
a *Grace Notes* publication

The Gospel of Luke

an expositional Bible study by
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The Gospel of Luke

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Foreword

These studies in the Gospel of Luke have been compiled and written by Rev. Daniel Hill, PhD, pastor of Southwood Bible Church of Tulsa, Oklahoma. He has graciously provided his notes so that they can be made available by E-mail and on the World Wide Web.

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Chapter 1

Let's begin our study of the Gospel of Luke by looking at the introduction to the Gospel of Luke.

Luke 1:1-4

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

Now let's quickly turn to Acts chapter one.

**Acts 1:1, The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach,
2 until the day when He was taken up, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen.
3 To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.**

From these two introductions we can see that these two New Testament books were written by the same person and written to the same person.

About Luke.

Luke is called by Paul in Colossians 4:14 the beloved physician.

He was a close friend and missionary companion to Paul.

The circumstances of his conversion are not known.

He spent time in Antioch and later ministered in Philippi.

An ancient epitaph of Luke stated that he had: *He served the Lord without distraction, having neither*

wife nor children, and at the age of 84 he fell asleep in Boeotia, full of the Holy Spirit.

He is a Gentile, a Greek, his name is Latin showing some Roman influence.

As a medical physician he was well educated and his training and profession resulted in very detailed writing in both Luke and Acts.

About Theophilus.

His name means *friend of God*.

He was the recipient of both the books of Luke and Acts

However, his exact identity is unknown. Speculation has ranged from the generic *friend of God* intended to all Christians.

Or he could be a specific benefactor to the early church, perhaps in high social or political standing.

If that is true, the name may be a pseudonym to protect the individual from persecution.

Another possibility is that Theophilus was unsaved and that Luke wrote the letters to persuade him to put his faith in Christ.

When and from where was the Gospel of Luke written?

Of all the ideas about when this Gospel was written the early date of early AD 60's seems to fit the context of both the Gospel and the books of Acts the best.

Luke would have then written this during the time of Paul's first imprisonment in Rome where both Paul and Luke had the time to write and record.

He is mentioned as being with Paul at this time in Philippians 1:24 and then in II Timothy 4:11 we find that he is one of the very few who stuck with Paul during his second and most difficult imprisonment.

In considering when it was written we must also consider the relationship of this Gospel to others.

Mark is the first written Gospel and John in the last.

Matthew's Gospel and Luke's Gospel seem to be written about the same time.

Who drew upon whom?

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There was oral tradition that developed regarding the earthly ministry of Christ.

These developed into written tradition that predated the writing of the Gospels.

One of the best theories is that there were four written traditions.

Mark's Gospel (inspired), then the Q document which developed in Antioch, the M document which developed in Jerusalem, and the L document which developed in Caesarea.

These along with oral traditions became the sources for the Gospels.

Mark used the oral traditions and Q, along with his eyewitness account

Matthew used Mark, Q, and M, along with his eyewitness account

Whereas Luke used Mark, Q, and L

John seemed to have relied on Luke along with his own eyewitness account

One very interesting theory that clears up some internal problems with the language used in Luke is that he wrote a Gospel account using the Q and L documents.

But then, came upon Mark's Gospel and edited his original work using this new influence.

Notice what he says in Luke 1:1-2

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us,

just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us -

To say the least, I am thankful to the scholars who spend a lot of time looking into these matters to show us the not only the relationship between the Gospel writers but also the validity of these accounts about our Savior.

Luke has been thought of as a historian but his Gospel is much more theological than historical.

And in his introduction he states a theological purpose.

It seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent

Theophilus; so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

Outline of Luke

The Infancy Narratives (John and Jesus): Chapters 1-2

The Ministry of John the Baptist: 3:1-20

Jesus in Galilee: 3:21 - 9:50

From Galilee to Jerusalem: 9:51 - 19:44

Jesus in Jerusalem: 19:45 - 21:38

The Crucifixion: 22:1 - 23:46

The Resurrection: Chapter 24

Major Themes

What emphasis do we find in this Gospel? Why was it written?

Well, it was written as a defense of the faith, to prove the earthly ministry of Christ, His death, His resurrection.

But in doing this we see a number of major themes of doctrine dealt with.

It is the Gospel for the Gentiles, written by a Gentile.

Of all the books of the Bible, only two are written by a Gentile and that Gentile is Luke.

He was the man from the wrong side of the tracks (non-Jewish) so to speak, but God used him in a mighty way.

Even his quotations of the Old Testament are taken from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.

It is a Gospel of Women. In the Jewish culture the place for women was very low but with the Greeks and even more so the Romans, the woman's place in family and in society was elevated.

Luke writes much of Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary and Martha of Bethany, Mary Magdalene.

Some suppose that Luke may have grown up in Macedonia where women were more emancipated than anyplace else in the empire.

It is a Gospel of Praise.

In Luke's writings the phrase *praising God* appears more than in all rest of the NT put together.

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Some think that the tradition of praise is part of the Jewish culture and not our heritage and here is Luke, a Gentile, writing much of praise and worship.

It is a Universal Gospel.

The barriers are brought down.

A Gentile writes to Gentiles about a Jewish Carpenter, their Savior.

Samaritans, the poor, the outcast, Gentiles, those rejected by religious Israel are pictured in this Gospel.

And it is a Gospel of Prayer.

Luke shows to us a Savior who was a man of prayer.

We see Jesus at prayer at all the great moments of his earthly ministry.

We see others at prayer, seeking earnestly the will of God for their lives.

Luke saw the unlocked door of prayer as being a great gift of grace from God to us.

And that is really where we begin our study - with the earnest prayers of a righteous man.

The first thing we hear about is the birth of John the Baptist.

Luke 1:5

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

Herod died in 4 BC, shortly after the birth of Christ.

Jesus was born about 4 BC.

How could he have been born BC?, before himself? A mistake in the calendar.

In 525 AD, Pope John I commissioned Dionysius, a historian monk, to revise the Alexandrian calendar so as to date all years from the birth of Christ rather than *anno uris conditae* (the founding of Rome).

He did so but made a mistake on the year of the death of Herod, a six year mistake so Herod died in 4 BC and Jesus was born prior to Herod's death.

Now Zacharias was a priest, a descendant of Arraighn.

But there were so many priests, as many as 20,000, they had different orders and took turns ministering at the Temple.

His wife was Elizabeth also of the priestly line.

He was of the eight division of the twenty-four divisions of priests.

Each division was on duty twice a year.

Their service was assigned by lots.

And only some received then selected to serve.

Luke 1:6

And they were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord.

While many of these part time priests did not take their service seriously, we see that Zacharias did, he walked blamelessly before God which did not mean he was sinless but that he admitted his sins to God and claimed the forgiveness of the grace of God.

Luke 1:7

And they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years.

One school of Rabbis taught that an unmarried Jew or a Jew who had no children was to be excommunicated from the synagogue.

Some even taught that it was grounds for divorce.

This was a social stigma of the day but it did not stop Zacharias from serving the Lord.

Luke 1:8

Now it came about, while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division,

This would have been his one week of service, twice yearly.

Topic: Zacharias Incensing

Luke 1:9

according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

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This was a tremendous honor.

The actual service to be preformed was assigned by lots.

And for these part time priests, the highest service was the burning of incense.

A priest like Zacharias could only do this one time in his entire life time.

Every morning and evening, sacrifices were made for the nation.

Following the sacrifice, the burnt offering, a priest would be in the holy place burning the incense which was seen as enveloping the smoke of sacrifice, making it a sweet savor to God.

This ritual paralleled the reality of prayer.

After the evening sacrifice and the burning of the incense the priest would come out of the holy place and come to the rail of the courts and bless the people.

Answered Prayer.

Luke 1:10

And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering.

Luke 1:11

And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.

At verse 19 we find that this is the archangel Gabriel.

He appears to Zacharias to the right of the altar which would be standing between the altar of incense and the golden lampstands.

Between *prayers offered* and *light given*.

Luke 1:12,13

And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear gripped him.

But the angel said to him, Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.

With his formal prayers for the redemption of the nation, Zacharias also prayed for a child for himself and Elizabeth.

Luke 1:14,15

And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.

For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother's womb.

He is to similar to one who has taken an Nazarite Oath as did Samson but he will be of the priestly line so he will also be like a priest.

He is seen as one who had a unique position, neither Nazarite nor Priest, but with elements of both.

Also we have an adverb rather than a preposition.

The word WHILE YET is $\epsilon\tau\iota$ in the Greek text and can be translated, out from or once besides his mother's womb.

Luke 1:16-18

And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God.

And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN (Malachi 4:6) , and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

And Zacharias said to the angel, How shall I know this for certain? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.

Zacharias has been praying for this for so long that he now wants assurances rather than just promises.

Isn't that a lot like us?

How often do we pray for something, it comes about, and we doubt.

We want more than the promise, we want some assurance that we can handle and touch and see and experience.

Zacharias will get his assurance.

Luke 1:19,20

And the angel answered and said to him, I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; and I have been sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news.

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And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which shall be fulfilled in their proper time.

I get in this that Gabriel was not accustomed to being doubted. After all, he was bringing the very word of God to this human being. So Gabriel gives Zacharias his credentials. And then gives him a sign, the Jews always want a sign.

Zacharias will be silent, not able to speak, until the birth of his son. So when he comes out of the Holy Place, he is not able to bless the people.

Luke 1:21,22

And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and were wondering at his delay in the temple.

But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept making signs to them, and remained mute.

Now I want you to notice some things about Zacharias.

He was just a part time priest and yet he took his ministry seriously.

Many priest in the many orders did not serve, he did.

And God honored his willingness to serve.

He faced rejection.

Because he was childless a whole school of Rabbis would have rejected him, seen him as unfit to serve in the Temple.

But he did the best thing he could do in ignoring them.

Zacharias and Elizabeth did not allow their childless state to distract them from their spiritual life.

They walked blameless in the sight of God. So often we let circumstances dictate to us what we think our relationship with God actually is.

Fourthly, Zacharias was a man of persistent prayer.

So God put him into the Temple, in the most honored place, a place of prayer.

And it was there that his prayer was answered.

He prayed and then, waiting upon the Lord, put himself into the place where he could hear God's voice.

God's answers to prayers come to those who listen for them., as Zacharias did.

Have you prayed, then have not listened?

Have prayed and then been so busy in the things of this world that you have not heard the answer that came from heaven?

Have you ever prayed the desire of your heart and been unwilling to serve God, fulfilling the desire of His heart?

What was said of David?

He was a man after God's own heart?

Well, we met another such man today, Zacharias, a man after God's own heart - a man of prayer.

C. S. Lewis, quoted in *Jesus Christ: The God-Man*.

"The Second Person in God, the Son, became human Himself: was born into the world as an actual man -- a real man of a particular height, with hair of a particular color, speaking a particular language, weighing so many stone [pounds]. The Eternal Being, who knows everything and who created the whole universe, became not only a man but (before that) a baby, and before that a fetus inside a woman's body. If you want to get the hang of it, think how you would like to become a slug or a crab.

The Arrival of Gabriel.

Luke 1:26-29

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee, called Nazareth,

to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

And coming in, he said to her, Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you.

A Conversation with Gabriel.

Luke 1:29

But she was greatly troubled at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this might be.

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She was not troubled at Gabriel's appearance but at the content of what he said.

This archangel had called this young teen-age Jewish girl *one who was favored of God*.

The word *pondering* is *διαλογει* from which we get *dialogue*.

She dialogued in her mind.

She was thinking not merely reacting or emoting.

Luke 1:30

And the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.

So now in three verses we find that Mary is favored of God, and has found favor with God.

The Greek word could be loosely translated - graced out!

χαριτω a word used in the New Testament only where God is the subject, He is one giving grace.

Luke 1:31

And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.

As with the announcement of the birth of John, Gabriel tells Mary the name she will give the child, *Jesus*, from the Hebrew *Joshua*, meaning *the Lord is salvation*.

Luke 1:32,33

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end.

His character, His reputation,

His position, and His activity is also described.

Luke 1:34

And Mary said to the angel, How can this be, since I am a virgin?

She is looking at it physically but God is going to perform a miracle

Luke 1:35

And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow

you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.

The virgin conception is as important as the virgin birth.

Is it through normal conception that the sin nature is imparted.

And in the virgin conception, herein described, there is no transmission of the sin nature to Jesus.

There is no doubt with this statement that the child will be the Messiah, the unique only begotten Son of the Most High God.

Isaiah 7:14, Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

Luke 1:36,37

And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month.

For nothing will be impossible with God.

It was not impossible for God to cause Elizabeth to conceive and it is not impossible for God to cause Mary, a virgin, to conceive.

Luke 1:38

And Mary said, Behold, the bondsman (complete obedience as a slave) of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her.

Humility and trust in the Lord. What a beautiful combination. Mary goes to be with Elizabeth, the two Mothers United.

Luke 1:39-41

Now at this time Mary arose and went with haste to the hill country, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.

And it came about that when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

This is the reflex motility of the fetus. It is not independent action. The word *leaped* which is *σκιρταω* is used of cattle, sheep, even the wind

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and the hills. It is used for the movement of non-human objects, even lifeless objects.

What God wants us to see is Elizabeth's joy in hearing of the news of Mary's pregnancy and what He did in filling her with the Holy Spirit.

Elizabeth Rejoices

Luke 1:42

And she cried out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed among women are you, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

The word for *fruit* looks like that which is not yet ripe nor ready to be picked.

Luke 1:43,44

**And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?
For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy.**

The word leaped is preceded by the pronoun *εγω* which would be *I heard (strong emphasis with the pronoun expressed) and leaped in gladness the baby in my womb.*

Luke 1:45

And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord.

The lifetime of the moment is found in this verse - blessed is she who believed and all who believe.

Mary Rejoices, Her Song of Praise

This is Mary's song, called in Latin *The Magnificat*, which is taken from the first words of the song in the Greek text.

Magnify the soul of me, the Lord.

This song can be divided into two parts in two ways.

First:

1. What God has done for Mary
2. What God will do for the World

Second:

1. A testimony of Spiritual identity
2. A testimony of Spiritual destiny

Let's begin with the first part.

Luke 1:46-47

And Mary said: My soul exalts the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

The greatest commandment for God's Old Testament people was to love God with the total being.

Mark 12:29 Jesus answered, The foremost commandment is, Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.

As with every believer, Mary had body, soul, and spirit.

