even in the midst of the horror of the Cross, God is still in control.

2. While they would not tear apart the inner garment of Christ, God would that day rip from top to bottom the inner veil of the Temple.

Mark 15:38 And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

When the sacrifice of Jesus was completed the veil of the Temple was torn away exposing to the world the Holy of Holies because now salvation was not a shadow but a historical reality.

3. Each of these soldiers walked away with something that belonged to Christ but each walked away an unbeliever.

I SEE IN THIS WHAT THE WORLD so often wants from God. They want something that touches the divine but not God himself. They want the things that might be close to God without ever getting too close themselves.

I would guess that if an exhibit came to Tulsa that contained the clothing of the crucified Christ that people, believers, would line up for miles just to be close to such things.

But do we line up to be close to God our Savior. To possess Him?

Too often not.

Let this challenge us to set aside the unimportant, to draw near to God knowing that He will draw near to us.

All the soldiers needed to do was to look up and they would have seen the face of the suffering Savior. But like the world they were looking down into the earth, taking a chance, casting the dice, hoping to walk away with gain - while the greatest thing they could ever have gained was there on the Cross.

Let's not miss out on what God has for us!!
INTRODUCTION: In his book *The Great Boer War*, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle recounts the story of a small detachment of British troops who were surprised by an overwhelming enemy force. The British fell back under heavy fire. Their wounded lay in a perilous position where they faced certain death. One of them, a corporal in the Ceylon Mounted Infantry, later told that they all realized they had to come immediately under the protection of a Red Cross flag if they wanted to survive. All they had was a piece of white cloth, but no red paint. So they used the blood from their wounds to make a large cross on that white cloth. Their attackers respected that grim flag as it was held aloft, and the British wounded were brought to safety under the sign of the Cross.

In our study today we will see two groups of four people who stand under the Cross of Christ, but they are very different and the difference is in their faith.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER 19, VERSE 23 (vv 23-27).

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A major emphasis in John's Gospel is the repeated mention of the fulfillment of Old Testament Scriptures.

One writer has called this John's master thought, that God is over all, in control of all, and directing all this is being done.

It is God will that is being done, not merely the actions of man.

2. While they would not tear apart the inner garment of Christ, God would that day rip from top to bottom the inner veil of the Temple.

Mark 15:38 And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

When the sacrifice of Jesus was completed the veil of the Temple was torn away exposing to the world the Holy of Holies because now salvation was not a shadow but a historical reality.

3. Each of these soldiers walked away with something that belonged to Christ but each walked away an unbeliever.

I SEE IN THIS WHAT THE WORLD so often wants from God. They want something that touches the divine but not God himself. They want the things that might be close to God without ever getting too close themselves.

This illustrates for us two types of people.

1. The unbeliever who seeks religious things without ever seeking the person of God and His Son.

Religious symbolism, tokens, items, crosses and stars and even fish. A Bible, setting in the entry way of a home but covered in dust, pages brittle from never being turned.

They have the cloak, something of value, but they do not have the one who wore the cloak.

2. Secondly, this account illustrates the believer who is more concerned with symbolism than substance.

They involve themselves in spiritual things but not in the person of the spirit. They get absorbed in all the things that surround Christ but never quite get to Christ himself.

They end of looking down to the ground, throwing dice for a chance to have something that is superficial without ever realizing how close the Savior really is. SO OFTEN THE BELIEVER WHO GETS MORE INVOLVED with the cloak that the Christ does so to keep God at arms length. They deceive themselves into thinking that since they are close to things that are spiritual,

And this keeps God and a personal life changing relationship with Him from ever getting personal.

I would guess that if an exhibit came to Tulsa that contained the clothing of the crucified Christ that people, believers, would line up for miles just to be close to such things.

But do we line up to be close to God our Savior. To possess Him?

Too often not.

Let this challenge us to set aside the unimportant, to draw near to God knowing that He will draw near to us.

All the soldiers needed to do was to look up and they would have seen the face of the suffering Savior. But like the world they were looking down into the earth, taking a chance, casting the dice, hoping to walk away with gain - while the greatest thing they could ever have gained was there on the Cross.

Let's not miss out on what God has for us!!

John 19:25b-27 Four Believers.

In contrast to the four soldiers we have four women at the Cross along with John the disciple and writer of this Gospel.

v 25 But there were standing by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

There is some dispute as to whether there are four women mentioned here or three. Some see Mary the wife of Clopas as being Jesus' mother's sister. But it would be unusual for two sister to share the same name. So I think we can see four believing women here, who

stand in contrast to the four unbelieving soldiers.

We know from Luke 8:2-3 that many of the disciples who followed Jesus were women. Mary Magdalene being perhaps the best known, but also Mary and Martha of Bethany, but also Joanna who was the wife of an important official in Herod's court, and Susanna.

We are told that these women provided for Jesus and His disciples from their own funds.

Hence, it is very likely that the clothing they just saw divided and gambled away and now possessed by those who crucified their Savior, had been provided to Jesus by them.

This would have, no doubt, been a heartbreaking situation. To see the gifts given with such love to their Lord and Savior, divided among the unbelieving soldiers.

BUT THEIR FOCUS WAS NOT ON THE CLOTHING but on Christ and although He was being put to death they still had Him, a personal relationship with their Savior.

v 26-27 Out the midst of His agony, Jesus considers the needs of others.

When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, Woman, behold, your son! Then He said to the disciple, Behold, your mother! And from that hour the disciple took her into his own household.

There are three important lessons to be learned from these verses.

1. Jesus always considered the needs of others above himself.

Here He is, nailed to a Cross, dying, facing continual agony, and He thinks of His mother's well being.

So often when we hurt, physically or emotionally, we place ourselves at the center of our own universe and expect everyone and everything to revolve around us.

We place unrealistic expectations upon others and expect everything to stop while we receive the approbation we think will cause us to hurt less.

But here is Jesus, dying on a Cross, ministering to others.

WHY WAS HE ABLE TO DO THIS?

1) First, He knew that what was happening to Him, the pain the hurt, even the death He faced, was not out of the grip of His heavenly Father.

Therefore, He put his circumstance in the hands of the Father. He could add nothing to it, do nothing about it. He faced the reality of the situation knowing that God was in command.

This allowed Him, in His humanity, to concentrate on the needs of others. His needs were being met by God, so He could do as He had always done, serve others.

2) The second reason He was able to do this is that He had loved these disciples with Spiritual love and that love now did not have to kick in but just continue.

His relationship with them had been one of love and now the love for His mother, as His mother and as a believer, just took another step. He would make sure her needs were met as He would not longer be there to care for her in a material sense.

2. Out second lesson from these verses come from the fact that Jesus broke custom and tradition in asking John the disciple to care for His mother and for His mother to consider John as her son.

REMEMBER: After Jesus was born Mary and Joseph had other children.

Mark 6:3 at Nazareth: Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us? And they took offense at Him.

The culture and custom of the day would have the eldest living son care for his widowed mother. Jesus had done this directly until He was 30 when He began His public ministry and after that indirectly He cared for her.

Now that He was leaving the next oldest son, probably James, should have been given this responsibility and there is no reason to think he would not have accepted it (we find that James was considered a man of the highest integrity).

BUT JESUS GAVE THIS TASK TO JOHN, the disciple.

BECAUSE AT THAT TIME HIS BROTHERS WERE NOT BELIEVERS AND JOHN WAS.

Jesus valued and trusted His family in the faith more than any physical relationship among brothers and sisters.

This was illustrated early in His ministry in Capernaum in Mark 3:31-35

v 31 And His mother and His brothers arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him, and called Him. v 32 And a multitude was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.

v 33 And answering them, He said, Who are My mother and My brothers?

v 34 And looking about on those who were sitting around Him, He said, Behold, My mother and My brothers!

v 35 For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.

And now, back in John 19, Jesus gives the care of His mother to John, not one of her sons, but a believer.

QUESTION: How highly do we value and honor those who are members of the family of faith, who, along with us have trusted Christ as our Savior

Now I love my family, both of them, but there is something very special about those who are

a part of the spiritual family over which God our Father is the head and which He has established for His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

3. And that anticipates our third lesson: Jesus Christ will always bring together those who love Him so that they can love and serve one another.

Part of His ministry, whether during the incarnation, presently in Heaven at God's right hand, or even when He was on the Cross, is bringing believers together into relationships that are centered upon Him.

This is another of many illustrations in which Jesus demonstrates to us the new commandment.

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

SO WHAT DO THESE LESSONS MEAN TO US, how do they effect how we live the Christ Centered Life?

1. Do we put the needs of others above our own needs? Do we know that because God our Father is in control of our lives we can seek the well being of others?
2. Do we value and honor other believers even more highly than those with whom we have a family relationship? Who do we seek in times of need?

Matthew 10:37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

3. Do we seek the unity of the body of Christ? Jesus brought together those who loved Him. Do we seek to bring together other believers and together focus upon Christ?

There is a fourth lesson in these verses which can be learned as we consider those present. There were the ones who mocked, the ones

who divided His clothing and gambled for his cloak. There were the Roman officials and the Jewish priests, all there to watch Jesus suffer and die.

But the Father did not leave Christ alone at the Cross. There were others, these four women, John the youngest of the disciples, who were there to comfort their Lord and Savior, their Son, their friend.

God the Father, as Jesus Christ hung upon the Cross, paying a debt He did not owe for those who had a debt they could not pay, provided believers to encourage the humanity of Christ. INTRODUCTION.

As we celebrate our nation's birthday and the liberty that we enjoy as a free people, let us never forget that true freedom transcends man and found in heaven and begins at the Cross.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER NINETEEN, VERSE 28 (vv 28-30).

As we noted last week, one of the major themes in the Gospel of John is the revelation that God is in control. This control that God, from His sovereignty and omnipotent power exercises over the affairs of man is accomplished while allowing man to have free will.

Although the sovereignty of God and the free will of man may seem incompatible, we can see how God exercises His control at the Cross.

Satan, as he influenced the Jewish religious leaders, would have had Jesus stoned to death. But God, while allowing men to have their free will did not allow them to act out their will.

Years prior to the Cross a law had been passed by the Romans that forbade the Jews condemning a man to death by their decision alone. Shortly after the Cross that law would be suspended and Stephen, the first Christian martyr would be stoned to death by the

Jewish high council - but at the time of the Cross, they could not do this.

So Jesus was condemned, not to die in a pit of stoning, but to die on a Roman Cross.

And it would be there, as He was lifted up by sinful man, that He would pay the price for the sins of the human race.

Jesus, in His humanity, was consciously aware that His heavenly Father was in control. Jesus was also consciously aware that He was carrying out His Father's plan.

v 28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, I am thirsty.

John is looking at these events chronologically. He says after this, indicating that Jesus had, in making sure His mother was cared for by John, fulfilled all earthly obligations and now had also fulfilled the obligations of His Father's plan.

Knowing that all things had already been accomplished.

The word knowing is OIDA and is a perfect, active, participle.

This particular form shows us that Jesus knew He had completed the Father's plan not because of some special revelation or from divine knowledge, but because He knew the Word of God.

Perfect tense: Learned BD in the past and now applied it in the present.

Active Voice: He learned this and applied this knowledge from His own volition.

Participle: This knowledge attended some other verb action.

THE PARTICIPLE shows us that the end, the objective, was not the knowledge, but the action that could occur from the application of the knowledge.

The word ACCOMPLISHED is the same word we will see in v 30 where it is translated IT IS

FINISHED. Here, as at v 30, it is a passive verb indicating that Jesus made Himself available to the Father to be the once and for all sacrifice for sin and the Father accomplished this, passive voice, the Father's plan was now finished.

HENCE, Jesus, in His humanity, knew the Word and now applies the Word.

There can be no application without first knowing the Word of God. One cannot consciously do the will a part from knowing the Word of God.

The application, in this case, is a statement that fulfills the prophecy of the suffering Savior given in Psalm 69:21

In order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, (Jesus) said, I am thirsty.

Then v 29 A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop, and brought it up to His mouth.

This statement teaches us two things.

1. First, it is demonstration of the humanity of Christ. Deity does not want and does not thirst. Humanity gets thirsty.

John tells us about this seemingly unimportant statement to remind us that it is the humanity of Christ that went to Cross and paid the price for man's sins.

So have tried to see a change in the person of Christ on the Cross. That He became God as a result of His sacrifice. This verse, the drink of sour wine He took, shows us that He is still fully man while at the same time being fully God.

2. Secondly, the recording of this statement is in contrast to an earlier occurrence at the Cross.

Mark 15:23 when Jesus first arrived at Golgotha He was offered a sedative: And they tried to give Him wine mixed with myrrh; but He did not take it.