She had already given her body to be used by God in giving birth to Jesus, now who looks at the immaterial part of herself and exclaims that her soul and her spirit also honor God.

She is fulfilling that greatest command of loving God with her total being.

The soul is said to exalt or magnify the Lord.

This means to make large, to make great and glorious by what is said.

The soul is the real you, and from the soul comes communication, life style, manner of life, norms and standards.

Mary prays that her soul, the real person, will bring glory to God.

It is an amazing thing that we can glorify God.

God has given us the assets, the grace that allow us to make Him great and glorious before the world.

The SPIRIT is said to REJOICE in God my Savior.

Mary looks at the human spirit, given by God at salvation, the place where doctrine is stored, and says that the spirit rejoices.

The amount of joy you will have in spiritual things is directly parallel to the amount of doctrine in the human spirit.

Little doctrine, little joy; much doctrine, much joy.

Mary had much joy and we can then know that she had much doctrine.

The use of the title GOD MY SAVIOR shows that she had a friendship and intimacy with Jehovah.

She knows she is saved, and rejoices in her Savior.

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David knew God intimately and in one of his final Psalms he said (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.*

Luke 1:48

For He has had regard for the humble state of His bonds slave; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed.

The first part of this verse looks at Mary who was not deceived or distracted by what God had chosen to do with her.

She continued having a spiritual identity of humility.

Martin Luther spoke beautifully of this verse when he paraphrased it by saying.

"God has looked upon me poor, despised, lowly maid, where he could have easily found a rich, high, noble, mighty queen, a daughter of a prince and great lord.

"So he might have found Annas' and Caiaphas' daughter, who were of the highest in the country, but upon me he cast his pure, good eyes and used such a lowly and despised maid that no one should boast before him that he would have been or was worthy."

Luther goes on to talk about a true humility of mind, not in outward deeds or acts, but a humility that knows God and can draw near to Him.

Now the second part is used by many to exalt Mary, but listen to it again.

For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed.

The little word for BEHOLD is the word that really arrested my attention.

That word is used to either issue an order or to state a cause for amazement.

Now if Mary was issuing an order the verb would be an imperative, but it is not.

Furthermore, if this was an order it would be inconsistent with the first part of the verse.

What she is doing is stating her own cause for amazement, she is amazed that she should be so regarded of God and will be, in the future, so regarded by men.

She stands amazed and humbled that this is happening to her.

Principle

When we see how God will use even us, it will move us to greater appreciation of Him, greater amazement of His plan, and greater humility regarding ourselves.

Verse 49 really puts the emphasis where it should be.

Luke 1:49

For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name.

The tense looks back at the definite act of God choosing Mary to bear the Christ child.

The contrast is between her humble state, her lowliness, and the Might of God, the power of God, and the willingness of God to act in and through His servants.

The word might is DUNATOS which almost always looks at the supernatural power of God but not merely a power that is possessed by God, but a power that acts in mighty ways towards mankind.

Mary sees God as powerful, acting in powerful ways, and she also sees Him as Holy.

Holy is His name.

How do we know the name of God? Only by the revelation of God.

Revelation is God revealing to man what man would otherwise not know.

Mary knew the name of God because God revealed Himself to man, and we know the name, the names of God, because He reveals Himself to us through His word.

And from that revelation, we can make a statement of fact - He is holy!!

At verse 50 the object of God's work shifts from Mary to the nation of Israel.

Now Mary quotes some of that revelation (Psalm 103:7)

Luke 1:50

And His mercy is upon generation after generation, Toward those who fear Him.

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We can be sure she had in mind the context of that verse which goes to say.

Psalm 103:17-18 But the lovingkindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children, To those who keep His covenant, And who remember His precepts to do them.

So mercy, God's work in holding back the judgment we deserve, comes as we fear-respect Him, and keep and remember His Word.

Luke 1:51-53

We have contrasts of God's dealings with man in the past

He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart.

He has brought down rulers from their thrones, And has exalted those who were humble. (Psalm 107:9) He has filled the hungry with good things; And sent away the rich empty-handed.

Mark begins these contrasts with the arm of the Lord doing mighty deeds.

In the Old Testament the arm of the Lord was associated with His right hand of His justice and in the right hand of God was found either cursing or blessing, depending upon man's position of faith in the Lord.

So depending on how God's justice finds you, the result will either be cursing or blessing.

Those who are proud and arrogant rulers will be scattered and cast down.

We think of Herod who will try to kill Jesus and ends up dying a miserable death shortly after that time.

But to the humble, those who know where they fit into God's grace program, God will exalt.

The hungry are filled, but the ones who think they have no need that God can fill because they are rich, will go away empty handed.

Luke 1:54-55

Mary gets very specific regarding the birth of Christ as a fulfillment of prophecy for Israel.

He has given help to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy,

As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his offspring forever.

God' purpose is to shed mercy and grace on those who turn to Him.

The greatest display of that mercy and grace is in sending His Son to be born in a feeding trough in Bethlehem.

The mercy and grace of God that Mary spoke of is still part of His plan and purpose for us - the purpose of the infinitive still goes on.

He remembers us in His great mercy.

Mary looked back to Abraham, and the promises God made to him.

She looked back nearly 2,000 from her time to the time of Abraham.

And today we look back, nearly 2,000 years to the fulfillment of those promises.

For unto us a child is born and His name is Jesus.

But more promises came as He lived and as He died and as He lived again.

As Mary sang her song she knew the promise and she would know greater promises.

But one thing i want to leave you with, one thing about this song I haven't mentioned, one thing that challenges me to very depth of my soul.

These words about our Savior, these wonderful, words of truth were said by a teen-age girl.

Maybe 16 years old, but what a depth of understanding and wisdom.

That only we could look to God and know our humble state like Mary.

That only we could look to God and have the confidence this teen age girl had as she looked ahead to the destiny God had for her, and the child she would bear, and give to the world, and give up to death.

Yes, Mary, generations will call you blessed, because of the doctrine you had in your soul.

Mary then remains with Elizabeth.

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Luke 1:56

And Mary stayed with her about three months, and then returned to her home.

Well, Jesus did grow up and we know that John the Baptist heralded the coming of the Messiah.

John was the forerunner, not only in ministry but also, in his birth.

Luke 1:57,58

Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she brought forth a son.

And her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her; and they were rejoicing with her.

The birth of a child, especially a son, was a time of great rejoicing in the ancient world.

And especially with Elizabeth and Zacharias since they were older and had not had any children until now.

Luke 1:59

And it came about that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father.

The Romans named boys on the ninth, the Greeks did so on the tenth day.

The Jews developed a custom of naming boys on the eighth day, the day of their circumcision.

The Jews always wanted to be ahead of the Romans and the Greeks.

Circumcision on the eighth day goes back to the Law and Leviticus 12:3 but the naming of a son on this day was a more recent practice.

It was assumed that the boy would be called Zacharias Jr., but this was not to be the case.

Luke 1:60

And his mother answered and said, No indeed; but he shall be called John.

I want you to notice that she uses a future tense at this point, just remember that.

Luke 1:61

And they said to her, There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name.

The name *John* means Jehovah's Gift or Jehovah is Gracious.

So while it was unusual to give a son a name that was not in the family already, it is a very appropriate name for this child.

Luke 1:62

And they made signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called.

We are not told that Zacharias was unable to hear, just unable to speak but perhaps the people assumed he could not hear so they made signs to him.

Luke 1:63

And he asked for a tablet, and wrote as follows, His name is John. And they were all astonished.

The ancient tablet were board covered with wax.

Zacharias writes out, *His name is John.*

I think the subtle difference in verb tense is great.

Elizabeth said he will be called John, but dad said - His name is John.

Here we see that the Word of the Lord has become a sure reality to Zacharias.

There is no doubt, no need for speculation, no questions to be asked or answered. John is this boys name!

Luke 1:64

And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God.

As what might be a vindication of his faith, Zacharias is now able to speak after nine long months of silence.

Luke 1:65,66

And fear came on all those living around them; and all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea.

And all who heard them kept them in mind, saying, What then will this child turn out to be? For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

The news of these events was spread about.

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But notice that in v 66 we are told that those who heard of these things *kept them in mind*.

They heard the news but did not speculate or gossip about it.

But they allowed this news, this good news to effect them and encourage them in knowing that the Lord was behind all of this working His perfect plan.

Now, after nine months of silence, Zacharias is now ready to speak.

And what does he do?

He finishes the job he had not finished nine months earlier.

Remember that he was supposed to come out of the Temple and bless the people.

But was not able to do this.

Now he gives his blessing and while we may think a new father would want to talk about nothing else except his new son, this is not what we hear in this prayer.

Zacharias had been composing this prayer for nine months, and it will deal with his Son, but also with the whole nation and most importantly, even more important than the birth of his son, it will talk about the Messiah.

The Song of Zacharias or the *Benedictus* which is Latin for the first word of the Song.

It can be divided into four stanzas, first: thanksgiving; second, deliverance, third: the place of John, and fourth: Messianic salvation.

Thanksgiving.

Luke 1:68

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people,

The opening words of this prayer were common words used to express thanks to God.

God is *blessed* or to be *spoken well* of because of who He is and what He does.

He has visited us.

This was very literal to Zacharias as the angel had come to him with the word of God.

Mission Accomplished.

Here again we see the expression of Zacharias faith.

Redemption is seen as already accomplished.

He know that in the mind of God what is planned by God is a sure and certain thing.

The word redemption is the strongest word used when purchasing a slave.

To buy, to take out of the slave market, and then to set free - λυτρω

This would have both political overtones as well as spiritual significance.

Luke 1:69

And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of David His servant—

The horn was a symbol of strength so this would be the mighty salvation of God worked within the house of David.

Remember, Zacharias was a priest of the tribe of Levi, David was of the tribe of Judah.

So here we see that his prayer is in praise of the Messiah who his son John will herald.

God had said in Psalm 132:17

I will cause the horn of David to spring forth; I have prepared a lamp for Mine anointed.

Zacharias knows of what Gabriel revealed to Mary and that Mary would give birth to the Christ.

This also validates Mary's descent from David because at this time Zacharias had no way of knowing if Joseph would marry Mary.

Luke 1:70

As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old

This statement further emphasizes the divine nature of what is going on.

God revealed all this long ago thorough his prophets.

Deliverance.

Luke 1:71

Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us;

The Gospel of Luke 15

This has political application to the Romans but that deliverance will be for the second Advent.

Now the enemies are death, sin, and Satan and God will deliver us from those enemies through the Cross.

This great work of God is first seen as deliverance, then as mercy, and then as a fulfillment of the covenant God made with Abraham.

Luke 1:72

To show mercy toward our fathers, And to remember His holy covenant,

Mercy is the holding back of what man deserved, condemnation, judgment, and separation from God forever.

But instead there is mercy.

And this relates back to the holy covenant.

Luke 1:73

The oath which He swore to Abraham our father,

Not the covenant with Moses and Israel called the Law, but the covenant that Paul would later call the covenant of promise.

God took an oath on Himself.

And Abraham believed it and by his faith he was justified.

Not the Law but the Promise.

What do we go back to today?

Luke 1:74

To grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear,

Being delivered - How?

The same way Abraham was, by faith.

Then we might serve God without fear because now we are part of His family.

There are volumes of truth in this one verse.

Faith, as stated in the covenant with Abraham, precedes service and that service, now that we are God's children is not in fear but in what God provides.

Look at the next verse.

Luke 1:75

In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

How can we be holy, separated unto God? How can we be righteous before Him? We may even say, how dare any man even think he could stand before God in righteousness?

But we can because we have put our faith, our trust, in His Son alone.

The Role of John the Baptist.

Luke 1:76

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS;

Isaiah 40:3, A voice is calling, Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.

Malachi 3:1, 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.

Israel had not known a prophet for near 400 years and now John will grow up to be the prophet of the Most High God.

Luke 1:77

To give to His people the knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins,

John ministry would not be to save people but to teach them, tell them about the salvation that would be in the one who could forgive their sins.

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!

John's own father, at his the birth of his son, predicted that his son would understand this radical departure from the works mentality that had so perverted Israel.

The Coming Messiah.

Luke 1:78

Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high shall visit us,

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Forgiveness will not come because of our works or good deeds.

Nor will it ever come because God overlooks our sins.

God's justice would not allow that.

It will come because of God's tender mercy which will cause the Bright and Morning Star, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come from heaven to earth.

That is the message of this season.

God did something only once and something only He could do.

He left his heavenly throne and came to man to live among us and to go to the Cross for us.

The word sunrise is equal to the sun rising in the east and the morning star.

The word in the Greek is one you have heard.

It was taken by the Muslims to designate their holy men - ANATOLEI.

But there is only one and does not live in Iran.

He lived two thousand years ago and now sits at the right hand of God.

Luke 1:79

To shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

I want you to see the richness of salvation as described by Zacharias in this passage.

There is preparation.

All life is a preparation for what awaits us tomorrow.

For Israel it was the coming of the messiah.

John would prepare the way.

As Christians our tomorrows are prepared for as we grow in the grace and in the knowledge of Christ today.

There is knowledge.

Paul asked how we they know unless someone teaches them.

Perhaps just like in John's day when religion strangled the people with rules and laws today we need the knowledge of a God who is righteous and just and who loves us enough to send His own son to die for us.

We need the knowledge of grace.

There is forgiveness: Grace begins with forgiveness.

We could never earn the pardon of God but we can receive it as a gift, GRACE, God's riches at Christ's Expense.

There is Illumination.

No longer in the shadows of death, we have been brought into the glorious light by Jesus Christ.

There is peace.

And it is in this light that has come into the world that we have peace.

In saying goodbye to his disciples Jesus said in 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.

I can give you the greatest Christmas gift you will ever get right now.

Peace, not a peace from troubles but a peace even in the midst of troubles.

Not a peace as the world gives but a peace only God can give.

A peace that is with God and of God and a peace that will keep on giving day after day.

Zacharias was a priest of Israel.

He knew what was happening and as he looked at his little new born son, he knew, with the full confidence that only faith can bring, that things were changing.

Israel was about to receive a visit and his little son would go before the one who coming to redeem His people.

Luke 1:80

And the child continued to grow, and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

And what an appearance it would be.

He would shake religion to its very roots and tell them about the grace that is only found in the one who is coming to die for them.

The Gospel of Luke 17

The prayer that went to heaven with this song is very simple, and a prayer we can appreciate today as we look back to Jesus coming to earth,
O come, O come Emanuel.