Matthew 27:34 gives us additional information: They gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall; and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink.

But now, that all things had been accomplished, finished, He took the sour wine to quench His thirst.

Crucifixion was such a horrible manner of death that the Romans allowed the women of Jerusalem to administer a strong anesthetic prior to the execution. This was intended to dull the senses of the condemned so that the piercing of the wrists by the nails and the pain of cross bar upon which the condemned was nailed as it was hoisted to the up right would be bearable.

1. The anesthetic was a mixture of wine and gall or myrrh. Now both are capable of deadening pain.
2. Myrrh was a plant sap that was a very strong natural anesthetic that would have eliminated much of the pain.
3. The verses in Mark and Matthew focuses us upon the humanity of Jesus, He tasted the mixture, His throat was parched, He was thirsty.
4. But recognizing what it was He refused it. He would go to the Cross, endure the pain in what was provided by God and not by man.
5. His senses would be sharp, He would be able to think about the doctrine He had as He died for our sins. 6. But now, as John records, the price is paid, the sacrifice is offered, sins are paid for and Jesus' work on earth is finished - so He takes the sour wine, not a pain killer, but sour wine to quench His thirst.

Indeed, all things are finished.

v 30 When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, It is finished! And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit.

NOW WHEN WE CONSIDER THE DEATH OF CHRIST we have to really look at the two deaths that our Lord suffered on our behalf.

The death for our sins was a spiritual death that satisfied the righteous demands of a Holy and Just God.

We have spiritual life because Jesus endured a spiritual death, a separation from the Father as the sins of the human race were poured out upon Christ.

Such passages as.

Galatians 1:4 The Lord Jesus Christ who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.

1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

I Corinthians 15:3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

Look at this death that only Christ could die to bring us to God, insuring forgiveness and sanctification.

When we compare Mark 15:25 with Luke 23:44 and Matthew 27:45 we find that Jesus went to Golgotha about 9:00 am. Then at noon a supernatural darkness covered the area of the Cross until 3:00 pm. During that time Jesus was crying out, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me.

That cry is the evidence that Jesus was taking upon Himself the sins of the world.

It is quoted from Psalm 22:1 My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.

And in Psalm 22 we see why God did turn from His only begotten Son: v 3 Yet Thou art holy, O Thou who art enthroned upon the praises of Israel.

Jesus Christ knew that because the Father was Holy He could not look upon the Cross where Jesus died for the sins of the World.

THE SPIRITUAL DEATH OF CHRIST.

The phrase Blood of Christ (seven times in NT) or Blood of the Cross (Colossians 1:20) refers to the sum total of the violent deaths experienced by Christ on the Cross.

1. The word blood is used as a METONYMY, a figure of speech in which a noun is used to describe a larger event or whole.

ENGLISH EXAMPLE: I was reading C.S. Lewis the other day - what was I doing?

OR: He wrote a bad hand - means his grammar, style, form left much to be desired.

2. The use of the word blood then should remind the reader of the total violence of the Cross.

3. Christ did not bleed to death and death by crucifixion did not produce that much blood.

4. We are saved by the finished work of Christ on the Cross and that work was finished when he said It is finished (John 19:30).

5. After that he voluntarily gave up His spirit into the hands of the Father.

John 19:30 Jesus - said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.

6. The two deaths of Jesus Christ are mentioned in the plural use of the word death in Colossians 1:18 and in Isaiah 53:9

Colossians 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead [deaths].

Isaiah 53:9 His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death [deaths].

7. Our salvation is based upon the Spiritual Death of Christ.

The Christ centered life is related to His incarnation and the dependence upon the Spirit and the Word of His humanity.

And our future resurrection and place in heaven is related to His physical death, a death that did not hold Christ because He was risen.

Justification: Spiritual Death Sanctification: Human Life Resurrection: Physical Death
OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER 19, verse 31 (vv 31-42).

Last week we saw the final moments of the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

1. He knew his task was finished because he knew the Scriptures.

Whereas Adam became sin through his disobedience

Jesus became sin for us through his obedience

2. Only once his task was finished did he concern himself with his personal need - I thirst

The one who said in John 7:37 If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.

Was now himself thirsty because in His humanity he had given everything He had and was for us whose throats are parched from the spiritual death.

3. His thirst was a declaration of His humanity. It was the man Jesus who died for man's sins.

4. His cry of victory, it is finished, shares with the human race what Jesus already knew, the plan for salvation was set.

A cry of victory in an hour of defeat

5. He then bowed his head and gave up His spirit. The words GAVE UP are the aor, act, ind of a verb meaning to surrender, to give something to someone who is in a position of authority or control, and to return to someone something that belongs to them.

In other passages we read that Jesus dismissed or commended His spirit to the Father.

Schofield comments on this that Jesus physical death was like no other. He voluntarily gave His human spirit to the Father.

He did this from His humanity. In our passage He addresses God and His Father which is indicative of His humanity.

Since Jesus did not have an OSN there was no way the corruption of the body would have caused his death.

The only way he could have died was at the hands of others or by his own volitional decision.

John 10:18 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.

Having conquered Satan and Sin at the cross, Jesus now turns his attention to death. He will conquer death by dying and then by being raised up by the power of God.

So He dies, but that is not the end of the story. The rest of the story is that He is raised from the dead and thus becomes - I Corinthians 15:20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.

So what would normally be the end of the story becomes for us the beginning of the story. We serve a risen Savior who has conquered death.

At the moment of death the human spirit of Christ went into the presence of the Father.

The body would go into the tomb

And the soul would descend to Sheol, the place of the dead, for three days where victory would be proclaimed to the Old Testament saints who were there, in paradise.

But Sunday morning is coming and He will be raised from the dead.

BEGINNING AT VERSE 31 we have three prophecies fulfilled.

Each of these events and the prophecies they fulfill show us that God and His perfect plan is behind all the things that are going on.

We might think that things have gotten out of the hand of God, that God has lost control, that Jesus' death will be nothing more than the tragic end of a life of truth and love, but it is not the end.

v 31-37 The first and second prophecy fulfilled.

The Jews therefore, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (or that Sabbath was a high {day}), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and {that} they might be taken away.

The soldiers therefore came, and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other man who was crucified with Him;

but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs;

but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.

And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.

For these things came to pass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Not a bone of Him shall be broken.

And again another Scripture says, They shall look on Him whom they pierced.

v 31 These Jewish leaders knew the Old Testament Law and knew the law forbade a dead body to be unburied at sundown. Also the, next day was a Sabbath and it would have been a insult to the Jews to allow the crucifixions to continue during this high Sabbath of the Passover.

Deuteronomy 21:22 And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but

you shall surely bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is accursed of God), so that you do not defile your land -

The Romans would leave a crucified man on a cross for days to serve as a warning. This would have resulted in a violation of Old Testament Law and made the land unclean.

So they go to Pilate and ask him to speed things up by breaking the legs of the condemned men.

Crucifixion is death by suffocation. The one crucified could only breathe by raising his chest by straightening his legs. With the legs broken this was impossible and death came quickly. This called this part of crucifixion crucifragium and it assured the death of the victim.

So the Jews did not want to defile their land but they had no concern that they themselves were defiled by their deed of destroying Jesus.

As we have seen so often in the Gospel of John, religion is blind. It will major in minor points of law, obeying rules, while setting a side both compassion and justice.

It is because of this type of perversion of priorities that we can truly say that religion has brought more harm to mankind, more death and destruction than any other single system.

But Christianity is not a religion, it is a relationship with Christ.

v 32-33 Pilate patronize the Jewish leaders and instructed the soldiers to break the legs of the ones being crucified.

We can only imagine the screams of pain that accompanied such a brutal act but when they came to Jesus they found Him to be already dead.

The soldiers therefore came, and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other man who was crucified with Him; but coming to

Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs;

Jesus was already dead because He had already finished the task for which He came. Having finished the task and crying out it is finished He gave up His own Spirit.

The Jews wanted to kill Christ, if they could not they wanted the Romans to do it. Neither would get that chance. God plan is way out ahead of their evil plans.

And God is way out ahead of the evil plans of man today. Man cannot frustrate the perfect plan of a perfect God.

AND I WANT YOU TO NOTICE SOMETHING HERE, there is no army of the Lord, no soldiers of the Cross rushing in to make sure God's will gets done. There is Jesus nailed to a Roman Cross, John the youngest disciple, and a handful of devoted women who followed their Lord. Not much of an army. And all they were doing was standing there as their son, their friend, their Savior died.

God doesn't need us to fulfill His will. We need to follow Him in His plan. But too often the Christian activist get out ahead of God and through some arrogance combined with activism comes up with a crusade in which they are going to help God. We need His help, He does not need ours.

v 34 In order to be sure this man was dead a Roman soldier drew his sword and pierced Jesus' side.

From the human viewpoint this may have been a final act of scorn. From the divine viewpoint it fulfilled prophecy and serves as a scientific proof that Jesus did not die by the hand of man.

But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.

The sword entered the left side of the body, under the ribs and pierced to the heart.

The heart is surrounded by a sac called the pericardium which secretes a small amount of watery fluid as a lubricant for the heart. Under extreme suffering this enlarges and the fluid builds up.

When the spear pierced the heart the blood in the heart drained first, then, because the heart was not pumping the blood already started to coagulate, the fluid came out.

v 35-37 John now relates what had happened to two prophecies.

v 35 And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.

John inserts at this point a statement that tells us he was there, he was a witness. He is telling the truth for a reason - that we may also, with him, believe.

This statement contradicts the critics who claim that Jesus did not really die but only fell into a state of unconsciousness and was revived by the coolness of the tomb. Then, with pierced hands, feet, side, having been scourged, rolled away a two ton rock and single handedly defeated a platoon of Roman soldiers and got away.

People, that takes more faith than I have.

v 36 For these things came to pass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Not a bone of Him shall be broken.

Remember why the Jews wanted these men off the Crosses by sundown. The next day, which begins at sundown according to the Jewish clock, was a day of preparation for the Passover meal.

The main course of the Passover meal was the Pascal lamb, that was to be prepared that evening. In every Jewish household dad was sharpening his knife and getting ready to prepare the lamb. And this took a sharp knife and much care because the Old Testament law stated that not one bone on that lamb was to be broken.

Exodus 12:46 It (the Passover lamb) is to be eaten in a single house; you are not to bring forth any of the flesh outside of the house, nor are you to break any bone of it.

In Psalm 34:19-20 this rule is prophetically applied to God's care over His righteous one (the Lord Jesus) Many are the afflictions of the righteous; But the Lord delivers him out of them all. He keeps all his bones; Not one of them is broken.

As every Father in every Jewish household in Jerusalem was taking care not to break the bones of the lamb, the Heavenly Father was taking care not to break the bones of the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the World.

And believer if the Father takes care of His Son He will take care of those who are His children through faith in His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

v 37 The second prophecy fulfilled: And again another Scripture says, They shall look on Him whom they pierced.

John cites Zechariah 19:10 And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.

Some pretty specific prophecies regarding the Messiah are found in those passages.

Some looked with scorn, others with indifference, and some looked by faith.

He was lifted up by the hands of evil men, but hung from the cross for all to see.

In Revelation 1:7 this prophetic statement that is now historical fact finds another fulfillment at the second advent: Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him.

The BLOOD and the WATER are also significant in that John has used BLOOD as an analogy for natural life and WATER as an analogy for spiritual life in his Gospel.

John 1:3 talks of being born of blood

John 4:14 talks of a spiritual water that gives spiritual life

So if see an analogy in the blood and the water its significance is that there is no life of any sort a part from Jesus Christ apart.

v 38-42 The Third Prophecy that is fulfilled in these verse is about the burial of the body of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 53:9 tells us His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His deaths.

Burial in the ancient world was done quickly. A common man with no family of wealth was buried in a common pit along with others who died that day. This is what would have occurred to Jesus' body had it not been for Isaiah 53:9.

Matthew 27:57-60 Shows us how God will now use a believer, who makes not what he owns available to God but makes himself available to God:

And when it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given over to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away.

Joseph of Arimathea had previously aligned himself with Jesus. In Luke 23:50-56 we are told that this man had not consented with the council to condemn Jesus. He had openly taken a stand with the Lord and now goes to Pilate and requests the body of Jesus.

But he was not alone. Nicodemus, who had come to Jesus in John 3 and was told that he must be born again also step forward to help in the burial.

Both members of the Sanhedrin which had condemned Jesus to death. Both taking a very public and open stand for their Savior.

We are told that while Joseph provided the tomb, Nicodemus provided the herbs that were used to prepare the body. About seventy-five pounds of myrrh and aloes.

This amount of burial herbs would have been expensive. This amount was usually reserved for the burial of royalty - and they are used to bury the King of kings.

Nicodemus had come to Jesus asking how he could enter the Kingdom and now He honors His King.

BUT ONE LAST THING I WANT YOU TO SEE: The next day was the Passover, the most important Holy Day in Israel. A day of family and friends and feasting and what was to also be a day that reminded the Jews of their Faith.

These two important Jewish men did not celebrate the Passover. Their handling and burial of Jesus' body made them legally unclean.

They probably sat alone for that next day, separated from friends and family due to their devotion to their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

But that was the better part, for they knew what Jesus meant when He said - It is finished. **OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER 19, verse 35 (vv 35-42).**

As we look at the closing events of the darkest day of history we see Jesus' body hanging on a Roman cross. He is dead, his spirit is with the Father, His soul is proclaiming victory in Sheol, the place of the dead, and soon his body will be placed in a borrowed grave.

Three prophecies are fulfilled in the final hours. These prophecies and their fulfillment

are the subject of John's final verses in John, Chapter 19. He deals with these to show us that while sinful men raised Jesus up to die, God's perfect plan won out.

We might be reminded of what Joseph said of his brothers in Genesis 50:20

And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to save many people.

We can know with confidence that God can even bring good out of evil in many ways. We can consider His +R character and that He is a God of goodness. We can see illustration of His over ruling good repeated in the Bible. And we can see, in the midst of darkness, His promises, His prophecies coming to fulfillment.

This is what John wants his readers to see. That God is in control in spite of the evil of men and Satan.

AS JOHN RELATES THE FULFILLMENT OF THESE PROPHECIES we see something else. We see how God works to perform His will.

Two Principles.

1. There are times His will will be done with no involvement from believers.
2. And there are times His will will be done through believers.

In other words there are times He will use us and there are times He will not.

Did you get that? And if that is the case, when He chooses to use us in fulfilling His will we are used in a position of honor and in a task of privilege.

v 35-37 John now relates what had happened to two prophecies.

v 35 And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.

John inserts at this point a statement that tells us he was there, he was a witness. He is

telling the truth for a reason - that we may also, with him, believe.

This statement contradicts the critics who claim that Jesus did not really die but only fell into a state of unconsciousness and was revived by the coolness of the tomb. Then, with pierced hands, feet, side, having been scourged, rolled away a two ton rock and single handedly defeated a platoon of Roman soldiers and got away.

People, that takes more faith than I have.

v 36 For these things came to pass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Not a bone of Him shall be broken.

Last week we noted that in every Jewish household in Jerusalem the Passover Lamb was being prepared and not a bone of that lamb would be broken.

Just as great care was exercised with the Passover lamb, God the Father exercised great care with the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the World.

And now that we are in Christ we are counted as God's lambs and even when we must be tested the Father takes great care over us.

The Passover lamb was prepared to honor God and His greatness. We too, as God's lambs, are prepared to honor God and His greatness.

Spiritual surgery may have to be done but not a bone will broken - the Father cares for us.

v 37 The second prophecy fulfilled: And again another Scripture says, They shall look on Him whom they pierced.

John cites Zechariah 19:10 And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.

Some pretty specific prophecies regarding the Messiah are found in those passages.

So looked with scorn, others with indifference, and some looked by faith.

He was lifted up by the hands of evil men, but hung from the cross for all to see.

HOW MAN LOOKS UPON THE ONE THEY PIERCED will determine where they will spend eternity.

EVEN TODAY WE ARE LOOKING UPON JESUS, whom we pierced.

You might say wait a minute, I did not do that. That was done buy a bunch of Romans and Jews who lived a long time ago. It wasn't done by me.

But why was Jesus there on that Roman Cross? He was there because of our sins.

The HAMMER is in our hands - We nailed Jesus to the Cross with our sins.

In Revelation 1:7 this prophetic statement that is now historical fact finds a another fulfillment at the second advent: Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him.

The BLOOD and the WATER are also significant in that John has used BLOOD as an analogy for natural life and WATER as an analogy for spiritual life in his Gospel.

John 1:3 talks of being born of blood

John 4:14 talks of a spiritual water that gives spiritual life

So if see an analogy in the blood and the water its significance is that there is no life of any sort a part from Jesus Christ apart.

v 38-42 The Third Prophecy that is fulfilled in these verse is about the burial of the body of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 53:9 tells us His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His deaths.

Burial in the ancient world was done quickly. A common man with no family of wealth was buried in a common pit along with others who died that day.

This is what would have occurred to Jesus' body had it not been for Isaiah 53:9.

Matthew 27:57-60 Shows us how God will now use a believer, who makes not only what he owns available to God but makes himself available to God:

And when it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given over to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away.

Joseph of Arimathea had previously aligned himself with Jesus. In Luke 23:50-56 we are told that this man had not consented with the council to condemn Jesus. He had openly taken a stand with the Lord and now goes to Pilate and requests the body of Jesus.

But he was not alone. Nicodemus, who had come to Jesus in John 3 and was told that he must be born again also step forward to help in the burial.

Both members of the Sanhedrin which had condemned Jesus to death. Both taking a very public and open stand for their Savior.

We are told that while Joseph provided the tomb, Nicodemus provided the herbs that were used to prepare the body. About seventy-five pounds of myrrh and aloes.

This amount of burial herbs would have been expensive. This amount was usually reserved for the burial of royalty - and they are used to bury the King of kings.

Nicodemus had come to Jesus asking how he could enter the Kingdom and now He honors His King.

THESE TWO MEN REPRESENT WHAT is about to happen in Israel and in the whole world.

Men and Women and even Young People and Children who are willing to pay the cost of being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

For Joseph and Nicodemus the cost was a burial cave and expensive burial herbs - but more than that it was rejection by their fellow Jews and most likely dismissal from membership in the Sanhedrin.

WHAT DOES IT COST TO BE A DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST?

Mark 8:34-38

v 34 And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

v 35 For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it.

v 36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?

v 37 For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

v 38 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

The cost of Discipleship is related to what Jesus Christ has done for us.

Jesus Christ paid the price of sin, we could not do that for ourselves, only the sinless Savior could do that on our behalf.

1 Corinthians 6:20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. I Corinthians 7:23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.

OUR OBLIGATION, which David in the Psalms so clearly understood as a vow or debt, is to first glorify God and then not become the slaves of men. But instead, become the slaves of Christ.

Psalm 50:14 Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, And pay your vows to the Most High.

NOW WE COULD NEVER, NOR DOES GOD EXPECT us to repay Jesus Christ for what he has done for us, for the price he paid.

But as we consider the cost of the Christ Centered Life we are motivated by the fact that we are under debt to God.

The Price: Deny self interest, lose your ego and emotional motivation in life, and put your life in the hands of Jesus Christ.

The Result and Reward: Whoever will lose his life for the sake of me and the Gospel will save it.

This motivation focuses on both the person of Christ and the Gospel, the Word of Christ.

The Gospel here is far more than just salvation. It is the good news that Christ not only has life for you but also that that life is ABUNDANT.

Our self-life is set aside, abandoned for something far greater - the person of Christ and the Word of God.

Jesus never calls upon us to pay a price He did not already pay.

NOW WHEN YOU PAY THE PRICE you expect something in return.

John 10:10 I came to give you life and life more abundantly.

BUT ONE LAST THING I WANT YOU TO SEE: The next day was the Passover, the most important Holy Day in Israel. A day of family and friends and feasting and what was to also be a day that reminded the Jews of their Faith.

These two important Jewish men did not celebrate the Passover. Their handling and

burial of Jesus' body made them legally unclean.

They probably sat alone for that next day, separated from friends and family due to their devotion to their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

But that was the better part, for they knew what Jesus meant when He said - It is finished.

Chapter 20

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER TWENTY, VERSE ONE (vv 1-18).

History's Darkest Day gives way to Eternity's Brightest Morning.

We have already seen that the humiliation and shame suffered by Jesus Christ for our sins on the Cross is beginning to give way to glory and honor as His body is buried in the tomb of a rich man named Joseph.

The events we have studied, as we have seen, were under the control of God. They were initiated and carried out by evil and sinful men who wanted to eliminate Jesus and ended up crucifying a man who was proclaimed as innocent.

Man brought upon our Savior humiliation and shame.

But now God takes over directly and He will provide His Son, our Savior, the innocent lamb of God, with glory and honor.

Hebrews 12:2 Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Enduring the Shame - receiving the Glory.

And that pattern, established by the Cross, the death, burial, resurrection of Christ, His ascension, is the pattern of grace we live under today.

We will at times be called upon by God to endure, but the end is always the same, glory and honor, if not in time then certainly in heaven with Him

JOHN CHAPTER 20.

As we approach the resurrection morning we have to consider what has been happening for the previous three days. Pessimism has settled in on the part of the disciples and followers of Jesus Christ. The worse scenario seems to be playing out. Doubt and confusion rule the day, and fear rules the night. Hope seems to be lost, Jesus is dead and His body lies in a tomb, sealed and guarded by Syrian Troops.

BUT THE REVELATION IS GOING TO CHANGE ALL THAT. And even more so the presence of Jesus Christ risen from the dead.

As we examine these passages I want you to consider what it takes to turn pessimism, doubt, confusion, and fear into faith and hope.

The same two things it takes is what it takes for us as Christians today. The revelation of God, His Word, and the presence of Christ.

Just as humiliation and shame gave way to glory and honor so confusion and fear gave way to faith and hope.

v 1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb.

As with the arrest, trials, and crucifixion of Christ, no Gospel writer gives us all the details of the resurrection.

Each writer selected for His audience and being led by the Spirit, those events that were important for His readers to know.

Because of this, we hit some confusion. Especially regarding Mary Magdalene who was the woman who most devotedly followed Jesus.

A casual reading of the four gospels would make it seem as if there had to be two Mary Magdalenes or she had the ability to be in

more than one place at one time. She was some woman but even she could not do that.

So in order to sort out the confusion I have worked out the eight events of the resurrection morning in chronological order.

1. Jesus is resurrected. To show this to the world an angel rolled away the stone prior to Sunrise (Matthew 28:2-4).

This occurrence scared off the Syrian Troops and Roman officers.

2. The Women who followed Jesus leave Bethany prior to sunrise and arrive at the tomb (Included in this group is Mary Magdalene) and find it empty (Mark 16:1-4).

3. Mary Magdalene leaves to tell Peter and John (John 20:1-2).

4. The other women remain at the tomb and see the two angels who announce the resurrection of Christ (Mark 16:5-7).

5. Peter and John arrive at the tomb and find it empty (John 20:3-10).

6. Mary Magdalene returns to the tomb alone and Jesus appears to her in the garden (John 20:11-18). This is His first appearance.

7. Jesus then appears to the other women who have now returned to the tomb (Matthew 28:8-10). This is His second appearance.

8. The guards report to the religious leaders how the angel rolled away the stone and the tomb was empty (Matthew 28:11-15). They were then bribed to keep silent.

This is followed by the appearance to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, then an appearance to Peter, and then on that Sunday evening to 10 of the disciples. Thomas was not present.

Back to John 20.

v 1 Here then we have the arrival of Mary Magdalene at the tomb with Mary the mother of James, Salome, and Joanna.

The complete account of this is found in the opening verses of Mark 16.

v 2 Mary Magdalene leaves the garden tomb and runs to find Peter and John.

And so she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.

Here first thought is that the body of Jesus had been taken by the political or religious leaders.

Here, as common in his Gospel, John refers to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved.

In her RUNNING to Peter and John, we see a note of panic and fear - but also great emotion.

v 3-4 And in there reaction to this news, they show a hint of the same panic and fear - and great emotion.

This news did fall on apathetic ears. They stopped whatever they were doing and ran to the garden.

Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they were going to the tomb. And the two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter, and came to the tomb first.

John tells us that he, being the younger man, was able to run ahead of Peter to the garden tomb. But in verse 6 we see that Peter entered the tomb first.

I get a picture of Peter, running so fast to keep up with John, that when they got the tomb, Peter ran right by John and right into the tomb while John was standing outside looking in.

v 5 John stops and looks in and sees the linen wrappings lying there.

And stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in.

This would indicate that Jesus rose through the grave clothes, the line wrapping. The scene that is painted for us in this passage is one of order, not the disorder that would have been associated with a hasty covert stealing of the body or with grave robbers.

Supposedly the shroud of Turin is the linen face cloth mentioned in v 7 that was found in the tomb but studies and scientific experiments have failed to prove this to be true.