Chapter 2

The Journey to Bethlehem.

Luke 2:1-3

Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all were proceeding to register for the census, everyone to his own city.

Critics try to tell us this is historically impossible. But it is not.

While the first census ordered directly by Quirinius of Syria was in AD 6, is mentioned in Acts 5:37 resulted in a Jewish riot, we know that Caesar Augustus demanded detailed records of the inhabitants of the lands controlled by Rome.

This census would have been ordered by Augustus, then ordered by Quirinius, and carried out by Herod.

Herod apparently used the Egyptian method of taking a census which had every man return to his home town.

For Joseph this was Bethlehem, the place of his inheritance.

Luke 2:4

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register, along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.

Joseph would have had to go, but Mary would not.

Although Luke states that Mary was engaged to Joseph, they were married by this time but the marriage had not been consummated.

Joseph had to go to Bethlehem, by a decree set in motion in far away Rome.

And he chose to take Mary perhaps to avoid undo gossip in Nazareth.

So in this we can see the controlling hand of God and that God works through all kinds of people, Roman Emperors and gossip townspeople, to bring about his will.

In doing so we see that Micah 5:2 is fulfilled.

But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans 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.

Bethlehem was the home of David yet after David left to live in Saul's Palace it is not known if he ever returned.

In the same way, we do not see Jesus ever returning to Bethlehem after His birth.

The Birth of Christ.

Luke 2:6,7

And it came about that while they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth.

And she gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Luke alone records these events.

Matthew records the visit of Gabriel to Joseph and the Magi coming to Bethlehem but Dr. Luke alone records the birth of Christ and mentions the lack of room at the Inn.

We find that Jesus, the Son of God, King of kings, and Lord of lords, was born of humble, almost desperate estate, in a manger.

This word MANGER is "feeding trough."

The question remains, where was the feeding trough?

Some assume a cave because there were a lot of caves around Bethlehem and many were used as shelters for animals.

Some see it as a manger area attached to a house of even the Inn that was full of visitors.

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But wherever it was it reminds us of the humiliation of God himself coming to earth.

Poverty, obscurity, even rejection.

A non-Christian hearing that our Lord was born in a feeding trough commented that this was absurd.

And indeed it is.

It is absurd, but it is that very absurdity, that very foolishness that would confound the wise.

The Shepherds attend the Birth of a King.

Luke 2:8

And in the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields, and keeping watch over their flock by night.

Bethlehem would have been a very busy place, so much so that there was no room at the local inn for Joseph and his pregnant wife.

There was money to be made, people to see, old friends and family to spend time with.

Reunions and celebrations.

I can almost imagine the announcing angels going through Bethlehem trying to share the joy of the birth of Christ and finding everyone too busy.

The people missed out on sharing the joy of our Saviors birth not because of sin or malice, but because they were too busy.

Application

Have things changed?

How many of people this year, how many of you will be so busy with family and friends and food and the festiveness of the season?

So busy that you will not share in the joy of the coming of God to man?

The angels did find some who would listen, the shepherds in the hills of Bethlehem.

These were not ordinary shepherds.

From the time of David the shepherds who kept flocks in the area from Jerusalem to Bethlehem tended to the lambs who were to be used in the sacrifices at the Temple.

The lambs they cared for and loved were destined to die as a symbol of the Lamb of God who would come to once and for all take away the sins of the world.

Knowing about their job they would know that the Messiah was called by Isaiah, the *Lamb of God*.

The angels had found the perfect candidates to tell of the arrival of God to earth.

They were doing their job as unto the Lord

They understood that the Messiah was to be the sacrifice for sins

They were not too busy nor distracted by the circumstances that fell upon Bethlehem

But shepherds were not viewed by the rest of society as the most upstanding citizens.

Their work, following the sheep, kept them in a state of being unclean and unable to attend the worship at the Temple.

As a group they shared a rather bad reputation in, as the Talmud states, confusing what is *mine* and what is *thine*.

They were often accused as being thieves.

But these shepherds were devoted men who the announcing angel chose to invite to the birth of the King.

Luke 2:9

And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened.

FEAR was a normal response to the presence of angelic messengers.

But the Word of God as preached by angels would replace fear with joy.

Luke 2:10-2

And the angel said to them, Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people;

for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger.

We see that the Word did three things.

Replaced fear with joy.

The Gospel of Luke 19

The word joy as used by Luke is found seven times and is associated with the revelation of Christ.

Joy at his birth, at receiving his Word, as the disciples ministered in His name, and at His resurrection.

Principle

The greatest joy in life comes through *knowing* about Jesus Christ.

The angels announced salvation.

There would have been no question in the minds of these shepherds that this one who was born in Bethlehem was the promised Messiah, the Savior who came to save mankind.

The angels also announced how to find Him.

Salvation would only be half complete if we knew there was a Savior but did not know where to find him.

Our Lord never hides himself from those who seek Him.

Luke 2:13

And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

I have never read of anyone else other than me being puzzled by this host, this army of angels, appearing in great jubilation at this moment.

Consider that this may have been the first time the elect angels, all of them, knew for certain that the promised Messiah was coming to earth to fulfill all the promises of the ages.

God certainly veiled these events from Satan and the fallen angels and He may have veiled them from most of the elect angels also.

So upon now hearing of the Son of God coming to earth, they respond in spontaneous rejoicing.

Luke 2:14

Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.

Notice the last phrase.

Peace not on earth, but upon the people of earth, and then a condition - with whom he is pleased.

Notice the emphasis is on God not on man, it is God's good pleasure and that is only met by man with faith.

Apart from the personal relationship we are to have with Christ, there is not pleasing God and apart from pleasing God, there is no peace.

The idea of Peace on earth good will towards men, carries a condition.

Do you know the One, the only One who can bring peace?

Luke 2:15

And it came about when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds began saying to one another, Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.

The shepherds, who would never under normal circumstances leave their sheep, left the field to find the true lamb of God.

This decision resulted from a process.

They heard the Word, they thought about the Word, now they applied the Word.

They literally put *feet* to their *faith*, and went to Bethlehem.

Principle

Their responsibility over the sheep became secondary to seeking the Savior.

We too must learn the Word, think on the Word, and apply it establishing the priority of our lives.

For these shepherds, Christ became their priority.

Luke 2:16

And they came in haste and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.

Coming in HASTE is *σπευδω* which means *with speed and purpose*

It is aorist tense indicating that this was a single action that resulted from the Word they heard.

The baby Jesus was LAYING in the manger.

The verb *laying* is middle voice showing us that it was to Jesus benefit to be born of such low estate.

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The place and surroundings of Christ's birth removed any superficial attraction that man might have to seeking the Savior.

His lowly birth rivets attention on the greater purpose of God coming to man.

YOU SEE, you cannot look into the **manger** without seeing the **Cross** that was the destiny of this child born in Bethlehem - nothing is there attending the trappings of his birth to distract us from seeing a King who was willing to humble himself, even unto death, the death of the Cross.

Luke 2:17,18

And when they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.

And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.

The shepherds saw the babe in the feeding trough and this confirmed the message given by the angels.

They told Joseph and Mary what had been told them by the announcing angel.

Those who heard WONDERED, were amazed which is consistently used by Luke to show the response man has to the person and the power of Jesus Christ either in His very presence or in His work.

We are very poor in spirit when we lose that, being amazed and being in wonder about our Lord's person, passion, and power.

Just like the season, we find ourselves taking Christmas for granted, but we must never take Christ for granted or come to where we no longer wonder in amazement of who he is and what he has done - when we do find the enemy of apathy intruding upon what should be the dynamic relationship we have with our Lord, we need to renew that relationship, spend time with him which is done through His Word which the Father has called the mind of Christ.

Luke 2:19

While many were amazed, there was one there who responded differently.

But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

Have you ever notice that Mary has very little if anything to say on this amazing night?

She has given birth to the humanity of Christ, and yet in this birth she knows that this will not be a child she will see grow old, nor prosperous, but a child who born to die - for all mankind.

I think only a mother can understand what thoughts were going through Mary's mind as she cradled the Christ child to her breast, the Christ, destine to die on the Cross.

At his birth, as he grew up, throughout his life, and at the Cross, Jesus was *still her little child*

Luke 2:20

And the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

In the early 19th century, a war-weary world was anxiously watching the march of Napoleon. All the while babies were being born.

In 1809, midway between the battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo, William E. Gladstone was born in Liverpool; Alfred Lord Tennyson in Summersby, England; Oliver Wendell Holmes in Boston; Felix Mendelssohn in Hamburg, Germany; and Abraham Lincoln in Hodgenville, Kentucky. People's minds were occupied with battles, not babies.

Yet today, nearly two centuries later, is there the slightest doubt about the greater contribution to history -- those battles or those babies?

So it was with the birth of Jesus.

The people of Judea had no inkling that the infinite Son of God had been born in their midst.. Only a few shepherds came to see Him at this birth, a few wise men, Gentiles yet, came shortly after, and two people at the Temple who had waited so long to witness the coming of the Savior.

It is their story we are going to study this morning, the story of two who waited - .

Luke 2:21

And when eight days were completed before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the

The Gospel of Luke 21

angel before He was conceived in the womb.

The circumcision of Jesus and his naming occurred while in Bethlehem eight days after his birth.

The Jews of this time had combined the circumcision of male babies which was directed in the Old Testament Law with a newer custom of naming their sons on that day also.

In this we see two things.

First, Jesus was born under the Law to redeem those who were under the Law.

Galatians 4:4-5, But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

And secondly, we see that He is the fulfillment of prophecy, even His name was predicted by the angels who announced his birth in Luke 1:31 revealed His name. Jesus, the Greek form of *Joshua* and of title meaning, *Yahweh is salvation* and *the anointed one*, the *Messiah*.

THE VISIT TO THE TEMPLE.

Luke 2:22

And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord

Two reasons for the visit to the Temple are given at this time.

First, after a woman had a baby she was considered unclean for seven days.

Now I checked with Dr. Steve Mareburger on this and he told me that waiting at least seven days before resuming normal relationships with one's husband was medically a very good idea.

But there was also a thirty-three day period of time after the birth of a son (doubled after the birth of a daughter) she was to be kept from all religious duties.

This would give the new mother some extra and no doubt much needed time off.

She would not have to have participated in the Sabbath, going to synagogue, or the Temple.

But after this time was completed she would come to the Temple and offer a lamb and a dove or pigeon.

If the family was too poor to offer a lamb then a second dove or pigeon was offered.

Since Mary's offering is of the poor, a dove or pigeon.

Second,

This is the principle of first fruits stated more than seven times in the Old Testament Law.

The first born son belonged to the Lord, he would be separated unto Him.

And so his parents would go to the Temple to redeem him.

Numbers 3:13 relates this to the Passover in Egypt when the first born who were not under the blood of the sacrifice were killed.

Now, the Lord says that the first born belong to Him.

The price of redemption was five shekels of silver.

Numbers 10:15-16, Every first issue of the womb of all flesh, whether man or animal, which they offer to the LORD, shall be yours; nevertheless the first-born of man you shall surely redeem, and the first-born of unclean animals you shall redeem.

And as to their redemption price, from a month old you shall redeem them, by your valuation, five shekels in silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs.

This was not a large amount of money, merely a token amount.

But it reminded the people that the first of everything belongs to the Lord. And how much so with the Song of God Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But He was redeemed because He became fully man, even in this one thing, He Himself was redeemed.

Not from sin, but from God and to and on behalf of man.

Verses 23-24 describe these separate activities which would have occurred during their single visit to the Temple.

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Luke 2:23,24

(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, every first-born male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the lord), and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

SIMEON.

Luke 2:25

And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

The word CONSOLATION is παρακλαψις and looks at both comfort and encouragement.

And he was looking for this for Israel.

Luke 2:26

And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

We often assume that Simeon was an old man but that is not stated in the text, just that he was told by God the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he saw the Messiah.

Luke 2:27

And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law,

The Holy Spirit led Simeon to the Temple at the precise time that Mary and Joseph would be there with Jesus.

Luke 2:28

then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

SIMEON'S SONG, The *Nunc Dimittis*.

It is from the lips of Simeon that we see for the first time in Luke's Gospel that all will not be sweetness and light.

To this point great praise has been given to Jesus, all that had been said was very positive.

But now we see that is the glorious event of God coming to earth, there is a dark cloud on the horizon.

Pain and suffering lay ahead

His Thanksgiving.

Luke 2:29,30

Now Lord, Thou dost let Thy bond-servant depart In peace, according to Thy word;

For my eyes have seen Thy salvation,

Notice that Simeon does not distinguish between salvation and the Savior.

He sees them as one.

A Savior for all People.

Luke 2:31

Which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples,

A light of revelation to the gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.

So many Jews of Jesus' day saw God favoring them and their nation to the extent that all others, the Gentiles, did not matter to God that they did not count unless they fully converted to Judaism.

Luke, being a Gentile, no doubt penned these words at the direction of the Holy Spirit with some ethnic pride in that this Jesus was the Savior of all men.

For which we can be thankful.

Response of Mary and Joseph.

Luke 2:33

And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.

Mary and Joseph would have been amazed or surprised not that Jesus was salvation, but that the salvation He would bring would extend even to the Gentiles.

The Prophecy of Pain

A summary of the work and future of the Lord Jesus.

Luke 2:34,35

And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, Behold, this Child is

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appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed-- and a sword will pierce even your own soul-- to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.

Three things are emphasized in these verses.

Jesus will be the cause whereby many will fall

It is not so much that God judges man but that man judges himself.

And his judgment is his reaction to Jesus Christ.

When man is confronted with the ultimate of God's grace in Jesus Christ, and he remains cold and indifferent, even rejecting, he will fall.

He is condemned already.

There will be great refusal just as there will be great acceptance.

He will be the cause whereby many will rise

It will be Jesus and Jesus alone who will lift man out of the old fallen life into new life in Him.

The Roman philosopher statesman who lived during the time of Christ said what man needed above all else was a hand let down to lift them up.

This statement was very popular in Rome and may have been in the mind of Luke as he wrote these words of Simeon.

Only Jesus Christ would lift man up to where He is and forever will be.

He will be meet with much opposition

There is no neutrality with Christ.

We either are with Him or opposed to Him.

It is the tragedy of the human soul that pride and self reliance so often keep mankind from faith in Christ and instead put man at war with God.