I seriously doubt that it is because it would be a distraction to what the resurrection is all about.

AND THAT IS WHAT THESE DISCIPLES, Mary, Peter, and John have missed at this point - what the resurrection is all about and the very fact of the resurrection.

v 6-8 Let's look at the rest of the verse in this paragraph.

Simon Peter therefore also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he beheld the linen wrappings lying there,

and the face-cloth, which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself.

So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb entered then also, and he saw and believed.

For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

So the disciples went away again to their own homes.

Now we are told in these verses that John believed. but we are not told what he believed. Did he merely believe that the body was not there, hence believing Mary's report? Or did he believe that Jesus had risen from the dead?

Yet we are told in the next verse (v 9) that they did not understand the Scriptures, that He must rise again from the dead.

AND THAT IS REALLY WHAT IS AT ISSUE HERE, they did not believe the Word of the Lord, what was now Scripture to John's readers and to us, when He spoke of the resurrection.

LET'S TURN BACK TO JOHN 2:18-22

v 18 The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?

v 19 Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

v 20 The Jews therefore said, It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?

v 21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

v 22 When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken.

The Lord had told the disciple that He would be raised up from the dead. They had this information given to them. But they did not believe at this time, it would not be until later in the day that they would bring the words of Jesus into the arena of reality.

LET'S LOOK ALSO AT JOHN 10:17-18

For this reason (His willingness to obey) the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.

No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment (this authority or mandate) I received from My Father.

NOW GOING BACK TO JOHN 20 we are faced with disciples who are not remembering and therefore, not believing that Jesus has been risen from the dead.

Look at Mary in the next verse - v 11 But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and

so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb.

She cannot leave the tomb where they laid her friend, her Savior to rest, she stands by alone, weeping.

NOW ONE THING THAT IS NOT OFTEN CONSIDERED IN THIS ACCOUNT is how easy it would have been for God to dispel this unbelief with the very presence of Jesus at the tomb.

WHY WAS HE NOT THERE WHEN PETER AND JOHN AND MARY arrived at the tomb. Why was He not there when the faithful women had arrived at the tomb earlier that morning?

BUT WE SEE IN THIS A PATTERN BEGINNING - God giving believers time to believe time to trust the Scriptures.

1 Peter 1:7-9 That the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the deliverance of your souls.

There are times, like in the garden on Resurrection morning, when God will seem to us to not be present.

Why does God sometimes seem to be so far away?

1. It can be because of our Sins: When we sin we are out of fellowship.

1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

Psalms 66:18 If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear.

We can be restored to fellowship when we confess our sins and by faith recognize that

Jesus died for our sins. This removes sin and the shame of sin and the Holy Spirit fills us and cleanses us.

2. It can be because of Apathy: We do not walk with Him and only desire to be close to Him, to draw near to Him, when we have a need or a problem that eventually gets too big for us.

We have not walked with Him, so we do not know Him.

This apathy can take two approaches.

1) One is with sin. We are apathetic towards that fact that we sin. We fail to recognize our sin before God's holy and righteous throne of Grace.

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Notice: We have deceived ourselves.

2) The second type of apathy is towards the Word and Wisdom of God.

Proverbs 1:20 through 33

Those are tough words but they are very real. If we refuse wisdom from the Word. If we are so apathetic we do not see value in a daily relationship with God through His Word, when calamity comes, and we turn to Him, we will not know Him.

Can't learn how to deal with a problem in the midst of the problem. You have all you can handle just to keep composed. You have to be prepared prior to the problem.

Give me a verse!!!

3. The Lord may also seem distant to us because of Ignorance. He wants us to learn use the Word that we already have within our souls. To trust in Him even when He is silent.

Job dealt with this. In chapter after chapter he cries out to Lord and asks why? But not until Job, chapter 38 does God answer him. Job needed to listen to the wise counsel of Elihu

regarding how God can use affliction to draw men closer to him.

When God does answer Job, Job is ready to listen and to learn, and to think, and to apply.

The Prophet Habakkuk in Habakkuk 1:2 asks of God: How long, O Lord, will I call for help, And Thou wilt not hear? I cry out to Thee, Violence! Yet Thou dost not deliver.

Habakkuk took the night watch over the city of Jerusalem and night after night cried out to God regarding the people and their sin. God seemed very far away but He was not. He was giving Habakkuk the time to think of the doctrine he already had and to understand why God was allowing His people to drift further and further into sin.

SO GOD MAY BE SILENT, and thus to us seem distant, when He wants us to recall and apply the doctrine we already have.

NOW WITH THAT LET'S GO BACK TO JOHN 20.

Why was Jesus not at the tomb in the early morning hours of eternity's brightest day? Because He was giving the disciples, Peter and John, and Mary a chance to pass a test.

And they did not pass it - they did not remember the words He spoke regarding His resurrection.

SO THEY FAILED A TEST - BUT GOD GIVES MAKE UP EXAMINES.

And it would not be long until they would see the Lord and then Apply the Word and go out from there and turn the world upside down.

A unique feature in the grace of God is that we do fail and fail often, but the first characteristic of God's love for us is that He is long suffering.

We have chance after chance, opportunity after opportunity.

NOW APPLY THIS: Has God seemed distant to you? Is because of sin? Confess it. It is because of apathy? Make a decision today to take

advantage of all that God has given you and walk with Him daily. Or is His silence a test? Do we need to utilize what He has already provided to draw near to Him and as James has promised God will draw near to us.

Last week we studied the order of the events of resurrection morning. How The women came to anoint the body of their Lord, how they found an empty tomb, how Mary Magdalene ran to tell Peter and John and how they ran to the tomb.

We also saw the absence of the risen Lord. And the doubt and wonderment that filled the hearts of the disciples.

Peter and John left the garden tomb and as we approach John 20:10 we see one of the greatest scenes of history, Mary alone in the garden weeping over the loss of her Lord, her friend, her Savior, Jesus Christ.

TURN NOW TO JOHN CHAPTER 20, VERSE 10 (vv 10-18).

v 10 So the disciples went away again to their own homes.

v 11 But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb.

We saw last week how the disciples did not connect what Jesus had predicted with what was happening that morning. While we are told that John believed we are not told the content of his belief.

From this scene we do see that he did not share with Mary any thoughts he may have had on the Lord's resurrection.

So she remains at the tomb, which was the place her Lord had been laid to rest.

In this we see that she does not know what to do. She is confused, not knowing what to think, not knowing where to go.

So she remains at the tomb, weeping tears of fear, confusion, doubt, and tremendous grief.

These are emotions that all of can identify with. Confusion, grief, all these thoughts and feelings rolling over us like waves.

And just like with Mary there is only one thing that will take this burden and turn it into joy unspeakable in our lives - the risen Lord.

She is weeping and as tears stain her checks, she goes to the tomb to look in again.

v 12 And she beheld two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying.

When angels appear to men and women they do so in the form of men. It is only in visions that angels appear with wings and in their angelic form.

These angelic messengers ask Mark a question.

V 13 And they said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? She said to them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.

I THINK THAT IS VERY INTERESTING: They could have given her information, they could have told her that Jesus is risen from the grave, but they did not, they asked a question.

And her answer reflects her lack of understanding as to what was going on.

Let's make some observations.

1. The angels, knowing what had happened, saw this day as a day of rejoicing, not a time for tears.
2. Mary, however, was weeping indicating that she did not have the information or was not applying the information
3. In that the angels questioned her rather than inform her we would assume she was not applying what she had been told by the Lord himself.

She was as close to Jesus as any of the other disciples and she would have heard Him teach that He would rise up from the dead.

Mark 8:31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

4. Mary did not need more information, what she needed was faith.

The angels could have started Bible class, taught her the doctrine of the resurrection - but she already had it.

5. Their question was designed to summons her to faith. But her faith would not be real apart from the presence of the risen Lord.

6. We often try to pour more doctrine onto our problems, but too often we have the doctrine, we need the faith. And that will only come in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Mary thought her relationship with the Lord had ended. That THEY had taken the body and hidden it. But that relationship had not ended, He is risen from the dead. A new relationship was about to begin.

v 14 When she had said this, she turned around, and beheld Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus.

She did not recognize the one for whom she wept. Perhaps His appearance was changed, maybe her eyes were blinded, or perhaps the tears that welded up in her eyes kept her from recognizing Him.

v 15 Jesus said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking? Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.

As with the angels, Jesus now asks her why she is weeping and then goes on to ask who she is seeking.

The second question is significant in that, while the answer seems so obvious, it zeros in on what the believer's life is to be all about - seeking Jesus, knowing Him.

People today are trying to find themselves, or find significance in others, but we are to be seeking Jesus.

That is the purpose of our study of the Bible, the learning of BD doesn't end with doctrine, it goes on to application and the developing of a relationship with God.

Mary at this point still does not recognize Jesus and thinks he is the gardener.

She still thinks that someone took the Lord's body out of the tomb and placed it somewhere else.

So after a series of questions she is still not getting the point - what will it take for her to go from confusion and doubt to faith and confidence?

ONE WORD.

v 16MARY.

We have here the greatest recognition event in all of history.

The first appearance of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ.

Upon saying her name she recognizes Jesus.

WE CANNOT OVERLOOK THE FACT that the first person Jesus appeared to after His resurrection was a woman disciple.

Too often we forget the faithful women who followed Jesus, who were there at the Cross while most of the eleven disciples had run away in fear. These women, of whom Mary is seen as the most devoted, followed Jesus Christ.

So perhaps it is not unusual that He would appear to her first.

That Jesus would appear first to Mary shows us three things.

1.His love: Here is Mary weeping and it is Jesus who will wipe away the tears

2.That is this Church age that is about to dawn there is no distinction of man and

woman in the dynamics of the relationship one can have with Christ.

3.It also points to the authenticity of the Word: For a Jew to record that the King of Kings and Messiah of Israel first appear to a woman would be unheard of.

To the disciples, even to the High Priest, to one who was in authority yes - but to a woman.

Men, there is a lesson in that for us: Let the wonderful believing women we have in this church enjoy their position in Christ.

Husbands, give you wives the freedom to be loved of the Lord, to love Him, and to serve Him with you, but also apart from you.

Allow them to develop the ministries God has for them and to enjoy their personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

DO NOT EVER MAKE THESE women who are sisters in Christ anything less than believers of the highest station.

They may be the ones who seek after and follow Jesus when you are running away with fear and doubt.

This verse also shows us that the Shepherd now His sheep.

Remember John 10:3 The Lord as the Shepherd of the Sheep: JOH 10:3 The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out.

This one word speaks volumes of the personal intimate relationship we can have with Jesus Christ.

He knows us, do we know Him?

v 17Jesus said to her, Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren, and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.

There are numerous opinions on what this statement means. I think the confusion can be eliminated if we see that there is an

interpretation of this passage and then one very important application.

1.As Mary recognized Jesus she fell at His feet and clung to Him. This was an expression of Joy.

Amazing how quickly the gloom of lost is turned to the Joy of finding.

2.Jesus told her to stop because He had not yet ascended to the Father.

This is a time between the resurrection and the initial ascension. In the ascension of Christ we see the bestowal of Glory.

He lead captivity captive (Ephesians 4:8) and was seated at the right hand of the Father (Hebrews 12:2)

3.She wanted Him to remain, but He had a job to complete and that was to ascend to the Father.

In many ways we can see the ascension was put on temporary hold so that Jesus could comfort this one woman.

I think the angels stood silent in their amazement at how much she love Him but even more, how much He loved her.

4.But by way of application, we see the principle of the Church Age.

That Principle includes three parts.

A new relationship, a new relatives, and new responsibility.

Let's read again the verse.

v 17Jesus said to her, Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren, and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.

1.A NEW RELATIONSHIP.

Jesus, in telling her not to cling to Him, in effect was saying that this physical contact is not His real presence for His church.

A new relationship would begin with His ascension and the decent of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the other comforter who will guide us in all truth and minister to our human spirits.

In the C.A. Jesus is risen, He sits at the right hand of the Father, and while He has ministries towards us it is the Holy Spirit who is directly involved in our lives. He is the one who leads us, teaches us, and enables us to develop the mature relationship are to have with God.

2.NEW RELATIVES: Jesus instructed Mary to Go to my brethren, brothers.

Jesus called His disciples His brothers. Earlier they had been servants, then at the last supper they were called His friends, and now His brothers.

Believers in Jesus Christ become a part of His family through faith. God and their Father as He is the Father of Jesus Christ.

We see in the next phase that the Father of Jesus Christ is to be our Father also.

This family relationship reminds up that we have a kinship with Christ and a kinship with all others who put their faith in Him.

A new family, new relatives, in Christ

3.A NEW RESPONSIBILITY: Jesus told Mary to go and tell His brethren that I ascend to my Father and your Father and My God and your God.

Mary was to go and tell the others and we continue to pass on the good news even today, Christ our Lord is risen - even death could not hold the one who came to save the lost.

Our new responsibility as the church and Christians individually is to tell others that Jesus Christ is the Savior, He has conquered sin, Satan, and even death.

Now Mary was blessed in four special ways.

1.She was ministered to by angels

2.She saw the risen Jesus

3. She was the first to see Him alive

4. And she was first chosen to be the proclaimer of good news - He is not dead, he is risen.

We share in that last blessing, we too are to be the proclaimers of good news, He is not dead, He is risen.

v 18 Mary came to the disciples and told them what had happened.

Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, I have seen the Lord, and that He had said these things to her.

Luke, however, tells us what the response would be that morning so long ago as Mary and the other women who later saw the two angels would begin to tell others.

Luke 24:11 When they gave the angelic report to the disciples: These words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them.

And with the two men on the way to Emmaus we find their conversation with the Lord himself who they did not recognize.

LUK 24:22-25 But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that He was alive. And some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see. And He said to them, O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

Things have not changed all that much, we continue the in the legacy of Mary and tell others, but others see our words our nonsense and do not believe the Scriptures. OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER 20, VERSE 19 (vv 19-29).

It is the night of the day of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our risen Lord has appeared to Mary Magdalene, and the two disciples on the

road to Emmaus. He now appears to the disciples.

v 19 When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst, and said to them, Peace be with you.

We cannot overlook the delay that took place between the morning and the evening. Our Lord had risen from the grave prior to sunrise but it is not until that evening, after 6:00 by Jewish time that He comes to the disciples.

This delay was for these disciples an opportunity to consider, to think, and then to apply the doctrine they had been taught.

When God delays in doing something it is always for our benefit. We need time to consider, think, to muse upon what we have learned so that when we see the power of the resurrection we will know that God is at work.

I am sure that having learned of the empty tomb that morning from Peter and John and having heard the report of Mary they were there together taking, reminding each other of what He had said. Putting truth together and encouraging one another.

The time was now right for the Lord to come to them.

They were together because of FEAR. But their fear of the Jews will be turned to the peace of God in the presence of Christ their Savior and their friend.

We are told: The doors were shut or locked.

And yet we are also told that suddenly: Jesus came and stood in their midst.

Here we begin to see the uniqueness of the resurrected body. It is not barred by closed doors. It can appear and disappear. It is a body of light and it can fuse together and transcend all created things. It is eternal and a body fit for eternity.

But something else can also be applied here. The Lord comes even though the door is locked. We may lock the door against Jesus, man may try to lock the door and keep Him out, but man cannot do this. Jesus is in our midst, where ever a believer is He is there and as we will see, the Holy Spirit is there also.

As Jesus has promised He will never leave us nor forsake us.

I think of believers who have been imprisoned for their faith or service to their country. Their captures lock the doors, but Jesus is there.

And then we see what the Lord announces: Peace be with you.

The verb is absent making this an elliptical and very strong statement.

PEACE - WITH YOU.

He came (aorist) He stood (aorist) He spoke (present)

The present tense would indicate that this was repeated. It was said perhaps to each disciple present.

PEACE IS ONE OF THE GREAT COMODITIES possessed by the believer.

It is said that peace is well sought after yet not well found.

From the beginning of history, less than 8% of the time has the world known peace. In a total of 3500 years only 280 years have been without war. Eight thousand treaties have been broken in the course of history.

Why is peace do hard to find for nations and for individuals? It is because true peace has a source and that source is God.

[See c:\doctrine\peace.001, own notes]

v 20And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

The Lord displayed the wounds made for them, this validated His identity and also reminded then that He went to Cross for them. He suffered so they could be set free in Him.

NOTICE: Where only moments before there was FEAR there is now REJOICING.

The presence of Christ dispels fear. They had been remember the words He had spoken but still they feared the Jews.

BUT NOW HE IS THERE and His presence along with the Word remembered results in rejoicing.

REJOICING is from JOY and JOY is from God. We do not manufacture it, fake it, try to obtain it. It is there in the Word and in the presence of Christ.

IT IS FOUND ONLY IN OUR RELATIONSHIP with Him.

Now in this dispensation the presence of Christ is with us though the indwelling of the other comforter, the Holy Spirit. He, as we have seen, reveals Christ in us.

v 21Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.

Jesus now tells them that the peace they have is not to be kept to themselves.

We have the commissioning of the disciples which will become the commissioning of the Church entire on the Day of Pentecost.

We have two adverb that show us that Just as the Father sent the Son the Son now sends us.

KAQOS and KAGW, each very strongly indicating that the full weight of authority and assets that were Christ's are now ours.

HE LIVED BY THE POWER OF THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT and these sources of power are now given to us.

v 22Because He has commissioned them He must also empower them.

And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.

At this point the disciples were indwelt by the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost they would be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The indwelling of the Spirit is often seen as being of little or no practical effect but we overlook the fact that the Spirit works in us, not only having done a work at the moment of our salvation, but continuing to work apart from His work in Filling us or empowering us.

1.The Indwelling of the Spirit breaks the power the OSN has over us. In the indwelling of the Spirit we now have a new power option and the OSN, while it continues to tempt us and even control us when we volitionally chose to give it power, no longer has authority over us.

Romans 8:11-12 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you. So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

2.The indwelling of the Spirit establishes in the body of the believer a temple or the Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

3.The indwelling of the Holy Spirit allow the believer to understand spiritual truth.

John 16:13 But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God.

4.The indwelling of the Holy Spirit wars against the flesh convicting the believer even when the believer is out of Fellowship.

Galatians 5:17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

5.The indwelling of the Holy Spirit allows us to witness for Christ.

Our passage and Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.

v 23The content of the commission.

If you forgive the sins of any, {their sins} have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.

We must not see this as an arbitrary choice of the believer. Christ died for all sins and we have the privilege of presenting that good news to the World.

The forgiveness of sins was the prominent feature of the apostles preaching in the book of Acts.

If a person has believed in Christ we have a right to proclaim they are forgiven of sins.

If a person rejects Christ they continue in their sins without practical forgiveness.

The word RETAINED, found twice here is KRATEW and looks at domination, mastery, authority over, power over.

By rejecting Christ the unbeliever retains or continues to live under the power of his sins.

SO WHAT THEN IS THE CONTENT OF THE MESSAGE? Our sins are forgiven, we are set free - that is the Good News that we proclaim

From the peace we have with Christ, our rejoicing with Him, His sending of us, and the Spirit that dwells within us - we tell the world about true freedom in Christ. What do you do

when you doubt? Here in the gospel of John we find the account of Thomas, who since antiquity has come to be personified with doubt. We have all hear and perhaps even used the term: Doubting Thomas.

This morning we are going to learn about doubting Thomas and perhaps see how we too doubt and how God deals with our doubt.

One Religious writer has said: Doubts can be valuable if the force a man to search deeper for answers. For to pursue doubts is to come upon some exciting beliefs and greater truths.

OPEN YOU BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER 20, VERSE 24 (vv 24-29).

Last week we looked at the account in which Jesus comes on Sunday night, the night of the resurrection, to his disciples as they are huddled together in fear. Their fear is turned to joy through the PEACE they have in the presence of their Lord and Friend, Jesus Christ.

But only ten of the eleven disciples were there. Thomas was absent.

v 24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

We are told where Thomas was not. We are not told where he was. Much speculation has gone into why Thomas was not with his colleagues that night.

Now a few things about Thomas.

1. The name Thomas, which is the Greek pronunciation for the Aramaic word Twin, and Didymus, which is the Greek word for Twin, was apparently a Twin, he had a twin brother or sister.

Although nothing is known of his twin.

2. John tells us more about him than any other gospel writer, implying that they were close friends.

3. In the Gospel of John, Thomas is shown to be impulsive, quick to question, honest with his lack of understanding, and very loyal.

In John 11:16 when Jesus told His disciples they would go to Bethany near Jerusalem to visit the grave of Lazarus, Thomas, even in the face of awaiting danger, was willing to go and.

John 11:16 Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with Him.

4. During the Farewell Discourse, it was Thomas who boldly admitted his lack of understanding regarding what Jesus was teaching.

In John 14:5 when Jesus talked of going to the Father, Thomas, while others were nodding heads not knowing nor understanding, Thomas spoke up.

John 14:5 Thomas said to Him, Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?

To which Jesus answered: John 14:6 I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.

5. From what John tells us of Thomas we begin to see a man who is lives a bit on the emotional edge. If we were to describe his temperament we would see Thomas as melancholy, and this may help us understand why he was not there with the other disciple.

He may have been alone, still trapped in his grief, brooding over the loss of his Savior and Friend, Jesus Christ.

v 25 But during the week that followed Resurrection Day, he rejoins the disciples and they tell him what has happened.

The other disciples therefore were saying to him, We have seen the Lord! But he said to them, Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.

SAYING TO HIM is imperfect tense. The other disciples were telling him this repeatedly.

In doing so they were fulfilling the commission that Jesus gave them.

v 21 Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.

They had been commissioned to tell others and they were telling Thomas, Jesus Christ is risen from the dead.

BUT HE DID NOT BELIEVE IT.

Notice what he does. He doesn't reject entirely, but what he does is establish a test for personal validation of his faith.

Let's reword this statement: I will believe if and when I see for myself and physically touch the nail holes and wound in His side.

SOME OBSERVATIONS AT THIS POINT.

1.Thomas does not reject, but he does not believe either.

2.He is in between belief and unbelief. This is the middle ground of doubt.

3.He wants for himself what the other ten disciples had, personal validation of the resurrection of Jesus.

4.This personal validation could have been his had he been with the other disciples. But he chose to absent himself from the fellowship of his colleagues and friends.

5.At that point there is not much of a problem. He doubts and he wants further proof, just like the other ten had.

6.But then he complicates matters. He establishes his own test for belief. He sets up his own parameters for faith. He says only when he can see, and touch, and feel the wounds, will he believe.

7.So like many of us, he wants to move from doubt to faith, but to make that trip along a path of his own choosing. Well, it is not going to be that way.

We go from doubt to faith along a pathway of God's choosing not our own. When we establish tests that we expect God to pass, we put ourselves in control, and we must let God control not only ourselves but the pathways we will travel.

THE PROBLEM: When we chose our own path for faith we can easily establish unrealistic and unnecessary requirements that we expect God to fulfill. When these are not fulfilled the way we expect, we remain locked into doubt - and this doubt will soon move to unbelief.

v 25Continued.

Along with Thomas' doubt, we need to consider how the other disciples dealt with his doubt.

THINK ABOUT IT: The first person they tell of the resurrection, one very close to them, doesn't believe it and therefore, does not believe them.

THE DISCIPLES COULD HAVE taken Thomas' doubt and disbelief very personally, but they did not.

We see no rejection of Thomas, no criticism, nothing said that in any way would indicate separation or scorn.

WHAT THEY DID IS EXACTLY WHAT WE must do when others, even others close to us, reject the message we give.

WE LEAVE IT UP TO THE LORD, AND NOW, IN THIS AGE, TO THE HOLY SPIRIT, TO CONVICT AND CONVINCED.

In most Christian circles today, Thomas would have been rejected, denied fellowship, others believers would have been offended, statements of separation would have been made.

Our responsibility before the Lord is the same as was the disciples. We proclaim Christ, risen for the Grave. Our job is to invite others to know Him, not to convert, convict, convince, criticize, condemn.

John 20:26-29 THE LORD COMES TO THOMAS, just as he did with the other disciples.

v 26 And after eight days again His disciples were inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst, and said, Peace be with you.

It is the next Sunday evening, now all eleven disciples are together. Again, the door is locked and again the Lord Jesus appears in their midst, and again He says Peace be with you.

So we have now the same conditions of validation that we set by the Lord for the other disciples a week before.

So Thomas is given the same opportunity as his fellow disciples.

v 27 But here we see the Lord's patience with even those who doubt.

Then He said to Thomas, Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing.

The Lord in a tremendous act of grace, gave Thomas the opportunity to prove the resurrection according to Thomas' own requirements for faith.

THE PURPOSE: That Thomas would be not unbelieving but believing.

Both UNBELIVING and BELIEVING are adjectives that describe not merely Thomas present state, but Thomas himself. He is a cynic, he is a doubter, he is unbelieving.