William Barclay:

There was no Jew who did not regard his own nation as the chosen people.

But the Jews saw quite clearly that by human means their nation could never attain to the supreme world greatness which they believed their destiny involved.

By far the greater number of them believed that because the Jews were the chosen people they were bound some day to become masters of the world and lords of all the nations.

To bring in that day some believed that some great, celestial champion would descend upon the earth; some believed that there would arise another king of David's line and that all the old glories would revive; some believed that God himself would break directly into history by supernatural means.

But in contrast to all that there were some few people who were known as *the Quiet in the Lord*.

They had no dreams of violence and of power and of armies with banners; they believed in a life filled with prayer and quiet watchfulness until God should come.

All their lives they waited quietly and patiently upon God.

Simeon was like that; in prayer, in worship, in humble and faithful expectation he was waiting for the day when God would comfort his people.

God had promised him through the Holy Spirit that his life would not end before he had seen God's own Anointed King.

In Jesus he recognized that King and was glad.

Now he was ready to depart in peace.

ANNA THE PROPHETESS

Luke 2:36,37

And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with a husband seven years after her marriage, and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. And she never left the temple, serving night and day with fasting and prayers.

Anna, whose name means grace, was an old woman.

She had been widowed after seven years of marriage and had since then been an attendant at the Temple. In her later years she now lived on the Temple grounds.

Four things are noted of this beautiful woman of age. She had been widowed early in her life, but she had not become bitter

24 The Gospel of Luke

Sorrow can do two things to us.

It can make us bitter, resentful, even rebellious towards God or it can draw us near to Him and give us a tender heart towards others who are in sorrow.

Anna chose the better part.

She was eight-four years old and never ceased to hope.

Age can take away the strength of our bodies but it can do something much worse.

It can take away the life of the soul set to serve the Lord.

If our service and worship and love for the Savior has been in our own strength, we will wear out.

Anna did not, she was old but her love for the Lord and desire to serve were as strong or maybe even stronger than in her youth.

She never ceased to worship.

She spent her life now in God's house seeking ways to serve Him and His people.

And she never ceased to pray and fast.

Perhaps all she could now was to seek those who came to Temple who needed prayer and she prayed for them as fasted, legitimate in the Old Testament economy, to focus her attention upon her prayers.

We can easily understand that her devotion to God allowed her to know, by the Holy Spirit, that this child was the Christ.

Luke 2:38

And at that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

As she sees Jesus she immediately begins to thank God.

And she continued to speak to those who came to the Temple that day of Jesus, the one who would fulfill their dreams of a redemption for Jerusalem.

Luke 2:39

And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the

Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.

Luke has the family returning to Nazareth which means that these events either occurred prior to Joseph being warned in a dream to flee to Egypt of at the time they returned from Egypt.

If the latter it would mean that they fled prior to the time Mary and Joseph would have gone to the Temple for the offering of purification and so upon returning to the Land they did this enroute to Nazareth.

In either event, and I prefer this being prior to them fleeing to Egypt, the account is consistent with Matthew's record of the Egyptian sojourn.

But let's go back to Simeon and Anna, two who waited for the Lord.

These two, who so immediately recognized who the Lord was, had waited and waited and waited for the coming of the Messiah.

They waited so they could worship.

They waited so they could have peace.

They wait so that could see Jesus Christ and know Him as the Messiah.

They waited because they had to - we do not have to wait, what is our excuse?

Jesus Christ want to be the center of your life now, the Holy Spirit wants to empower you now, and God wants to be your Father, right now.

I wonder as we look back over our Christian lives and then count the years if we have enjoyed a long walk with the Lord or if we have just taken the a few little steps over and over again.

Are we in the race or just on a treadmill?

Jesus, in His humanity, had to grow and Luke gives us two statements in the second chapter of his Gospel account that reveal to us that Jesus was in the race.

Luke 2:40

And the Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

Note this verse and then look ahead to verse 52.

And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

The Gospel of Luke 25

The incident in the earthly life of Christ that we are going to examine this morning is flanked by those two statements.

This shows us a great deal about the humanity of Jesus, it shows us that he had to develop and grow and mature in His humanity.

Even without the sin nature, even in perfect humanity, He needed to grow in six things.

Become strong

Increase in wisdom

Utilize the grace of God

Grow in Stature

Grow in favor with God

Grow in favor with men

Luke 2:41

And His parents used to go to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.

The Mishnah in its interpretation of Exodus 23, instructed all male Jews living within fifteen miles of Jerusalem to attend the Temple three times a year, at Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

Jewish men living beyond that area were required to come to Jerusalem each year for at least one of the feasts.

Apparently it was the custom of Joseph and Mary and others from Nazareth to attend the Feast of Passover.

Luke 2:42

And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast;

The wording is such that we might assume that this is Jesus' first visit as a young boy to the Temple.

You may see a pattern of progress that Luke is using in this chapter.

He has spoken of Jesus the baby at His birth, Jesus the child as His parents visit the Temple (perhaps upon their return from Egypt), and now, Jesus the young boy of twelve.

One year prior His becoming a full member of the Jewish religious community and the synagogue, what was called a *son of the commandment*.

Today we would refer to this as His Bar-Mitzvah.

It was the custom that as that time drew near, parents would take their sons to the Temple to let them become familiar with what happened at that most holy of places.

So this may be His first visit to the Temple and a preparatory visit, in the thinking of His parents, for his becoming a man.

But we are going to see it serves a slightly different purpose -

Luke 2:43

and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. And His parents were unaware of it,

It was about 70 miles as the crow flies from Nazareth to Jerusalem.

But remember that devout Jews would not travel through Samaria so the trip east of the Jordan added nearly 30 miles making this a 100 mile journey.

In caravans the best day's journey would be about 15 miles so we are looking at a six to seven day journey.

The full number of days of the Passover would include the one day of the Passover followed by the seven days of the feast of Unleavened Bread.

So a minimum of eight days.

As he parents began the return journey to Nazareth, we find that Jesus remained behind and His parents were not aware of His absence.

The reason for this is given in the next verse.

Luke 2:44

but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances.

It was common in caravans of the ancient world for the women and younger children to start out early in the day and then the men and older boys to start later, meeting that evening a pre-arranged camp site.

Jesus was at that age when he could have been a younger child or older boy.

So Mary would have thought he was with Joseph and the other men.

26 The Gospel of Luke

Joseph would have thought Jesus was with Mary and the younger children.

But he was not with either group.

That night when they camped it would have been an *I thought He was with you, no, I thought he was with you* type of thing.

So they started looking for Him among their relatives and he was not there.

Luke 2:45,46

And when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, looking for Him.

And it came about that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them, and asking them questions.

The three days would have include the day it took to return to Jerusalem.

So one day of travel and two days of looking for him.

And no doubt they looked for Him in all the places you would expect to find a twelve year old boy.

But not the Temple.

Then, as a last hope perhaps, they visited the Temple and found Jesus there with the teachers, the rabbis, listening to them and asking them questions.

This type of verbal interchange was common at the Temple as we saw with Jesus and the religious leaders a few days prior to His arrest and crucifixion.

A question would be posed, then anyone present could respond, and further questions could be asked to the one responding.

So Jesus was having an opportunity to learn as well as to question and also to defend what He said.

I had a professor at Dallas, Mike Cocoris, who told me there are three levels of learning - *you can know the material, you can explain the material to others, and you can defend the material.*

When you can defend what you know, you know it.

Luke 2:47

And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.

The word amazed as used by Luke looks at surprise and these learned men, these rabbis, were surprised that such a young boy would have such profound answers.

But we must notice that this was not merely an opportunity to tell what He knew, it was also an opportunity to listen and to learn.

Let's consider just how Jesus grew in wisdom.

Luke 2:48

And when they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You.

Now his parents are surprised, perhaps not so much as where they found Him but at what was going on.

And there is a bit of motherly reproach in her words.

Son, why have You treated us this way?

And what we have next is one of the key passages in Jesus' life.

Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You.

And now carefully notice his response.

Luke 2:49

And He said to them, Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?

These are the first actual words of Jesus that we find in the Gospels.

And the statement He makes is profound.

He first states that He is where He needed to be, where He belonged, at the Temple.

Some scholars translate this to read *I must be about my Father's Business.*

And since God's work was so closely associated with the Temple, that is certainly not incorrect and may be implied in what Jesus was saying.

But then, most importantly,

The Gospel of Luke 27

He very carefully yet very deliberately takes the title of father from Joseph and gives it to God His heavenly Father.

What He said would have surprised the teachers who would have been listening to this dialogue.

The Jews would commonly refer to God as *our Father* or the *Father in Heaven*.

But not in the singular possessive as did this young man.

My Father - and here we see that Jesus knew beyond any question who he was and what he was to accomplish.

At sometime as He grew up He recognized His identity and His destiny.

Luke 2:50

But truth is not always real easy to understand.

And they did not understand the statement which He had made to them.

In obedience to them he went with them

Luke 2:51

And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

He continued in submission to them.

This is the last mention of Joseph, at sometime after this he died and Jesus as the elder son of Mary took over the responsibilities of the leadership of the family.

Luke 2:52

And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

I consider this one of the four key decisions Jesus made in His life.

First, He made the decision to be born. God chose to become man.

He also made the decision to minister publicly. This was done at the time of His baptism by John.

The Father even declared *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*.

The night before His death on the Cross, in the garden He made the greatest decision of His life

and that was to totally put his destiny in the Father's hands.

Not my will, but thy will be done.

But it is here, at the Temple, at age twelve, that Jesus made the decision to be about His Father's work which was the work of growing in grace, knowledge, and wisdom.

And that pattern is to be followed by each of us.

We decide to be born again.

A once and for all decision to put faith alone in Christ alone.

We decide to dedicate ourselves to learning, thinking, and applying the Word

We decide to minister to others, to become other centered

And we come to a point in our Christian Life where His will far outweighs our will.

His will be done.

In His humanity Jesus made some very important decisions and for all but the first one, to continued to make those decisions day by day.

We also have those same decisions to make.

I hope all of you have trusted in Christ as your Savior; but after salvation, what next?

Have you made the decision to follow Jesus?

Are willing to focus on what He has for you rather than what the world has given you?

Are you will to go with Him even when no one else seems to want to follow?

And are you willing to make that decision now?

It is not a one time decision to make.

If you make that decision today, you will have to make it tomorrow, and the next day, and the next.

But every decision that must be made again and again, must start someplace.

Won't you let that someplace be today.

Chapter 3

In Hampton Court near London, there is a grapevine under glass; it is about 1,000 years old and has but one root which is at least two feet thick.

28 The Gospel of Luke

Some of the branches are 200 feet long. Because of skillful cutting and pruning, the vine produces several tons of grapes each year.

Even though some of the smaller branches are 200 feet from the main stem, they bear much fruit because they are joined to the vine and allow the life of the vine to flow through them.

The Scriptures tell us that the Lord is the vine, and we are the branches.

And when we need pruning, the goal is always more fruit.

We are going to look at the ministry and the message of John the Baptist and at the center of his message we find the statement - *bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance.*

Luke 3:1

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Itrurea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abiene,

Luke goes to great lengths in this verse to indicate the date of the beginning of John Ministry.

By investigating the times of the reigns of these men we can conclude that this is towards the end of AD 27 to and including AD 28.

Which would mean that John ministered about two years prior to the beginning of Jesus' public ministry.

Luke 3:2

in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness.

Now Annas had been disposed as High priest in Israel by the Roman governor Gratus in AD 15, but all five of his sons and then his son-in-law, Caiaphas, became high priests.

Caiaphas was High Priest (AD 18-36) during the ministries of both John and Jesus but took his orders so to speak from his father-in-law, Annas.

We see Annas as the political-religious boss of Jerusalem.

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

The Place of His Ministry.

Luke 3:3

And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins;

This would be in the Jordan river valley and the closest point of the Jordan to Jerusalem is about 15 miles.

So those who came from Jerusalem to hear John had to travel 15 miles for Bible class, with no freeways.

The Prophecy of His Ministry.

Luke 3:6

as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet (Isaiah 40:3-5 and 57:14) , the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ready the way of the lord, make his paths straight.

Every ravine shall be filled up, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough roads smooth;

And all flesh shall see the salvation of god.

Luke very clearly demonstrates that the ministry of John the Baptist was a fulfillment of prophecy given 700 years earlier.

Five points of prophecy are fulfilled.

A voice of only one person but with God, one person can be a majority

The message would be one of preparation, making ready and making straight

The which is low will be filled and that which is high will be leveled.

This looks ahead to the physical changes that will occur on the earth in the Millennial reign of Christ.

But it can also look to what Jesus will do for the humble and for the arrogant.

The crooked will become straight and the rough smooth.

Jesus will bring order out of disorder, making what is difficult and conflicting easy.

Remember Jesus would later say, *come unto me all who are heavy laden and I will give you rest.*

The Gospel of Luke 29

And then, all mankind will see the salvation of God.

Again we see that salvation and the Savior are inseparable.

He is salvation and salvation will be for all nations.

The Perspective of His Ministry.

Luke 3:7

John's Message to the Religious Crowd

He therefore began saying to the multitudes who were going out to be baptized by him, You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Baptism of John.

The idea of baptism was not completely new in Israel although the way John used it was new.

As early as Genesis 35:2 we see Jacob instructing his family to be cleansed before returning to Bethel.

Cleansing by way of immersion in water became one of the parts of the ritual for a proselyte in Israel.

When an unbelieving Gentile believed in Jehovah he would be ceremonially cleansed, similar to baptism.

That was for the Gentile but here we have John adding this cleansing, this baptism to his ministry.

He was approaching Israel as though they were Gentiles in need of conversion.

How that must have shook the sensibilities of these Jews who traveled the miles to the Jordan to hear this new preacher, just to have him tell them they were no better than Gentile unbelievers.

His message to the Religious Crowd.

You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

This is sarcasm, he taunts them.

Calls them snakes, vipers, questions them. Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

John knew that religious people go through motions, participating in a ritual they had found to be popular among the people.

Did they think they needed to repent, no.

But they were going along with the what they saw as the popular religious activity of the day.

Reminds me of the liberal ministers who line up to sit on the platform with Billy Graham while at the same time denying the very deity of Christ.

Luke 3:8

Therefore bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, We have Abraham for our father, for I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

Here we see that John sounded a bit like James.

He not only wanted to hear the testimony of repentance but see the results of repentance.