HERE IS A OPPORTUNITY FOR FAITH - a decision to believe.

v 28 Read this verse: Thomas answered and said to Him, My Lord and my God!

What we do not see here is as important as what we do see.

Thomas did not do what he had required for faith nor did he do what the Lord invited him to do.

He did not place his fingers in the nail holes nor did he put his hand in the scared side of the Savior.

Instead he proclaimed: My Lord and my God!

In all the Gospel of John, this is the most dramatic, definitive, and accurate statement of faith proclaimed by any of the followers of Christ.

He proclaims Jesus as His Lord and Jesus as God, Thomas brings together in one statement the humanity of Christ, His Messiahship, and His deity.

And all without going through with his test of faith.

YOU SEE, IF WE ALLOW THE LORD TO PROVE HIMSELF TO US, HE WILL DO IT - HIS WAY NOT OUR WAY.

v 29 But notice what the Lord has to say about Thomas' Doubt.

Jesus said to him, Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.

The dismissal of doubt and his ensuing faith, blessed Thomas.

But there is a greater blessing in store for us. We do not see and yet we go from doubt to faith.

I cannot help but think that this is the situation Peter had in mind when years later he wrote in I Peter 1:8-9

And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the deliverance of your souls.

We may wish we could have been there with the disciples in that room nearly 2000 years ago and experienced the resurrected Jesus appearing in their midst - but something even greater is reserved for us. To not see and yet believe, and be greatly blessed by God.

SOME PRINCIPLES ON DOUBT.

1. When a believer doubts, his doubt must have a direction. Like faith it is a transitive concept, it seeks an object, what is being doubted?

2. Doubt is common to every believer in every stage of growth. As we grow we face new challenges of faith. We will at times believe and trust, and at other times doubt.

3. When we doubt we may be doubting the word of the ones who give us information. In that type of doubt we really do not trust the person who speaks to us.

4. We may doubt that what is taught can be a reality in our lives. We may even see truth as being effective in the lives of others but doubt that we too could ever have such a life of faith.

We may doubt that we can live dependant upon the Lord and we may even doubt that the Holy Spirit can live the life of God through us.

When we doubt in those ways we are doubting both ourselves and what God can do with a weak vessel when it is put into his hands.

5. Or we may doubt God himself. We may doubt that God can do what He says He will do or is willing to do what He says He will do.

6. Therefore doubt can either be in others, in ourselves, or in God and His Word.

7. All doubt keeps us from faith and it is faith that works in the Christ Centered Life.

8. The solution to doubt is not in our own power, but in the presence and power of God. We must go to him with our doubts and depend upon Him to bring us along on the pathway of faith.

9. Notice that the Lord did not teach Thomas, did not give him the various points of the doctrine of the resurrection. Thomas already had the doctrine, what he needed was something to move him along the pathway of

faith. And for him it was the presence of Christ.

What we it be for us, for you, for me, as we hit the roadblocks of faith called doubt? I don't know, neither do you.

But just as with Thomas, you can be assured, God wants you to go from doubt to faith and He will provide for you His way to bring you to greater faith, greater dependence upon Him, and greater blessing.

In Mark 9:24 we have a man who also doubted. He had a son possessed by an evil spirit, the disciples had tried to help but the failed. When Jesus came the boy's father honestly told the Lord that while he had some faith, much was doubted.

Mark 9:24 Immediately the boy's father cried out and began saying, I do believe; help my unbelief.

So what did Jesus do, He healed the boy of the unclean spirit and while we are not told of the father, I think we can be sure he moved on a little bit father of the pathway of faith.

LET US RESOLVE TO TAKE OUR DOUBTS TO HIM, LET IS RESOLVE TO LET HIM BRING US TO FAITH. At the end of both John chapter 20 and John chapter 21 we have two statements by John that tell us that what he has written is only a partial picture of what was accomplished by our Lord during His earthly ministry.

John 20:30

Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;

John 21:25

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written.

John tells us that the purpose of this record of the incarnate Christ is for his readers, then and through the centuries, to consider the

signs that Jesus did. To contemplate His miracles, and from then to form a correct belief in who Jesus is.

The Signs of Christ: The word SIGN in the GNT is SEMEIA and is one of four words used to refer to the miracles of Jesus Christ.

It looks at that which is a token or sign of divine authority. Hence, the signs John refer to are designed to authenticate Jesus Christ as the unique Son of God who came to provide Salvation for whosoever believes in Him.

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS CHRIST.

1.The four Gospels include 35 different miracles

2.John selected, at the urging of the Holy Spirit, eight of these miracles to authenticate Jesus Christ as the Son of God

3.The miracles that Christ did can be divided to three categories.

1)Miracles of nature: Stilling the storm, walking on water, turning water in wine, the feeding of the 4,000 and the 5,000, the miraculous catch of fish (John 21).

2)Miracles of Healing: Cleansing of the lepers, restoring sight and hearing, even raising three people from the dead.

3)Miracles of power over demons: The casting out of demons done by Christ and His disciples as He sent them to minister.

4.The Seven Signs that Jesus did as recorded by John point the way to Salvation in Christ.

A sign is designed to point the way, to give direction, and can be a very welcome sign to those who are lost.

Ever been lost? Or thought you were on the wrong road. What a welcome relief it is to see a sign that points the way to you destination.

LET'S CONSIDER THE EIGHT MIRACLES IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN:

1.Jesus turns the water into wine: John 2:1-11

While this shows us Jesus' power over nature, and what power it was because god wine can takes years to mature, it also sets a pattern for our relationship with Christ.

The disciples, Jesus' earthly family, and others were at a wedding feast and the joy of the feast was threatened because the host had ill prepared for the ones who were there and ran out of wine.

Jesus in turning the water into wine revealed

1)He is concerned about even the smallest details of our lives.

2)He desires those who follow Him to have Joy in their lives

3)Although we can never fully prepare for the future (too many guests and not enough wine) Jesus will provide His highest and best for us.

The one word we want to remember from this sing is: JOY

2.The second miracles is in John 4:46-54 and shows us Jesus healing the nobleman's son in Capernaum.

This man was a Gentile, a Roman Official. He requested that Jesus come to his home and heal his son. But Jesus did not go, but told him that his son was well and the official trusted in the Words that Jesus spoke.

When he arrived home he found his son had been healed.

This miracle teaches us two things.

1)Jesus compassion, love, and power is not reserved for Israel alone but for those who come to Jesus in faith, trusting Him.

2)The love and power of Jesus is not in His physical presence or even in His resurrected presence but in trusting in the Words He spoke.

In many ways as this official physically departed from Jesus he was drawing near to Jesus by faith.

So the one word challenge of this sign is:
TRUST

3.Next we have the healing of the lame man in Jerusalem: John 5:1-18.

Here we see Jesus' compassion and power directed to someone who in the eyes of man did not count. A poor infirmed man who thought if he could get to he pool of Bethesda he would be healed.

So he was a nobody who was trusting in superstition. And Jesus came to Him and said.

Take up you bed and walk.

In this miracle we can see what Paul would later state.

1 Corinthians 1:26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble.

We see that Jesus come to us when we, like the lame man, are locked into weakness in the flesh and in the soul. Even the superstition that we might have, the false doctrine, the religion, is wiped away by Jesus Christ.

And then what do we do? We WALK BY FAITH IN THE SPIRIT

The key word we learn from this sign is :
WALK

4.The fourth sign is Jesus feeding the 5,000. John 6:5-14

This was not a good day for our Lord. He started out with 5,000 people following Him and ended up alone.

The people wanted Him to be a King but only according to their own expectations and demands.

When He refused He sent them away.

He had been teaching them all day and now when evening came they were hungry and so he preformed a miracle, He feed five thousand people, had food left over, all from 5 loaves of bread and two fish.

In this miracle we see that Jesus provides even for those who do not understand Him and even those who demand that He be a Savior according to their own expectations.

The key words we have from this sign are:
UNDESERVED PROVISION, AND GRACE

5.The fifth sign in John's Gospel sees Jesus walking on the water. John 6:16-21

Here again is a display of Jesus' power over the nature He created and controls.

But we also see that Jesus is walking someplace where no person is supposed to be walking and in other accounts we see that even Peter joins Him on walking on the waves.

The opportunity revealed in this sign is:
THAT WHEN WE WALK WITH THE LORD WE WILL GO WHERE WE COULD NEVER GO IN OUR HUMAN STRENGTH.

So the one word lesson from this miracle:
DEPENDENCE

6.The next sign was of Jesus healing the man born blind in Jerusalem. John 9:1-7.

Jesus was the first to ever heal blindness. During the time of Moses and later Elijah and Elisha we see many miracles but healing blindness was unique to Jesus Christ in God's unfolding plan.

In Isaiah 42:16-20 the prophets tells us that it will be God's servant, the Savior who will heal the blind. His power, given to Him by God, is authenticated by this sign.

And perhaps more than any other miracle of healing we can see this sign directly applied to us.

We are born spiritually blind and we need the touch of the master's hand if we are to see what God has for us.

When we are born again we are healed of our spiritual blindness.

Ephesians 1:18 The eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is

the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

The one word key in this sign is:
ENLIGHTENED

7.The seventh sign was Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. John 11:1-45

The applications and challenges from this sign are numerous.

1)Mary and Martha expected Jesus to come before their brother Lazarus died, He did not.

They had to learn to wait upon the Lord and while they waited they did so with eager expectation.

We need to learn the same thing, eager expectation mixed together with patience.

2)Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, restoring him to life. At salvation we are given life and have the potential for a life that is more abundant.

3)And in the resurrection of the church we will be raised to eternal life in a new body, a resurrection body.

So if we were to seek one word to describe this sign it would be: LIFE

8.An the eighth sign, that is coming up in John 21 is the miraculous catch of fish on the sea of Galilee. John 21:1-14.

We will see that in this miracle there is a tension between the disciples trying to do things on their own and the Lord doing great things for them.

As a result of the catch of fish the Lord had a sea side breakfast with His disciples.

The one word we could use for this sign is:
FELLOWSHIP

EIGHT MIRACLES, EIGHT SIGNS that not only point the way to Jesus our Savior but also point the way to Jesus our Friend and our Provision for life.

Let's look at what we can have in Christ just from these signs that point to Him.

1.JOY: I Peter 1:8 And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.

God wants us to have Joy in life. A joy that overcomes the world of sorrow, the place of pressure, and the activities of adversity that we face.

James 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials.

Joy is to go before us in the person of Christ

2.TRUST: Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

We are to Trust Christ, live by faith, trusting in the one who loves us so much that He went to the Cross to die for our sins.

3.WALK: II Corinthians 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

Our walk in the C.C.L. is to be a walk of faith, a walk in which we trust in Him and thus walk by the spirit.

Galatians 5::25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

4.PROVISION: We do not walk by our power but by the grace and provision of God.

James 4:6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Philippians 4:19 And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

5.DEPENDANCE: One of the things we struggle with in our Christian walk is our need to depend upon the Lord and not take control of our life.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now

live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

6.ENLIGHTENMENT: As we walk we can see clearly the path upon which we trod because Jesus has caused us to see, we have been enlightened to His plan and purpose.

Ephesians 5:8 For you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light.

1 John 1:7 If we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

7.LIFE: We have been raised to newness of life. The life we can have in Christ is a life that overflows with abundance.

Romans 6:4 We can walk in the newness of this life.

John 10:10 Jesus said I have come to give you life and life more abundantly.

8.FELLOWSHIP: As we walk with the Lord, depending upon Him, our fellowship with Him grows and becomes greater and greater.

1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Philippians 3:8-10 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which {comes} from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

NOW HOW CAN WE HAVE THIS, ALL THIS THAT LEADS US TO FELLOWSHIP AND FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST?

John gives us the key in John 20:31 These have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

And many years later in I John 1:3 he tells us again that the key to all that God has done and provided for us is found in the Word, as we study it and believe it, by faith, coming to know God in a personal way.

What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

SO IT BY FAITH THAT WE CAN HAVE WHAT GOD WANTS US TO HAVE, HIS HIGHEST AND BEST.

But this faith is not a leap into nothingness to a Rock which may or may not be there.

It is faith that is set upon the revealed person of Christ, the Father, and the Holy Spirit as found in God's Book, the Holy Scriptures.

LEARNING, THINKING, AND APPLYING the Word that we might come to know Him.

Chapter 21

New Englanders have a humor all their own. A story is told of a tourist who spotted an New Englander fishing and asked him how many fish he had caught. The man answered, Well sonny, if I catch this one I'm after and two more I have caught three.

Someday are like that, we do everything we can to insure a catch, and they just are not biting. Today we will see why the fish weren't biting on the sea of Galilee nearly 2000 years ago.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE, VERSE 1.