But they were comfortable in their position and saw no need of practice.

The religious Jews identified themselves by their heritage, we have Abraham as our father.

But every pot must stand on its own bottom.

This is like those today who think God is impressed because they are born into a certain Church or family or even nation.

But salvation was then and is today by faith in the one God promised who we know to be Jesus Christ.

But if God wanted to He could take stones and raise up descendants of Abraham.

Luke 3:9

And there is an urgency in this message then as there is now.

And also the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

The impending discipline that is referred to in this passage is the coming ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is going to be the axe.

This looks back to Isaiah 10:34 where the Lord is prophetically referred to as the axe that will cut down the evil and disobedient of Israel.

Now we can see that the people who hear John got the point.

30 The Gospel of Luke

The People of His Ministry.

Luke 3:10

And the multitudes were questioning him, saying, Then what shall we do?

This question is very much a response to the statement.

Bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance - what shall we do?

Each answer to each group is a statement defining actions towards others

Luke 3:11

And he would answer and say to them, Let the man who has two tunics share with him who has none; and let him who has food do likewise.

When you have an abundance, assist those who have a need.

The basics of life, a warm coat and food.

Do you have an abundance?

Then share with those who do not.

This is an action that follows the attitude of repentance.

Luke 3:12,13

And some tax-gatherers also came to be baptized, and they said to him, Teacher, what shall we do?

And he said to them, Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.

These tax-collectors were considered traitors in Israel. They worked for the Roman government.

Yet they have come to be baptized.

John does not tell them to abandon their profession but to be fair in their profession.

Do not use the position the world gives you to promote or profit yourself.

Deal with others justly and fairly.

Luke 3:14

And some soldiers were questioning him, saying, And what about us, what shall we do? And he said to them, Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages.

These soldiers would have been Gentiles, Romans and Syrians.

They come to John asking if *what about us?*

Is there a place in what you are teaching even for those who are not Jews and there is.

Do not take anything, money, whatever, by force.

Principle

These actions of the attitude are the pruning that will bring forth more fruit.

Repentance is a turning from one thing to another.

We do that is our attitude.

We turn what the world teaches us to what God has for us.

And what God has for us will include the active application of our attitude.

That active application is called *fruit*.

The word FRUIT is the Greek word καρπος and can mean production, crops, fruit, but always with the idea of benefit and profit.

And here is the wonderful thing about God's production in our lives.

It bring forth a benefit to us.

We are the branches, the limbs, through whom the fruit is produced and we not only is there benefit in the plan of God but there is also benefit to us.

The Purpose of His Ministry.

Luke 3:15,16

Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he might be the Christ,

John answered and said to them all, As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Mankind faces two baptisms - the Holy Spirit or Fire.

We will see more on these baptisms next week but notice now the next verse that illustrates each one.

The Gospel of Luke 31

Luke 3:17

And His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

The winnowing fork is used to separate and in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit the believer is the wheat brought into God's barn.

And in the baptism of fire the chaff is burned up.

That was the choice facing Israel then and the choice facing us today

Will we have in our lives the fruit, the production, God wants us to have?

We will turn from our identification with the world and all its schemes to the wonderful plan of Grace that God has for us?

Will we repent?

And will bring forth fruit that reflects our mental attitude?

You might say HOW?

How do we do this?

Can we do this?

And the answer is NO.

For it is not our fruit, it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit and it will only be by way of our faith in Him that this fruit can become a reality in our lives.

Luke 3:18

So with many other exhortations also he preached the gospel to the people.

We all have expectations.

Even expectations regarding our Spiritual Life.

Are our expectations constant with the expectations of God?

Are they our expectations of God's?

God wants to fulfill the desires of our hearts and when our hearts are not in keeping with what He has for us, He wants to change our desires, if we allow Him to do so.

Psalm 37:4, Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart.

Pay attention to both parts of the verse.

The fulfillment of our desires is preceded by delighting ourselves in Him.

David prayed.

Psalm 38:9, Lord, all my desire is before Thee;

Luke 3:19,20

But when Herod the tetrarch was reproved by him on account of Herodias, his brother's wife, and on account of all the wicked things which Herod had done,

he added this also to them all, that he locked John up in prison.

Herod Antipas had persuaded Herodias to leave her husband, Herod's half brother's daughter, and marry him divorcing his own wife in the process.

John spoke out publicly against this terrible sin.

And was arrested and put into prison by Herod.

The Baptism of Jesus Christ

Luke 3:21,22

Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased.

Luke begins the account of Jesus' public ministry with His baptism which is recorded in each of the Gospels.

This important event marks the division between the thirty private years of our Lord and the three years of His public ministry.

Why was Jesus Baptized?

The baptism of Jesus Christ had nothing to do with sins because the innocent Son of God had no sins.

The baptism of Jesus Christ identified the Son of God with the plan of the heavenly Father.

A public attestation at the beginning of His public ministry that he was about His Father's business.

This baptism also allowed the herald, John, to announce the beginning of Jesus' public ministry.

32 The Gospel of Luke

Showed the people that this is the one John had been preaching about.

In Jesus' three fold ministry of prophet, priest, and king, a priest and a king had to be anointed at the inception of their service.

As the only prophet of his day, John anointed the Son of God for service as priest and king in the waters of the Jordan.

The mode of baptism was immersion.

Going under the water Jesus said **Yes** I will die for the sins of the human race.

Coming up out of the water he said **Yes**, I will be raised from the dead to rule forever.

THEREFORE, the most important aspect of the Baptism of Jesus is that, he was, as he did often, identifying himself with the plan for our salvation.

The divine response is the most important response.

Three things occurred.

The heavens rolled back.

Greek word is SCHIZO and the beginning and end of Christ's earthly ministry was marked by a SCHIZO.

Here the Heavens are torn apart and when Jesus died on the Cross the veil in the Temple was torn apart from top to bottom (Mark 15:38).

This demonstrates that Jesus Christ is in control of all things, whether in heaven or on earth.

The Holy Spirit descended as (like - WS) a dove.

The Holy Spirit was not a dove but descended as a dove. The Lord had from His physical birth been indwelt and dependant upon the Spirit but here the Spirit of God is seen by the assembled multitude coming upon Jesus Christ.

The Father spoke.

You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Six times in the Scriptures we find that the heavenly Father spoke of his pleasure in the decisions of his Son.

Each time in reference to his willingness to go to the Cross.

Remember in verse 15 we read that the people were in a state of expectation.

That word in the Greek text is interesting, it is προσδοκαω and means to be on the look out for something.

Now to be on the look out you need to know what you are to look out.

To look out for something you have to know what it is you are looking for.

And these people who came to John did know that much.

They were looking out for the Messiah.

Now what is our expectation?

Our spiritual expectation?

Jesus has come and that is good news but the further good news is that He is coming again.

First for His church and then to judge the nations.

But our state of expectations does not have to wait for that blessed hope, it begins right now.

We can look forward to all that God has for us in the Spiritual Life, the freedom, the love, the grace and the acceptance we have of God.

Christian, you have so much to look forward to as you live the life of faith and truth, and you can also look forward to Jesus, the author and finisher of the faith, who is coming again for you.

1 Thessalonians 4:14-18, For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 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.

17 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.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

The Gospel of Luke 33

Luke 3:23-38

When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, the son of Eli,
24 the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph,
25 the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Hesli, the son of Naggai,
26 the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda,
27 the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri,
28 the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er,
29 the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi,
30 the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim,
31 the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David,
32 the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon,
33 the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah,
34 the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor,
35 the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Heber, the son of Shelah,
36 the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech,
37 the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan,

38 the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

I want to make some observations about this genealogy of Jesus.

Matthew's genealogy is of Joseph, Jesus' earthly but not physical father.

Luke presents a genealogy also but his is the genealogy of Mary, the mother of Jesus

While this appears to refer to Joseph's father it is in fact Mary's.

I believe Luke was lead to do it this way to be able to assert that Jesus was only supposedly the son of Joseph but truly is the Son of God, see last verse.

From David to the Lord Jesus these two genealogies take two different paths - Matthew through the subsequent kings such as Solomon, and Rehoboam, and yes, even Jeconiah.

But Luke goes from David to Nathan to Mary, and shows how the genealogy of Jesus avoids the curse upon Jeconiah.

Both Mary and Joseph were descendants of David, but only Mary was the physical parent of Jesus.

In these genealogies we see one of the reasons for and a testimony to the virgin birth of our Lord.

But more importantly is the fact that of all the Jews who have lived since the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, only Jesus has a genealogy.

And the Messiah was one who could trace His genealogy to David fulfilling the promises of II Samuel chapter 7.

No one else but Jesus can do this.

Chapter 4

In writing about America's problems with our own national security, Jim Banford, author of *The Puzzle Palace*, said, Once you've sold one secret you're usually hooked.

They don't start by asking to get a top secret document.

They usually ask for something innocuous, like a telephone directory.

Once a person starts, they're hooked at that point.

Isn't that the way Satan operates?

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He tempts us to make little compromises that seem so insignificant and end up ensnaring us in sin.

Luke 4:1

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness

This is a phenomenal passage.

It shows us that the one we are coming to know in Luke's account as the very Son of God was totally dependant upon the Holy Spirit.

Prior to this we have the Baptism of Jesus where He, in his humanity agrees to do the will of the Father and the Father encourages Him by saying

This is my beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.

From His humanity Jesus made a decision to do the will of the Father and the result was the accolades of the Father.

This reception of great spiritual blessing is now followed by intense attack.

Application

We will find that Satan loves to attack on the heels of our spiritual victories.

Jesus, in His humanity, was led by the Spirit.

He did not depend upon his own human ability nor upon His divine attributes but upon the power of the Spirit to led Him.

The same power that is available to us.

The Holy Spirit lead Jesus to a place of adversity as God the Holy Spirit will led us to places of adversity.

It will be in adversity we can experience the acceleration of spiritual growth.

The Spirit led him to a wilderness, not a very pleasant place.

We may want the Spirit to lead us on to glory, to new heights, to places of splendor where we can serve the Lord in great ways.

But he knows what we need and we may end up being lead to a wilderness.

Luke 4:2

for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those

days; and when they had ended, He became hungry.

Jesus Christ was tempted in every way imaginable.

We only have the final temptations recorded for us in the Scriptures.

Hebrews 2:17,18, 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.

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.

His extreme hunger shows us that what He is about to do in resisting the temptations of Satan was not done out of any human strength or ability.

Jesus did not go into these temptations being a macho man who is going to kick Satan.

We have a whole group of Christians today who think they can defeat Satan and his demons because they are strong - they have it all together, they are macho Christians.

Satan laughs at them.

Only when we are weak, but in Christ, we will know true strength.

Luke 4:3

And the devil said to Him, If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.

The IF here is what is called a 1st class conditional conjunction and means something is true.

We would translate the meaning as *Since you are the Son of God.*

The temptation almost seems like no temptation at all.

You are hungry, you have to power to change stones to bread, make bread, eat, feed yourself. If

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we were out in the desert and had gone days without food and came upon a situation in which we had the power to feed ourselves we would not hesitate to do so.

But there is a problem in this for Jesus.

Satan, who is called by more than 10 different names in the Bible, is very shrewd.

He is going to tempt Jesus' humanity with the purpose of trying to get him to act independently of Divine will.

Christ was dependant upon the other two members of the God head and Satan wanted him to depend upon self or upon him.

Christ had three sources of power available to Him.

First the Word which was doctrine in His human soul.

Secondly the filling of the Holy Spirit which He had had since birth.

And third was the power of His deity.

Which He voluntarily set aside the independent use of His divine attributes during the incarnation.

He had these three sources of power but to be our precedent He could not use His divine attributes.

Had He used these powers, Satan would have called foul, and Jesus could not be our precedent in life.

In the same way we as Christians have three sources of power available to us.

The power of the Word, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the power of the flesh.

Now if Satan could get Jesus to depend upon His divine attributes he could call a tactical victory in the Angelic Conflict by eliminating the Savior who had been promised to take away all sin from the fall of Adam to the last sin of the Millennial age.

Luke 4:4

And Jesus answered him, It is written (Deut. 8:3), man shall not live on bread alone.

Jesus was attacked, tempted, but used the weapon of the Word of God, a promise given to Moses 1500 years earlier to ward off this attack. That is a long time ago even in that day.

And yet we today go back 2000 years and use the Scripture as our first line of defense against Satan's temptations.

Luke 4:5

And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

Now you cannot see the whole earth from one mountain so this is a vision.

We can thus see that Satan can induce visions in people as he does so here is the humanity of Christ.

Luke 4:6

And the devil said to Him, I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.

Here is a very subtle attack.

It was the deity of Christ who created the world.

It will be the humanity of Christ who will rule the world in the Mill Age.

Satan makes a legitimate offer of the world, Satan is the prince, the ruler, the god of this world.

John 12:31, Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out.

Ephesians 2:2, In which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

Ephesians 6:12, For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

So the temptation was an offer that says take it now, the easy way, why go through the pain of sacrifice, of dying for the sins of man? Forget man, you can rule them right now.

Luke 4:7-9

Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours.

And Jesus answered and said to him, It is written (Deuteronomy 6:13 and 10:20),

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you shall worship the lord your god and serve him only.

And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here;

And then Satan, having had Scripture thrown at him, decided to throw some Scripture around himself.

He quotes from Psalm 91:11-12.

Luke 4:10,11

for it is written, He will give his angels charge concerning you to guard you, and, on their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

Here is where we can see a fascinating example of the misuse of the Scriptures.

Psalm 91:11-13, For He will give His angels charge concerning you, To guard you in all your ways.

12 They will bear you up in their hands, Lest you strike your foot against a stone.

13 You will tread upon the lion and cobra, The young lion and the serpent you will trample down.

Luke 4:12

Jesus answers the incorrect application with a correct application: He quotes Deuteronomy 6:16

And Jesus answered and said to him, It is said, you shall not put the lord your god to the test.

He refers to the Father, His Father, and tells Satan that the Word also says we must not tempt God.

To jump off the pinnacle would be tempting God and God just might let us get to heaven a little early.

Application

What pinnacles do we jump from and expect God to hold us up?

Do you act foolishly, in life?

Making bad decisions and then expect God to bail us out because we are claiming a promise - He sometimes will, but other times He will not in

order that we might learn of our foolishness and His perfect plan.

I know of those who have jumped off the pinnacle or financial sensibility (usually from Visa peak or Mater Charge Mountain) and then, after the get so far in debt complain that God has let them down.