The last chapter of John, John 21, is often called the Epilogue of this book. But we normally think of an Epilogue as being the end of the story and here, it is not. This chapter helps us understand the new

relationship believers will have with the risen Lord and it is not an end but a beginning.

You see the story of Jesus Christ is not finished, John's Gospel continues even to this day and this place. We become a part of the unfolding adventure of the Christ Centered Life and here is John 21 we see the function, the dynamics, of that life beginning.

v 1-3 The Disciples in Galilee

After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He manifested Himself in this way.

This will be the third manifestation of the risen Lord to his disciples.

In Matthew 28:7 an angel announced that Jesus would meet with His disciples in Galilee: Behold, He is going before you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you.

The fact that these disciples are in Galilee demonstrates an obedience to the Word of God. There can be little doubt that they were also very happy to get out of Jerusalem and get to more familiar surroundings. Jerusalem had been a difficult time for them, as a group, as individuals.

There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples.

Seven of the eleven disciples were present at this time. John, the human author of this epistle, was one of the sons of Zebedee. We need not assume that the other four disciples who were not present this day were in any way negative. They may have been in the city, with family or friends. We do know that in Acts 1, in the upper room, all eleven are there.

Simon Peter said to them, I am going fishing. They said to him, We will also come with you. They went out, and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing.

Never being one to have a lot of patience, Peter decides to go fishing.

We can see part of his personality in this and in what will follow but we also see his leadership qualities in that the other six disciples follow him with little or no discussion.

The final part of this verse reminds me of the saying that A bad day fishing is better than a good day working.

They were out in the boat all night and caught nothing.

WHAT A TREMENDOUS PICTURE THIS IS OF the believer, busy, active, doing something, but not doing it in the power of nor by the direction of God - and the results.

NO FISH, WHY? Because they were not called to be fishers of fish, they were called to be fishers of men.

Mark 1:16-18 And as He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men. And they immediately left the nets and followed Him.

How often do we go off, doing something, busy at an activity, involved in a program, only to see no production, no fruit, and no fish.

And yet the Lord told these disciples in His farewell discourse that they would have fruit, production from their labor.

Yet they were involved in the wrong labor.

Let's Look at three Principles.

1. Before the Lord called them, they had been fishermen

2. Now they have a sense of frustration, they are perplexed, they do not know what to do. They are waiting on the Lord but the Lord is taking an awful long time.

3. So they go back to fishing. Back to what they did before the Lord called them. Back to their comfort zone.

APPLICATION: How often do we gravitate to that which is familiar, secure, known, comfortable? And in doing so fail to fulfill the destiny God has for us.

BUT THE LORD IS GRACIOUS: Here in verse 3 we have what is really the first miracle. These experienced skilled fishermen spent the whole night on the water and caught nothing. That is a miracle.

That is the power of God interrupting what should have occurred.

And God still does that today.

HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO DO SOMETHING AND not been able to do it. Something very normal, very routine, something that should have been a snap. And yet you come up worn out and empty.

Maybe God is trying to tell you something. Maybe you are doing the wrong thing.

v 4 In the midst of their frustration from waiting and now their added frustration from catching no fish, Jesus appears on the shore.

But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

Perhaps it was the distance, perhaps the dim morning light, but the disciples did not recognize their Lord and Friend.

v 5-6 The Miraculous Catch of Fish.

Jesus therefore said to them, Children, you do not have any fish, do you? They answered Him, No. And He said to them, Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you will find a catch.

The word CHILDREN is a word that means little children. Not babies or young men, but those who would tend to try things on their own. And that is what the disciples are doing.

But this vocative should remind them and us that we are dependent upon the Lord.

They cast therefore, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish.

NOW BACK AT THE BEGINNING of His earthly ministry a very similar thing happened. He told Peter and the others to go back out to sea and put down the nets and there also was a miraculous catch of fish. It was from that miracle that Jesus said.

Luke 5:10 And Jesus said to Simon (Peter), Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men.

v 7 John, the human author of this account, recognized Jesus. Perhaps he put together what just happened with what happened three years earlier.

Then we have Peter's reaction: That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved said to Peter, It is the Lord. And so when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on (for he was stripped for work), and threw himself into the sea.

Peter could not wait for the boat to make it to the shore. He jumps in the water and swims to his Lord and his friend. Jesus.

This is very typical of Peter's impulsive nature. He was the first to speak up and argue with Jesus regarding Jesus' death. The first to claim that he would die for the Lord. The first to run head long into the tomb. And the first to deny the Lord he loved.

But while this impulsive action of swimming to shore is typical, it is very different than what Peter did three years earlier.

TURN WITH ME TO LUKE 5.

v 4 And when He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.

v 5 And Simon answered and said, Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but at Your bidding I will let down the nets.

v 6 And when they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish; and their nets began to break;

v 7 and they signaled to their partners in the other boat, for them to come and help them. And they came, and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink.

v 8 But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord! THREE YEARS EARLIER PETER wanted the Lord to depart from him because he recognized his own sinfulness -

NOW, THREE YEARS LATER he cannot wait to come into the presence of Jesus Christ.

And this even after he denied the Lord three times.

WE SEE SOMETHING HERE I WANT ALL of you to understand.

The young believer who does not have doctrine, who neither understands the Lord nor knows the Lord will tend to flee from the presence of the Lord because he will have an awareness of sinfulness but not of the Lord forgiveness, love, and grace.

The more mature believer will come into the Lord's presence still knowing he is a sinner but now being aware of the Lord's forgiveness, love, and grace.

PERHAPS WE HAVE TO ASK OURSELVES what we would do and the answer to that will determine where we are in our growth and relationship to the our Lord.

WOULD WE SWIM TO SHORE OR ROW FARTHER AWAY?

v 8The rest of the disciples make it to shore: But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away, dragging the net full of fish.

This tells us also how far Peter swam, the boat was 100 yards off shore so Peter swam 100 yards. Not a small task.

v 9-10The Lord was there, waiting for them:

And so when they got out upon the land, they saw a charcoal fire already laid, and fish placed on it, and bread.

Jesus said to them, Bring some of the fish which you have now caught.

Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn.

Jesus had made preparation for them. Everything was set for their arrival.

NOW SOMETHING IS LITTLE FISHY HERE.

1.The word FISH in verse 8 is ICQUS , the common word for fish.

2.The word FISH in verses 9 and 10 is the word OPSARION

3.That word can mean small fish (like smelt) or the sauce that is prepared before hand that is like a relish that was eaten with fish.

This was a delicacy in the ancient world

4.In verse 11 the word ICQUS is again used for FISH.

LET'S RECONCILE THESE WORDS AND GET SOME PRINCIPLES.

1.Jesus Christ was there waiting for them. The fire which He built looks at judgment, judgment only he could undertake for us.

2.Bread is a common picture in the scriptures of the Word of God. And the disciples, tired as they were, obeyed the Word of the Lord in casting their nets on the other side of the ship.

3.The relish is the relish of life, that which makes everything, even our production in Christ's power and by His word, better.

Life goes better with Christ, He is the one who refreshes.

4.The Lord them summons His disciples as He summons us today. He tells them to add some of there little fish to the fire.

5. Notice verse 11: Peter, the one who should be worn out having just broken the record in the 100 yard swim is the one who pulls in the net. This pictures his strength being in the Lord, not in Himself.

6. The disciples add to what the Lord had prepared what they now possessed, the fish. And they all benefitted, they would all eat.

They only had to haul in the catch, the Lord had done everything else.

7. But even that was possessed by them because they obeyed the Lord's Word and the fish were theirs because of His power.

PARRALELS: And there are a few.

1. Even our fruit, our production, must be in the power of the Lord as we obey His Word.

2. The Lord gives us the power to produce but the enjoyment, the relish of life is found in His presence.

3. What we produce, the fruit of our labor, is returned to the Lord and all are blessed.

4. We can also see a picture of the Fish being those we catch for Christ or win to the Lord, and they are to be brought to Him.

5. And although we may be tired in the flesh, as was Peter after His swim, when we serve the Lord, obey His word, operate in His strength, we not faint, nor will we be weary.

v 12-13A Picture of intimate Fellowship.

Jesus said to them, Come and have breakfast. None of the disciples ventured to question Him, Who are You? knowing that it was the Lord.

The invitation is given. The disciples chose to have fellowship with their Savior and Friend Jesus.

They know Him, they need not ask any questions. He is the WHO and that sets asides the many WHY's of life.

Jesus came and took the bread, and gave them, and the fish likewise.

The bread looks at Jesus provision of the Word of God to his children.

The Fish looks at the believer's production which is in the hands of the Lord and by His authority and power.

The eating together looks at the fellowship the believer can have with the Lord Jesus Christ.

v 14 This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead.

And from this fellowship is going to come service and from that service will come suffering - and we will see that next week. INTRODUCTION.

In John 10:14-16 Jesus said: I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock with one shepherd.

With that He established that we are His sheep and He is our shepherd. But now in John 21 He is preparing to ascend to the Father for the last time and He shares His ministry of being our Shepherd with others.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER 21, VERSE 15 (vv 15-19):

The first power breakfast is coming to a close. This intimate time that the risen Lord has spent with His disciples is about to end. Soon he would be seen by more than 500 believers in Galilee according to I Corinthians 15:6 and then another time with the eleven disciples as recorded in Matthew 28. His final appearance would be in Jerusalem at the Mt. of Olives (Acts 1).

But here, in this time of fellowship on the shores of Galilee we see what Jesus' greatest concern is for the future of His body the Church - that they would be feed.

NOW WHEN THIS PASSAGE IS STUDIED, IT is often looked at according to Peter's responses to the Lord's questions.

AND THESE ARE IMPORTANT: Peter, who had denied the Lord three times, is given three opportunities to affirm his love for the Lord.

BUT BEFORE WE GET INTO THAT I WANT you to see one thing that is often overlooked. Look at verse 15.

v 15 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord; You know that I love You. He said to him, Tend My lambs.

In verse 16: Shepherd my Sheep

In verse 17: Tend my Sheep

In these verses we what our Lord's number one concern is as He prepares to take His place at the right hand of the Father.

His number one priority is that you and I are feed the Word of Truth.

Now Jesus now knew from His omniscience that the church and believers would face many challenges and problem.

Now His glorified humanity and deity are present. In His resurrected body He is unique in that he is God and Glorified Man in one. Not only as in the incarnation where He was the God Man, but now functioning fully as God and Man.

He knows what we will face, what we are facing now. And concerns and priorities are built upon information and His information is perfect - so His solution is perfect - feed my sheep.

Jesus, looking ahead into our future, sees all that we will face and that the only way we as His Sheep will be able to face life and still follow Him is to have Bible Doctrine.

HERE JESUS IS PREPARING TO ASSEND FOR THE FINAL time and be placed in a position of

honor and glory receiving the accolades of His victory at the Cross and yet His the thoughts of His heart are for us.

But this should not surprise us. It may humble us that the eternal God of the universe, the beloved Son of the Father, the risen Lord would think of us, but it should not be a surprise.

He always sets us first. Paul would later use the Lord as an example of this for us.

Philippians 2:3-5 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not [merely] look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.

So it is in light of that concern for us, that we would be feed truth that He turns to Peter.

v 15 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord; You know that I love You. He said to him, Tend My lambs.

Peter had denied the Lord three times on the night of Jesus' arrest. Now he is given three opportunities to affirm His love for the Lord. This is grace and this is the way the Lord works even today. We will face and fall to failure, but the Lord is always there with an opportunity to pass the next test.

This first question is a comparative which looks at the mental attitude decision to put faith in Christ alone for salvation. Jesus is really asking Peter about his priorities, is Jesus Christ first over all others?

As the Lord asks Peter, Do you love me more than these others love me?

Peter would have been reminded of his boast that he loved the Lord so much he would die for Him.

John 13:37 Peter said to Him, Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You.

Mark 14:29 But Peter said to Him, Even though all may fall away, yet I will not.

So now the Lord asks.

Do you love me more than these? AGAPAW

A present, active, indicative of continual mental attitude.

AGAPE love is always seen as the highest form of love. It is stable, it is unconditional, it fulfills all that is said of love in I Corinthians 13. It is a mental attitude love but doesn't end there. It is the foundation of the actions of love.

The Greeks saw this love as the most noble, encompassing all virtue and honor.

THIS IS A TOUGH QUESTION ESPECIALLY IN light of past performance. This disciple who had boasted of his love for the Lord had ended up denying the Lord three times.