BELIEVER, do not test the Lord your God

Luke 4:13

And when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.

He we see part of the strategy of Satan, he is patient, he will wait for the opportune time in which to try again and then again and again.

And if he should fail with Jesus, he will just shift his attack and deal against those who follow the Lord of Glory.

And that is you and that is me -

Luke 4:14

And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit; and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district.

Mark was very impressed with the Holy Spirit and closes this portion of this chapter by mentioning again that Jesus was in the power of the Spirit.

Luke 4:15

And now Jesus begins His teaching ministry in Galilee.

And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all.

There is a small thing to notice here.

Satan had come against Jesus with full force and yet Jesus withstood the attacks.

And now the Father gives His Son some encouragement.

As He taught in the synagogues He was praised by all.

At the onset of His public ministry His teaching was received with praise.

Jesus had and used the power of the Word and the power of the Spirit.

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He stood against the evil one not in his own strength but in the strength of God.

He won the victory, He resisted the temptation - and now He had a need, He needed to be encouraged.

Why do we think that spiritual victories will not at times leave us weary and needing to be ministered to by others?

We all face temptation, we all find ourselves in the fray of the angelic conflict.

Even in those times we win we find ourselves on the victor's stand beaten and bloodied - let us serve one another.

How is this victory an encouragement to be ours? God the Holy Spirit will lead us, at times, into difficulties and even testing.

But He also leads us to the Word and in the Spirit and the Word and there in is our power, the same power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

TRUST it has been said is To Rest Upon Sure Things

And we can rest upon the certainty of the Word and the Spirit

Many years ago, while on a visit to the US, a wealthy Chinese businessman was fascinated by a powerful microscope. Looking through its lens to study crystals and the petals of flowers, he was amazed at their beauty and detail. So he decided to purchase one of these devices and take it back to China.

He thoroughly enjoyed using it until one day he examined some rice he was planning to eat for dinner. Much to his dismay, he discovered that tiny living creatures were crawling in it.

Since he was especially fond of this staple food in his daily diet, he wondered what to do. Finally he concluded that there was only one way out of his dilemma -- he would destroy the instrument that caused him to discover the distasteful fact!

So he smashed the microscope to pieces.

When mankind comes against what he cannot accept, he rejects.

In much the same way the Lord Jesus was the light, the microscope that magnified man's weakness and depravity.

And much like the man who destroyed the microscope, there were those who tried to destroy the Christ.

Luke does not deal with the early Judean ministry of the Lord.

He skips over that as does Mark and Matthew and goes right to Galilee.

But in John 1-4 we read of what is called the early Judean ministry and that ministry was marked by the failure of the people to listen to the message and their rejection of Christ.

Jesus moved on to Galilee where two things would occur.

First, his ministry would be authenticated by both His message and His miracles.

And secondly, it is there that He would call His disciples to follow Him.

Having had a successful ministry and being widely accepted in Capernaum, He now decides to go home. To go to Nazareth.

But even the best known axioms of that beloved poet Robert Frost, are not always true as we will see today.

Luke 4:16

And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.

Nazareth was located in lower Galilee about halfway between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean Sea. It was in the hill country north of the Plain of Esdraelon. The hills formed a natural basin with three sides, but open toward the south. The city was on the slopes of the basin, facing east and southeast. Cana was about five miles to the northeast. A Roman road from Capernaum westward to the coast passed near Nazareth. It was a small village in Jesus' day, having only one spring to supply fresh water to its inhabitants.

Nazareth did not possess a good reputation, as reflected in the question of Nathaniel, himself a Galilean (John 1:46 *And Nathaniel said, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?*). The early church received similar scorn as the Nazarene sect (Acts 24:5). Such lack of respect was likely due to an

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unpolished dialect, a lack of culture, and quite possibly a measure of moral laxity.

The Sabbath meeting in the synagogue was open for any adult male to read the Scriptures.

The custom was for him to stand and read and then sit down and explain the passage.

Since Jesus had a reputation now as a teacher, a rabbi, it was natural for Him to stand to read in the synagogue.

Luke 4:17

And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him.

And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written,

Of all the scrolls of the Hebrew Scriptures the senior rabbi just happened to hand to Jesus the scroll of Isaiah which includes more prophecy of the Messiah than any other scroll, wasn't He *lucky*?

Luke 4:18

(from Isaiah 11:2-5) the spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden,

This is all pretty standard stuff, anointed to preach, sent to proclaim, set free the downtrodden.

These things could be said of many men of God.

Except for one thing, one statement - to recover sight to the blind.

You see only the promised Messiah would restore sight to a man born blind.

That is one miracle that had never been done until Jesus came to earth.

And in both the Psalm and in Isaiah's prophecy this was to be an authenticating sign or miracle that this indeed was the promised One of God.

Psalm 146:8, The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; The LORD raises up those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous.

Luke 4:19

(from Isaiah 61:2a) to proclaim the favorable year of the lord.

Jesus ended the reading in what would be the middle of the verse, the middle of the context.

And He did so for a purpose.

At his first advent the Lord did not come for judgment but to offer the kingdom to Israel, to proclaim the kingdom, the favorable year of the Lord.

At his second advent the Lord will come as the righteous judge.

Luke 4:20,21

And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him.

And He began to say to them, Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

Nothing can be more clear than the fact that Jesus presented Himself to these people as the one who fulfills the prophecies of Isaiah.

He is claiming to be the Messiah, the King who alone can offer the Kingdom.

The word *TODAY* is important.

The people of Jesus' time would have agreed that this will occur, but Jesus tells them, it *IS* occurring, right now, that the prophecy of Isaiah, written 700 years before, is being fulfilled before their very eyes that day.

Luke 4:22

And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, Is this not Joseph's son?

We have two phases of discussion in this verse.

First, favorable, then antagonistic.

We see in this verse the cynicism of man.

How a discussion can move from compliment to criticism.

At first the learned men of the synagogue were speaking well of him.

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They were amazed, surprised, at the *gracious words that were falling from his lips*.

This is a very descriptive phrase of the message of the Lord.

Notice again the message.

It is not one of law but one of grace, it is not one of production but on promise, it calls not upon the flesh of man but the Holy Spirit of God.

They were accustomed to hearing the demands of the Old Testament law even when reading the Prophets and the Psalms.

But now they have heard gracious words.

What grace indeed, what gracious words - but what have I told you about grace?

It is the most difficult message to preach, to receive, to live.

And here we see the reaction to this message of grace, they recognize the grace, they cannot refute it, so wanting to disregard the message they attack the messenger - *Is this not Joseph's son?*

Luke 4:23

And He said to them, No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me, Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum, do here in your home town as well.

This was and is a very common proverb in almost every culture.

**Physician, heal yourself, OR
Teacher, teach yourself.**

Jesus is cutting them off at the pass so to speak, He tells them what their reaction will be and their reaction is to dismiss His authority.

He goes on by saying that they will not doubt want to see the miracles that were done, or at least that they *heard were done*, in Capernaum done in Nazareth also.

The very way they would say this shows that they do not believe it.

And yet He is not there, that day, in the synagogue, to perform wonders but rather to communicate grace.

They hear it, they see it, but they reject it

Luke 4:24

And He said, Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his home town.

Even in their rejection, He remains ever gracious.

And then He goes on to explain who receives these wonderful words of grace.

Luke 4:25-27

But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land;

and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.

And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.

He uses two Old Testament illustrations of men of miracles who ministered to Gentiles.

First, Elijah who in I Kings 17:9-24 left Israel and stayed with a widow in Sarepta which is identified in Jesus' day as Zarephath, a Phoenician city, twenty miles north of Tyre, and ten miles south of Sidon.

A very Gentile location we might say.

While he did a miracle there in providing her with food during the famine and raising her son from death, the main ministry he had with her was one of grace.

Second Illustration.

Elisha who, in II Kings 5, cured the leprosy of Naaman the Syrian. This whole story, as the Jews of Nazareth knew, spoke of the greatness of God's grace.

Read just one part of the story in II Kings 5:9-16

The simple work of God for which no one can pay.

Luke 4:28

The Reaction to these stories of Grace.

And all in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things;

Isn't it sad that the hearts of men are so callous that when they hear the words of the greatness and grace of God, they react in rage?

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Jesus reached out in grace to these men of His home town and yet they rejected and actually became angry.

That was nearly 2000 years ago and things have not changed a whole lot since then.

Why is the message of Grace so hard for some to Receive?

Grace tells us that God did it all and that we can do nothing. And man always wants to do something.

Grace tells us that what we have received is for others, for the Jews the others were the Gentiles, for us it may be the poor, the broken, the ones who are so very different than us and yet they receive grace too.

Man does not like that, man wants to be exclusive.

Grace tells us we do not earn nor deserve.

And yet man wants to earn his way and get what he has deserved.

Grace tells us we are nothing, that we are in total depravity, and that God is everything.

We want to be something, to find merit in ourselves, to be something rather than nothing.

Grace tells us that God's love is for others just as much as it is for us.

And again, we want to have something that no one else has.

Grace is God doing the work and man receiving the blessing and man wants so much to try to bless himself.

Grace tells us that only God is God and we are not.

And man wants to be his own god, chart his own course, plan his own destiny and ignore the greatness and grace of God.

How far can this rejection of grace go?

Look at the next verse.

Luke 4:29

and they rose up and cast Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff.

They wanted to kill the Lord Jesus!

Here it is a Sabbath day, they have been in the synagogue worshipping God and now they want to murder this Jesus, this son of Joseph.

Throwing Him off a cliff may have been a prelude to their desire to stone Him to death.

The irony of the mind of man, worship and murder in the same breath.

Luke 4:30

But passing through their midst, He went His way.

Luke records nothing spectacular, not miracles, just Jesus walking away.

This is a very sad picture we can paint in our minds.

Jesus reaching out to those He grew up with, reaching out in grace, and yet being rejected.

This pattern will be repeated throughout Jesus' ministry.

He goes to the Jews, He tells them of the grace of God, they reject, He tells them about the Gentiles and their participation in the grace of God, and they try to kill Him.

But they will not, cannot kill Him until the proper time.

But there was not victory in this for evil, there was no defeat of the ministry Jesus would have.

He reached out and was rejected.

And I would be safe to say that everyone here today has experienced the test of rejection and what is the outcome of that test?

Maybe you passed it, maybe you failed it.

That does not really matter, did you learn something from it?

Did you learn that there is one who has promised *I will never leave you nor forsake you?* That there is *one who sticks closer than a brother?*

That the sovereign omnipotent God of the universe has said - *you are mine?*

What did Jesus do in the face of this rejection?

And He came down to Capernaum,

He continued to do His Father's work, He continued to reach out even when rejected.

In a recent *Psychology Today* article T. George Harris (of the Harris polls) found that a recent 11

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year period, the proportion of adults who say they have been in touch with the dead has risen from 27 percent to 42 percent.

Close to 20 million Americans now report profoundly mystical experiences, including contact with the spirit world.

We are going to see Jesus in contact with the spirit world, the evil spirit world, in our text, and we are going to see how He stood firm against these evil forces.

Luke 4:31

And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And He was teaching them on the Sabbath;

He was rejected in Nazareth and we will see that the loss to Nazareth would be a tremendous gain to Capernaum, a city where Jesus would spend more time than any other city, a place of more miracles, more parables, more teaching than anywhere else - God seeks those who will worship Him and become the recipients of His grace.

He came down, although going north east from Nazareth, because Capernaum is on the coast of the Sea of Galilee and Nazareth is in the high plains.

We see that He was teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath, as was His custom.

In ancient Israel, the people of God gathered for worship on the Sabbath, Saturday morning.

The Talmudic Rabbis had taught the people to hurry to the synagogue taking brisk steps and return home slowly, taking leisurely steps.

The Rabbis had a lot to say about conduct during the Sabbath and the people's attendance at the Synagogue.

During the time that God was not sending Prophets to speak to his people the whole concept of the Rabbis and the synagogue arose.

In what we call the inter-testamental period, the 400 years between the Old Testament and the NT

The initial idea was good.

An established place where people could come and learn the Word of God from men who had dedicated their lives to teaching.

But as with many things, man's viewpoint soon entered in and the synagogue service became regulated, complex, and empty.

Men love to control, to influence, to regulate.

Even in Jesus' day men could not stand the simplicity of the synagogue.

One way to control was to add superfluous activity and order to the service.

Soon formal prayers were introduced, prayers written by men

Next, someone wrote a Jewish creed and that became mandatory

No less than six benedictions eventually became part of the service

And then the concluding eulogies spoken every week the same way

In addition to control through regulation and formality, there was also control through complexity.

Make the service so complex that nothing was really accomplished and no real teaching ever went forth.

No less than seven men would be called upon to read portions of the Law and the Prophets

This was followed by a message but usually given by a scribe or a distinguished visitor.

In our passage we read about teaching that is described as the Scribes taught.

Luke 4:32

and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority.

In Mark 1:22 we read a bit more.

And they were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

How did the Scribes teach, well, certainly not with authority.

They would give the opinion of others regarding a certain passage.

Often these opinions would number into the hundreds.

This Rabbi says this - that Rabbi says that, and so on and so on.

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After the message the congregation could ask questions and we will see what happens during this question and answer period.

The problem I have is that as I study the synagogue service, its complexity during Jesus' day, the little value it had for those who came to seek the truth, I am reminded of something - but I just can't put my finger on it.

Is there something similar today in which God's people are gathering together on a weekly basis to engage in some complex type of activity where formality and opinion dilute the truth that is found in Jesus Christ?

The church, it has been said has become many things today.

It has become a place of meeting where friends gather to meet with friends.

It has become a social club where people who reject the normal conventions of social activity find a refuge.

A place to play ball, bingo, and other games.

The church has become a place to put young people when you do not want them on the streets.

It has become an organization with all it attending power struggles, petty controls, and machinations.

The church has become a news service an opinion market where views are assimilated and speculation is promoted.

Indeed the church has become so many things it has lost what it was intended to be - the simple place where Christians gather to learn God's word and worship their heavenly father.

The synagogue of Israel had also lost its simplicity and now it was many things but no longer a place of true worship and learning.

The people's amazement came from the manner in which He taught, *with authority*. And as Mark adds, not as the scribes taught.

Jesus, however, taught with authority

The Greek word that is translated TEACHING is a word that means a prepared message that has a purpose.

We might say doctrine.

And the word for WORD is *λογος* so this is the living word, Jesus, teaching the written word from the Old Testament

And with authority, which is *εξουσια* and look at delegated authority, delegated to the humanity of Christ by the Father and by the Holy Spirit.

His authority was delegated to him by the Father in heaven who has sent His only begotten Son into the world

His authority was delegated to him by the Word of God which he taught.

And His authority was in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit

We as Christians have the same authority delegated to us.

We have the authority of the Father who has left us in the world as ambassadors of His Son.

And whenever we use the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit, the promises, precepts, and principles, are presented with authority.

While we are not told of the content we are told of the reaction, actually two reactions.

The reaction of the congregation, as we have noted in verse 32, was one of amazement.

The word for astonished is a very strong word that means to be struck with amazement.

To be shocked at what was heard.

And then the reaction of a demon possessed man.

The teaching, His doctrine was so different from what was normally heard in the is synagogue in Capernaum that even the demons could not keep silent.

Luke 4:33

And there was a man in the synagogue possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice,

He is said to have an unclean spirit.

This man was in a demonic spirit, a demon, and the this is because the demon was in him.

The man was an unbeliever Jew who was possessed by a demon.

Demons were at one time angelic beings who sided in a revolt with Satan against God and, in

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eternity past, fell from the grace and protection of God.

In Jesus' day and now they are Satan's army and they can possess a person.

Movies give the idea that people who are demon possessed are always foul and unclean, their heads can turn around, are physically abnormal.

But this man was just there, sitting in the synagogue, no physical or emotional abnormalities until he heard Jesus teaching doctrine with authority.

Then the man, controlled by the demon, screamed out.

He could take the redundant rhetoric of the scribes giving the various opinions but he could not handle the teaching of doctrine with authority.

Principle

Some people have told me that doctrinal teaching makes them uncomfortable.

Some people have walked out of a Bible class when the word is taught as with authority.

They are numbering themselves with this demon possessed man.

Now notice what the demon, who possessed this man said.

Luke 4:34

Ha! What do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are-- the Holy One of God!

The first intelligible thing out of the man's mouth is an insult.

Like asking What do we have in common.

But then addressing him with a title of derision, Jesus of Nazareth.

Not Jesus of God, but Jesus of Nazareth.

Remember that shortly prior to this Jesus had been rejected by the people of Nazareth.

This looks at him as did the people in his home town, as the son of Mary, a carpenter.

And then,

Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are-- the Holy One of God!

While this appears that the demon is asking a question, it is really more of a statement in which he tells the facts, the reason Jesus has come to earth.

Throughout the Old Testament, in more than fifty passages, this was the title of the promised one, the Messiah, the one we know as the Lord Jesus Christ.

So while Israel will eventually reject Him as their King, their Messiah, the demons recognized full well who He was.

This demon was attempting to show superiority over Christ by way of knowledge.

Jesus time to destroy sin and Satan would be at the Cross as our Lord often said, His time had not yet come. He was unfolding his purpose and his plan.

This demon goes right to the heart of the purpose of Christ.

Luke 4:35

And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Be quiet and come out of him! And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him without doing him any harm.

There are two words for rebuke used in the New Testament

One means a rebuke that leads to a desired result, a change of mind.

The other word, used here, refers to a rebuke that does not lead to a conviction of sin, a change of mind.

Satan and his fallen crew are incorrigible, they refuse to be convicted of their rebellion, there is no repentance or changing of mind.

Be quiet, translators see this as being very close to the idiom we have, *shut your mouth*.

The rebuke was strong and it was from one who had the very authority of God and the authority of the Word.

When our Lord command the demon to come out, the demon had to leave the man.

This is commonly termed exorcism, but that is an incorrect term. The only time we find that term in the Bible is used in connection with sorcery in the book of Acts.

44 The Gospel of Luke

This work means to throw out, EXBALLW, the expunging of a demon from possessing a human being.

And notice what come against this demon, not so incantation, some chat, but the authority of Jesus Christ, the authority he had in the Word and in the Spirit, the same authority we have.

How do we stand against Satan and his demons?

1 John 4:4, 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.

No theatrics, no exorcism, nothing spectacular - just the same silent strength and quiet power demonstrated by our Lord.

Demons do not like this.

Not only do they lose control of another one of God's creatures but also they are from that moment on incarcerated in Tartarus.

Tartarus is referred to in II Peter 2:4 and is the temporary abode or hell for demons prior to their eternity in the Lake of Fire.

So this demon was on his way, very quickly, to hell

We have the misplaced idea that Satan and his demons reside in Hell or that they rule in Hell.

A philosopher once said it was that it would be better to rule in hell than serve in heaven.

WRONG.

Even Satan will not be ruling in hell.

Hell is outer darkness, isolation, fire and pain, and it lasts for ever.

Luke 4:36

And amazement came upon them all, and they began discussing with one another saying, What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.

What has just happened has given these people in Capernaum something else to deal with.

Will they **react or respond**?

Again they reacted with amazement:

The word for amazement here is different than the word we saw in v 32, this word means to wonder

or to question. So they questioned among themselves.

In a synagogue service the speaker would take questions from the congregation. These people could have asked questions to the Lord himself, but instead they preferred to debate it among themselves.

This is total subjectivity, when the source of truth is standing right in front of you and you would rather get in a debate with others as ignorant as you - that goes beyond ignorance to stupidity.

Here were their topic for debate.

What doctrine is this? I have never heard it before so it must not be true. What is this man's authority: Where did he go to school, what degrees does he have, which Rabbis have approved of him?

He commands the demons and they obey HIM.

HIM is a dative of advantage and in this question these men are making a subtle implication that he may be in charge of demons.

They reacted rather than respond.

Subjectivity, reaction, arrogance even today would rather flap lips than come to source of truth, the Word of God, for answers.

Life is going to full of things that you will not understand, that be confusing, that seem at odds with much of what you might have thought was true - are you going to react or respond.

Are you going to come to that source of knowledge, wisdom, and understanding that is the Bible, the Word of God, the mind of Christ.

Luke 4:37

And the report about Him was getting out into every locality in the surrounding district.

His authority, his teaching of truth, his silent strength, his quiet power was becoming known to more and more. And that is what you have.

You have this same truth, this same strength, this same power that was demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ, it is yours!!

And against it even the gates of hell cannot prevail

The Gospel of Luke 45

In verses 37 to 44 in Luke's Gospel, we have the writer presenting us with Christ's ministry in Galilee.

This section begins with the wide spread ministry of miracles that our Lord engaged in and - it ends with a very curious statement by our Lord regarding his true purpose.

Luke 4:38,39

And He arose and left the synagogue, and entered Simon's home. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever; and they made request of Him on her behalf.

And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately arose and waited on them.

Now the custom of the day was for family and friends to gather after the morning spent at the Synagogue.

Here, Jesus and four of his disciples went to Peter's home.

Peter's mother and law was the matriarch of the house.

An interesting note, Peter had a mother-in-law.

Now the last time I checked, you had to have a wife in order to have a mother-in-law.

Peter, as well as some of the other disciples were married.

We are told in Luke 8:1-3 that a number of women traveled in the company of Jesus and some of these would have been the wives of the disciples.

In 1 Corinthians 9:5 we read that Paul stated.

Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Peter?

So Peter was married which is rather strange since the Roman church ended up making him a celibate pope.

The meal that was to be eaten was not prepared on the Sabbath day but on Friday.

It was the honor for the senior lady of the to serve the meal especially when guests were present.

However, in this case, Peter's wife's mother was ill, she is said to have a fever which would have

made her very weak and unable to follow the protocol, the manners, the customs of the day.

Jesus took her by the hand, and lifted her up and immediately she was healed.

And then she served or ministered the meal to them.

Now there are three types of miracles of our Lord in the Bible.

Miracles in nature.

These demonstrate that Jesus is all powerful even over creation.

Casting out of Demons.

These miracles demonstrate that Jesus is sovereign over even the forces of Satanic evil

The Healing of Illness and Disease.

Twenty of the 35 recorded miracles of Christ were of this type.

In these miracles, even the simple one described here, we see a parallel.

What the infirm person was physically, we are spiritually.

We too lay sick, and weak with a fever of unbelief, lack of faith, lack of trust in the Savior who has done everything for us - we need the touch of the Master's hand.

Then we can do exactly what Peter's wife's mother did.

We can be made well spiritually and then we can **serve** our Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke 4:40

And while the sun was setting, all who had any sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on every one of them, He was healing them.

We are given a time words here.

... And while the sun was setting

Since it was the Sabbath, the people of Capernaum waited until sundown to come to Peter's home.

The Law forbade working on the Sabbath and the Rabbinical law forbade carry a burden on the Sabbath.

So they waited until the Sabbath ended which was at sundown.

46 The Gospel of Luke

All the city was at the door of Peter's home.

They had either seen Jesus in the synagogue that morning or they had heard the stories of the miracles this man from Nazareth could perform.

Luke 4:41

And demons also were coming out of many, crying out and saying, You are the Son of God! And rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ.

Luke is very careful, as are the other Gospel writers to make illness and demon possession two separate categories.

Even then, as now, some were teaching that all illness and infirmity was due to demons.

As he expelled the demons we are told.

And rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ.

Reasons

The attestation of Jesus as the Messiah, the holy one of God was not to come from the mouth of the enemy - it would be Peter who would first see that Jesus was the Messiah.

Jesus' plan and purpose was the Cross.

He was revealing his purpose step by step to the positive believers.

He did not need demonic interruption.

A number of times, especially in John's gospel we read about Jesus telling others that his time had not yet come.

These demons could have encroached upon our Lord's proper timing for his ministry.

Also, the demons could have very easily lie about Christ and mislead the people.

They could have given a slanderous sermon about Christ.

But Christ did not give them the chance.

And this even further demonstrates his power and authority over all forces even forces of evil.

That Sabbath day in Capernaum ends with Jesus in the limelight of popularity.

Many people were present, the city gathered around him, he was the center of attention.

Luke 4:42

And when day came, He departed and went to a lonely place; and the multitudes were searching for Him, and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from going away from them.

Mark gives a bit more detail, in Mark 1:35-37, Mark states.

And in the early morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there.

36 And Simon and his companions hunted for Him;

37 and they found Him, and said to Him, Everyone is looking for You.

Both Mark and Luke often record the Lord going to a lonely place to pray.

The common thread of each time these writers talk about Jesus alone and at prayer is that it was a time in which our Lord was faced with a decision to make regarding the fulfilling of his mission.

Each time there was a choice as to which road to take, a path with less cost, easier, more attractive - **or**- a path less traveled.

Think in terms of the humanity of Christ.

He had been rejected in Nazareth, even before that He had been rejected and abused in Judea, and yet here in Capernaum he was the man of the hour.

Up to now He had been rejected, but here in Capernaum people flocked to his door.

It would have been very easy to stay in Capernaum but in these early morning hours of prayer he communed with his heavenly Father and the answer became very clear.

Luke 4:43

But He said to them, I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.

I am sure that Simon, who is Peter, could not understand why the Lord was out here in the wilderness when so many people in Capernaum were trying to find him.

The people of Capernaum were seeking Christ - he just had to go back to Capernaum.

Now that would have thrown them.

The Gospel of Luke 47

But they did not know that in those early hours of prayer, Jesus had an answer to prayer.

An answer that was right there all the time.

One thing about getting away and praying.

You sometimes learn the things you knew all along.

It just takes some time alone, in prayer, to get them up to memory center.

As Jesus was in Prayer he came to a decision.

The Lord Jesus Christ was almost distracted from his true purpose.

The miracles of the prior day gave great rise to Jesus' popularity in Capernaum.

If he had gone back to the city at that time, the whole population would have greeted and welcomed him.

He could have been the chief rabbi, the president of the synagogue, the man of the hour.

But what would have been the reason for this popularity and acceptance - his miracles of healing.

Remember, the people came to Jesus the evening of the Sabbath with their sick and their infirmed.

In his compassion he healed them, but that was not his purpose in coming to mankind

Here is his purpose: *I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.*

That I may proclaim, preach, for it is for this [purpose] I came forth.

This verse tells us two things about Christ.

He was not to be distracted by even those activities of ministry which to some all important.

Healing the sick is a very wonderful thing to do, especially if you had the power our Lord had or the power that was given to the apostles prior to the completion of the Bible.

But healing the sick was not the purpose for which Christ came - he came to proclaim the truth.

While the people were impressed with this, that was not what they should have been impressed with.

The got the method before the message.

Two parts of the fatal flaw of arrogance were in view.

They put the man above the message.

The whole city was seeking Christ but not for his teaching - for his miracles.

They put the method above the message.

They focus in on the act of healing rather than what the act of healing demonstrated - that all are spiritually sick.

The people of Capernaum were much like people today.

Today Christians make the mistake of putting the man or his method before the message.

1 Corinthians 1:27-29, But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are. 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Principle

Every time a man stands to proclaim the truth of God you are given a test - will it be the man, the method, or the message.

The people of Capernaum were subjective and shallow, they wanted their infirmities healed, their friends made physically whole and they could not see below the surface to the spiritual truth that Jesus' presented.

So what did Jesus do - he left Capernaum.

The second thing we see in Jesus' decision was that He was Mission Oriented.

He did not allow the flattery of popularity to deter him from his purpose.

The people wanted him back, his disciples hunted him down and were telling Him to take advantage of the opportunity, go back to Capernaum - all men are seeking you.

But Jesus Christ was oriented to his mission.

He knew what his purpose was and he would see it though to the end.

48 The Gospel of Luke

During his earthly ministry, Jesus Christ was heavily criticized by some of the people and abundantly complimented by others.

The compliments fell into two categories, compliments of the man and the method, compliments on the message,

The same two categories are found today.

Any compliment taken seriously regarding the man or the method is totally superfluous, dispensable, and non-essential.

In acting one of the greatest occupational hazards is to begin to believe you critics.

In your ministry the same thing could be said, are you going to believe your critics, whether they are making you the hero - or the goat.

Pastors today must be Mission Oriented, but it doesn't just end with the Pastors.

Every Christian must be Mission Oriented.

There is a reason you have been left upon this earth and that purpose is spiritual growth, then ministry.

You are on a mission, but so many are not oriented to that mission.

Let's look at some concluding principles.

Proper decisions solve difficult problem.

Jesus faced a very difficult choice, remain in Capernaum.