So Peter doesn't answer the question. He skips over the comparison part and skips over the mental attitude part. In his response he tells the Lord he has a relational love for Him.

Yes, Lord; You know I love you. FILEW

This also is a wonderful word for Love.

This love is relational and goes beyond the position of the believer and looks to a day by day love relationship with Christ.

BUT TRUE RELATIONAL LOVE is only possible if there is first the more noble unconditional MA love.

Because of this way Peter answered the Lord gives Him an opportunity to express that love.

Feed my lambs. The LAMBS are the new believers. We can all serve the new believer by giving him truth. He needs the milk of the Word and we need to give him or her basic truth.

To often we devourer our young rather than feed them.

To FEED then is BOSKW, a very old word for one who is a herdsman. One who feeds and cares for the lambs.

But Jesus has not yet received an answer to His question.

v 16 The second question: He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord; You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.

The same question but the comparison to the other disciples is left out.

Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ? Not in comparison to the love others may have but because of what you know about Him. Not a comparison question, but a question that asks if love is there for Christ because of His essence, His nature, His character.

Peter again responds with FILEW . He just doesn't want to use that more noble form of love. He wants Jesus to know that he loves Him but he cannot bring himself to say AGAPAW.

WHY???? Because the thoughts of his three denials still looms in his head.

He failed, He let down the one He professed so strongly to love. He went head long against reality, the reality of his own weakness.

And now here the Lord is asking, Do you love me with a noble love, an unconditional love, a love of the highest virtue?

Peter cannot bring himself to say YES, he loves the Lord, he is a friend, but a friend that fails.

The humiliation of his failure is giving way to humility in the presence of the Lord. And the Lord keeps asking - do you love Me.

What Peter is sensing is what many of us sense when we fail, when we sin. Paul called it Godly Sorrow.

II Corinthians 7:8 For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it-- for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while--

v 9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.

v 10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

A sorrow that bring repentance and draws us to faith. And then - no regret.

But right now Peter is hampered by regret. The Lord wants him to know that the Love He has for this disciples is greater than the failure of this disciple.

That Peter can profess His love for Him and that He can serve Him.

And so Jesus gives him more responsibility.

Shepherd my sheep. Here we change from FEED to SHEPHERD and from LAMBS to SHEEP. Yet with a diminutive of Sheep, little sheep, young sheep.

In view here is the believer who can serve other believers by shepherding them, encouraging and comforting, helping them shoulder the loads of life. And we can only do this out of our love for our Lord, serve one another.

v 17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Tend My sheep.

Here the question changes: The Lord switches from AGAPAW to FILEW. He asks the question that Peter has been answering all along.

THIS IS GOOD, THIS IS GRACE: The Lord meets Peter where he is. he doesn't demand of him anything, doesn't try to straighten him out. He loves this weak disciple, he loves him in spite of and because of his weakness - so he meets him where he is. On his level of love - Peter, are you my friend?

Peter is cut to the heart, Grieved, by this question.

In this question the Lord asks: Peter, are you indeed my friend?

And Peter is now faced with having to consider the depth of his devotion and love for the Lord.

Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.

The Lord, now in glorified humanity, with deity and humanity glorified in one, does know all things from His divine omniscience.

Some see typical Peter impatience here, I don't. I see something new. A Peter who is so honest and open before the Lord that he says, you know my heart even better than I do.

And yes Lord, I LOVE YOU, FILEW.

And that is the most I can offer with any measure of truth, honesty, and devotion, I love you as a friend. And being truthful with you, I may fail again.

BUT THAT IS ENOUGH, the Lord does not demand anything more than our openness before Him and our willingness to serve Him.

So the final mandate: Feed my sheep.

As with the first mandate in verse 15 Peter is to be the herdsman who feed the sheep. Here the diminutive is dropped. The full grown adult sheep.

PRINCIPLE.

1. We love other believers only after we first are in love with Jesus Christ. We express that love when we serve others.

2. The qualification for effective service is our Love for Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.

3. The love of God to us, our love for Him, our love for one another is all part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit who shed the Love of God abroad in our hearts.

Romans 5:5 The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Three things the Love of God, to us, in us, and from us, will do.

1. Love promotes service.

Paul said that he was controlled by the love of God.

II Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died.

2. Love prompts Sacrifice.

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself.

1 John 3:16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

3. Love prevents Schisms.

Ephesians 4:2 With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love,

Ephesians 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ.

Colossians 3:14 And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

Of everything that could validate our faith, it is our love for one another that Jesus said would demonstrate to the world both seen and unseen, that we are His disciples.

And that love is only possible as we live the spiritual life in the Spirit.

Romans 15:30 Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me. As we come to the end of the Gospel of John we deal not with an ending, but a beginning. The Lord Jesus will ascend to heaven and the Holy Spirit will soon descend to fill believers with divine power for living and ministering in the church age.

So we do end but begin and with this new beginning we see three things dealt with at the end of John's Gospel - Service, Sacrifice, and the Scriptures.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO JOHN, CHAPTER TWENTY ONE, VERSE 17 (vv 17-25)

Last week we saw the Lord commission Peter three times to both shepherd and feed His sheep.

v 17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep.

The responsibility of every believer is to love one another. That spiritual love is more than a MA. It becomes the foundation for action.

We all have ministries in common.

1. To the unbeliever we have the ministry of reconciliation, evangelism.

2. The believer who is in need we have the ministry of encouragement.

3. And to fellow believers who are growing in the Word we have the ministry of teaching, passing on the Truth of God.

You have a ministry with every person you come in contact with. unbeliever, Bel who is hurting, Bel who is growing.

The sum total of these ministries are described as: Shepherding and Feeding the Lord's Sheep.

v 18 That service that each of us are to be engaged in is dependent upon the direction and leading of the Lord and specifically in this age, the Holy Spirit.

Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself, and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go.

Truly, truly OR Amen, Amen: Occurs 25 times in John's gospel only. A double emphatic particle that calls for the giving of attention to an important affirmation.

This is not just an aside, it is an important principle of truth set within an analogy.

The analogy is of growing old. When young you go where ever you wish, look at kids, they run, jump, climb, crawl, go high, go low, go around, go under. But then age begins to set in - and when you grow old, very old, you have to stretch our you hands and others take you hand and lead you, sometimes to places you do not wish to go.

HUMOR: Remember the gag about the boy scout helping the little old lady across the street, but she was waiting for a bus and did not want to cross the street.

There is an applications from this that is for all or us. There is also an interpretation of this that is very specific.

1. For all of us, a spiritual application. We begin the spiritual life as immature, baby, young believers. We go where we want with

little thought to divine will. We stumble through the early years of the Christian life. Perhaps the only way we manage to survive is because the Father hedges us in, puts a ring of fire around us to protect us, and at times limit the extremes of our own will.

But then we mature, and as John the Baptist declared we desire to decrease while the Lord increases. We want what Paul had when he said in Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

And so rather than go where we want to go, we stretch out our hands to the Lord and let Him lead us.

AND IN THAT LEADING OF GOD we may go where we never expected, anticipated, or even wanted to go. Many you have gone to Russia and Belarus, and so of you have told me you would have never picked that field of service - but that is where you were lead.

AND THIS FOLLOWS THE PATTERN and precedent set by the Lord Himself.

Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

2. Secondly, the interpretation, which is what the Lord intended by the analogy and is what Peter understood, dealt with the manner of Peter's death.

In the Ecclesiastical History by the historian Eusebius we are told that Peter did die an old age in Rome. His hands were stretched out, tied to a cross. He felt so unworthy to die as did his Savior that he insisted that he be crucified upside down, and he was.

So Peter, even here, saw this as a prediction of his death.

v 19 Emphasizes the interpretation of the analogy.

Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, Follow Me!

NOTICE: This death would glorify God. We all know we will face death, what an honor is to also know that the death you will face will glorify God.

Jesus then added - Follow me!

Words spoken that reminded Peter of what was said along the shores of that sea three years before. When all this began, the Lord said to him - Follow me!

But a more recent event would also loom is Peter's mind.

In the upper room he had boasted that he would follow Jesus to his death, but then in John 13:36-38

Simon Peter said to Him, Lord, where are You going? Jesus answered, Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you shall follow later. Peter said to Him, Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You. Jesus answered, Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a cock shall not crow, until you deny Me three times.

And since that statement he did deny the Lord but now he is told he can follow his Savior and Friend, Jesus Christ.

Jesus said But you shall follow later, and Peter is now told that the time is right, follow Him, even to his death.

v 20Curiosity almost becomes a distraction.

Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; the one who also had leaned back on His breast at the supper, and said, Lord, who is the one who betrays You?

This disciple Peter refers to is John, the human author of this Gospel.

v 21Peter therefore seeing him said to Jesus, Lord, and what about this man?

NOW WE HAVE THIS LITTLE episode recorded in the Scriptures for us to establish a principle. And that principle is not so much the privacy we enjoy in the church age but the fact that God has an unique will and destiny for every believer.

THE DISCIPLES HAD FUNCTIONED as a team and that team work concept will continue in the church age with the LC. But the corporate ministry of believers in the church age is not exclusive.

God has a will, a plan, a destiny for each and every one of us.

v 22Jesus said to him, If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!

The IF is a 3rd cc, possibility, maybe this is the Lord's will, maybe it is not.

To remain until I come, This is also a reminder that Jesus is coming again.

THEN: What is that to you?

TI PROS SE, Why are you facing that issue?

The Lord Jesus had just given Peter a fantastic responsibility, to feed and care for His sheep. He has told him that he will be led of the Spirit, even to his martyrdom.

BUT NOW PETER almost sets that aside, minimizes it, wanting to know about John, his friend.

AND WHILE WE MAY SEE THIS as innocent curiosity, the Lord, in His omniscience, sees it as something more - a potential for distraction.

DISTRACTION AVOIDANCE:

Conclusion: Setting a priority and sticking with it.

Okay, sounds great, but how do we do that?

1.First of all you have to decide what is really important in life. Whatever you hold as being important will establish a priority in your life.

We are limited in our determination of what is and what is not important.

What you thought was important a few years ago may have no value to you today.

REASON: As we mature, as we grow, especially in the plan of God, our desires change

But as CHRISTIANS we can look to our Heavenly Father and he in His Word has told us what is truly important in life.

Luke 12:29-31 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

God who has created us, our Father who provided His Son as our Savior tells us what is really important.

By faith we are to seek His kingdom and in Matthew 6:33 we are told to seek His righteousness and everything else will fall into place.

2. We can see the establishment of priority in the Life and Ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Parable of the Lost Sheep.

Luke 15:3-7 And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.

Jesus Christ set you as a priority in His life even to the point of going to the Cross for that

which he established as being truly important in life.

3. If Jesus set us as a priority we must set Him as the priority in our lives.

Jesus Christ must become the most important person in your life.

And then His Word, the Bible, will become the most important thing in your life.

4. The pattern of Priority can be in four stages.

a. Thinking and concentration on priority #1

b. Then organize your life around priority #1

c. Then organize your thinking around priority #1

d. Concentrate on the details of priority #1

You already do this, your life is organized around, and your thinking is concentrated on some priority in your life, something you think is the most important person or thing in your life - but if it is not the Lord and His Word you are spending a lot of time and energy involved with the wrong priority.

PETER ALMOST GO DISTRACTED but the Lord shut it down and gave him a simple command - YOU FOLLOW ME.

Very emphatic in the Geek text: You, Me, Follow.

The word FOLLOW as an imperative command means to attend to, to follow in the sense of serving, to obey, to become a disciple of.

This was what Peter is to do and this is what we are to do and anything short of that is a distraction in the Christian life.

v 23 Shows us how even then a false application can become a false doctrine.

This saying therefore went out among the brethren that that disciple would not die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but only, If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?

John is writing this and think he is having a laugh at the decades that have passed since that day and how many times he no doubt heard others say he would not see death before seeing the Lord. He knew better, and on his death bead said, see I told you so.

JOHN 21:24-25 The Conclusion and a Reminder.

This is the disciple who bears witness of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his witness is true.

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written.

John, the last living apostle, the last one alive who walked with the Lord as one of His disciples, states that all he has written is true,

The plural refers to the elders in Ephesus who also are giving their approval to the truth that John writes by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

There is not doubt, no room for argument, the story told is a story true.

Then the last verse: A reminder that while the story is true it is not complete.

Imagine all the books in the world, having the depth of the Bible. In our lifetime we could never master this book, there is always something new - and in eternity we will discover new things about our Lord and Savior every day.

John is little like Paul Harvey, he has told the story of the Savior but it will be in eternity and for all eternity that we will come to know the rest of the story.

Psalm 145:3 Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised; And His greatness is unsearchable.

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!