Be the man of the hour, have many people coming to him - or leave.

Prayer must precede proper decision making.

Prayer is not the solution, but prayer sets up the solution which is the decision you make.

Proper decision making is part of prayer pursuit and in the pursuit of your prayers God can give you the information upon which to make a decision.

You can only make a decision based upon the information at hand and God alone can supply accurate information.

When Jesus was alone praying he was asking the Father what he should do, remain in Capernaum, will the people there be turned from the miracles to the message.

But then Peter, Andrew, James, and John hunted him down and the first words out of their mouths because the additional accurate information he needed.

All men are seeking you.

Not his message but they are seeking the man for his method, for His miracles.

In leaving Capernaum for other towns, he made the choice for the more difficult over the more easy.

It would have been easy, comfortable, convenient to stay in Capernaum - but it also would have been a distraction.

Sometimes it is the road less traveled that is right

If we are oriented to our mission (purpose in life) the distractions of life, even those closely associated with our mission, we not deter us.

The best defense against distraction is knowing where you are going.

Jesus knew his purpose, he came to proclaim the truth

Luke 4:44

And He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

Luke here uses Judea in the broader sense, referring to Palestine which would include Galilee.

Some mss do read Galilee but most have Judea.

This broader use is Luke 23:5

The Priests and Scribes.

Kept on insisting, saying, He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee, even as far as this place.

Now one final lesson.

On this Sabbath Day in Capernaum Jesus' compassion caused him to heal the sick, cast out demons, and do great miracles for others.

In each of these miracles we see grace, we see compassion, and we see the lame, the weak, the sick, the ones troubled by forces of evil restored.

We see the miracles in a very physical sense in these accounts.

But now, today, the miracles of Christ are just as real, just as profound, just as great.

The Gospel of Luke 49

He alone can bring sight to the spiritually blind.
He alone can bring hearing the spiritually deaf.
No miracle worker, no man, no healer - but Jesus Christ.

I am occasionally asked if I believe in miracles to day.

I am occasionally accused of not believing in miracles because I do not accept, biblically, men who claim to be miracle workers and divine healers.

But I do believe in miracles, I have had my spiritual blindness healed, I was spiritually lame, and Jesus has caused me to walk with Him in grace and in truth, I was spiritually sick, destitute, and Jesus gave me spiritual life.

I do believe in miracles I have seen souls set free -

Chapter 5

In the first paragraph of Luke chapter five we have the call of the first disciples.

Now this is about a year into the ministry of Jesus.

These men and others have been with Christ at times but not as His disciples.

We are going to see Jesus set up this invitation to follow Him with a miracle.

In this section of his Gospel, Luke is demonstrating the authority of Jesus Christ.

He has show this by His teaching and His miracles, and now by His authority over nature (the fish in the sea) and His calling of His disciples.

In the remaining two chapters we will see His authority over leprosy and His authority to take one who was alienated and bring him into the community, the authority to call even a tax-collector, and the authority over the Old Testament Law.

In this paragraph we will see teaching, a miracle, and a calling.

First, the Teaching.

Luke 5:1

Now it came about that while the multitude were pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret;

We see here the desire the Lord had to teach and the hunger of the people to learn the Word of God.

The lake of Gennesaret is another name for the Sea of Galilee.

This is unique because we see Jesus teaching not in the synagogue, not on the Sabbath, but during the week.

Something those who followed Jesus would see more and more of as time went on.

Luke 5:2

and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them, and were washing their nets.

This tells us that it is late in the morning.

Most fishing was done at night or early morning.

The fisherman are done for the day, the sun has warmed the water and the fish are now deep in the lake.

Luke 5:3

And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the multitudes from the boat.

The crowd of people were pressing in around Him and He got into one of Peter's boats and cast off a bit from land and continued teaching the crowd.

Notice that He sat down which was common for teaching the Word and showed a humility of mind when approaching the Word of God.

We might say they were not giving Him his space so He backed off a bit.

This was not the only time this happened.

Later, prior to giving the parable of the sower and the soils, he also got into a boat and put off from the shore and sat down and taught the people.

REMEMBER.

Jesus already stated His purpose, Luke 4:43

I must preach the kingdom of God, for I was sent for this purpose.

So we see Him fulfilling that purpose by teaching.

50 The Gospel of Luke

The word teaching in our passage is διδάσκω and is one of five word found in the New Testament for communicating the truth of God.

PAIDEUW.

To train or instruct one younger or under authority.

LALEW.

To speak in a conversational manner

KERUSSW

To herald in advance (John's ministry)

EVANGELIZW.

To proclaim the Gospel

DIDASKW.

To preach, teach a crowd of people

In our passage, Jesus is DIDASKW, preaching, teaching, instructing a large crowd.

Back to what happened, Peter was busy, washing nets, cleaning his boat, doing the work a fisherman must do after a day of fishing. Jesus asks Peter to stop his work and serve Him.

Second, the Miracle.

Luke 5:4

And when He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.

And now Jesus is going to stop His message and serve Peter.

He had delivered a message and now ends.

Having ministered to a large crowd he now ministers to a few of His followers.

This makes no sense, the fish are deep in the water and the nets cannot reach that deep.

If any fish are to be caught it would be in the shallow water.

Luke 5:5

And Simon answered and said, Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but at Your bidding I will let down the nets.

Now Peter knows fishing and he also know that Jesus was a carpenter.

What do carpenters know about fishing?

This defies logic and reason and demands faith.

Peter trusted Jesus Christ so He did what He instructed him to do.

His obedience followed his faith.

Peter did not allow his human viewpoint to interfere with his faith in the Words of Christ.

Luke 5:6

And when they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish; and their nets began to break;

We call this the first miraculous draught of fishes, because Jesus earthly ministry to His disciples will end in John 21, after His resurrection, with a similar miracle.

There, in John 21, He will use that miracle to assure them He is the risen Lord and to establish His authority to send them to minister in His name.

Here, this miracle also establishes His authority and serves as a foundation for Him calling His disciples to follow Him.

We also see that Jesus, the last Adam, has what the first Adam lost in the fall, authority over nature.

Luke 5:7

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.

This was not ordinary abundance of fish.

It was so large that the boats began to sink.

Now that is a lot of fish.

And with that abundance of fish I want you to see something.

These men made their living by catching fish. The more fish the better their income. They depended on fish. But Jesus shows them that they can depend on Him.

In a moment He is going to invite them to leave their trade of fishing and follow Him. And this miracle shows them that if He wants to prosper them, He can. That He will provide for them in every way.

The Gospel of Luke 51

I wonder how many of us need to learn that lesson. How do you make your living? Do you believe that Jesus could cause a miraculous increase in your profits should he desire to do so.

Do you work believing that it is the Lord, not you, not your boss, not your customers, clients, or patients, that is the source of all your needs?

These fishermen learned that on that day.

Luke 5:8,9

But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!

For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken;

Peter's response is two fold.

First, amazement, this means to not only be surprised but surprised to the point of asking questions, seeking answers.

This would indicate Peter started asking, *how did you do that, what happened, how did you get those fish to our nets*, on and on.

But secondly we see that he fell down at Jesus feet and confessed himself as a sinner.

We see a humility in the presence of Jesus Christ on Peter's part.

And we see as we so often see even today, a misunderstanding.

Peter cannot see how the Lord would have anything to do with him since he is a sinner and yet that is exactly why Jesus came, to save sinners.

The only problem was that so many then and now, deny their sinfulness and thus, their sins.

This should be the normal response of the Christian to Christ, I am a sinner, I sin.

I can admit this even in the presence of God because Jesus Christ died for my sins.

I can draw near to God because of what God did for me through Christ on the Cross.

The abnormal is to deny sins and sinfulness and that was the problem in **1 John 1:8-10:**

8 Even though: If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 Even though: If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 Even though: If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Do not deny, but rather, be ready, willing, open, and honest to God about who and what you are and what you do.

When we deny sins and our sinfulness, we short circuit the whole process at the very beginning.

Luke 5:10

and so also James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men.

He uses the miracle, the miraculous catch of fish, to illustrate what they will be doing, fishing for men.

In a way, in this verse, he tells them - you haven't seen anything yet!

Luke 5:11

And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

Luke gives us only the briefest account of the call of these four disciples. Mark, in his gospel provides us with a little bit more information.

Now in John 1 we studied the calling of the disciples was a call to believe in Christ unto salvation

A year later, here in our passage, we see a call to follow Christ and become his disciples, his students. Here the emphasis is on learning and growth.

In Luke 6 (also Matthew 10 and Mark 3) we will see the final call of the Twelve disciples which was a call to ministry.

These three calls of the disciples parallel the three critical decisions that we must make.

When we decide for:

Salvation => growth => ministry

52 The Gospel of Luke

So here in Luke 5 and in Mark 1 we are seeing a call to growth in Christ as his disciple, as a part of his team.

Mark 1:16-20, 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.

17 And Jesus said to them, Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.

18 And they immediately left the nets and followed Him.

19 And going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets.

20 And immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him.

We can observe **seven principles** in the calling of these disciples.

These four were all busy doing their jobs where they were.

We are told they were fishermen by trade and they were busy at their trade.

Principle

You must first be busy where you are before you can expect to busy where you wish to be.

Too often we live only looking ahead, we need to be busy right now.

Too many people wait on the Lord by doing nothing.

When God seeks someone to use for a special mission, he finds the person who is already busy where he is and with what has been entrusted to him.

Jesus, who they had already known and traveled with, gave them a short precise order.

Follow me, join with me, stay with me!

Principle

Our orders in the Christian life are not complex but precise - stick with the Lord Jesus Christ.

With the orders Jesus gave them a promise.

I will make you to become fishers of men.

Jesus related a future promise to them in terms that they understood, fishing.

The use of the two verbs indicates that this would be a process that would take time. But it will occur.

Principle

The promise was long range but these men saw its value and went with Jesus Christ.

There is great promise in following the Lord Jesus Christ.

Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

There was no discussion, no committee meeting, no inquiry as to contract or length of service, they knew Jesus Christ and that was all that mattered.

They left a very profitable business for a greater prophet, Jesus Christ.

Principle

They put the spiritual opportunity of being with Jesus Christ over and above everything else.

They immediately grabbed the opportunity.

With James and John we see two fishermen by trade who are not fishing.

They are mending nets.

Principle

James and John saw the value of proper preparation and of taking care of what they already had.

Spiritually, Jesus in calling them would make them menders of people.

That same word for mending nets is used for the ministry of the word in Ephesians 4:12.

For the *perfecting* of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Principle

Some fish, others mend, we are a ministry team.

James and John left their father Zebedee to follow Jesus.

They put family and the profits of business second to being with Jesus Christ.

The Gospel of Luke 53

They left their family for a royal family.

In Mark 3:32-35 the mother of Jesus along with his brothers and sisters sought him and he responded by saying - *Who is my mother, or my brethren?*

**For whosoever shall do the will of God,
the same is my brother, and my sister,
and mother.**

The last principle looks at the ones left behind.

James and John left the hired servants in the boat.

Principle

Being a follower of Christ is not a job you are hired to, no hired servants but willing followers, disciples of Jesus Christ.

The call of Peter and Andrew, James and John began the formation of a team that would eventually number twelve.

Luke 5:10-16

The following is a wonderful prayer by Norwegian Theologian Ole Hallesby.

Lord, if it will be to Your glory, heal suddenly.

If it will glorify You more, heal gradually;

If it will glorify You even more, may your servant remain sick;

And if it will glorify Your name still more, take him to Yourself in heaven.

When we request of the Lord anything, do we have that attitude.

Not the attitude that says give me what I want, what I think I need, but the attitude that says, Lord, only if you are willing.

Luke 5:12

And it came about that while He was in one of the cities, behold, there was a man full of leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.

Two of the recorded miracles of the Lord dealt with the cleaning of leprosy.

However, a number of passages indicate that many more lepers were healed by the Lord of this dreaded disease.

Leprosy today is not the same disease we have described in the Bible.

In 1873 a Norwegian physical named Hansen discover the bacillus that is common to what we call leprosy today, also now called Hansen's disease.

It is not a contagious disease but the leprosy described in the Bible was a contagious disease and required isolation and separation.

Now the Lord had not been healing people but this man apparently had heard what the Lord had done in Capernaum and came to him.

He had been fulfilling his purpose which was (Luke 4:43) to *preach the kingdom of God to the other cities*

The man saw Jesus, and he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.

His request is a bit hard to translate. The little English word *can* is actually a big Greek word meaning *power*. It is *δυναμις* which is a word that is always used for supernatural power.

So this leper recognizes the source of Jesus strength, it is supernatural, it is from God.

So we can see that this man is attributing to Jesus power from God.

You have been given the power from God to heal me if you are willing.

The mood of this moment is very dramatic.

Jesus was teaching, perhaps in the streets, not in a synagogue (the leper would never have gotten in), there are others around and through the crowd, perhaps wrapped in his robe with head covered comes this leper and addresses the Lord.

The fear of the contagious was so real that the Law of Moses given by God specified in Leviticus 13 that the person with leprosy would be expelled from the camp of Israel.

They were not to come into contact with anyone.

They lived out their lives in what has commonly been called a leper colony.

But here is an outcast, a leper in a city, in a crowd, and coming up to Jesus.

This was a very bold step.

He no doubt heard that Jesus was nearby, that he had healed others of physical maladies.

54 The Gospel of Luke

Should he go to this man who speaks the very words of God, dare he leave the outcast commune and go into a village risking life and limb if discovered?

Not only did he have the boldness to seek out the Lord he also had the confidence that Jesus had the power to cleanse him of the disease.

Now the contents of his request is built around two verbs followed by an infinitive.

I imagine he had thought very carefully and planned very carefully what he would say and what he says is very accurate.

If you are willing: A third class if, εαν, Recognition of his dependence on Christ and Christ's will free will.

You have been given the power.

He recognized that Christ's power was from God, given to Christ.

To cleanse.

An infinitive of results, the man knew that if Christ willed to do so he had been given the power to cleanse him of this terrible disease.

The combination of this verb and this infinitive, you have been given the power to cleanse is only uttered by this man who was in the most desperate of situations.

What this phrase tells us is that somehow he had been listening to the message.

Remember in Capernaum, the people were seeking Jesus the one who could heal

But this man was seeking the power of God that was in Jesus.

He did not see Christ as a mere miracle worker, he saw Christ in whom was the power of God.

The people that were whole, healthy, wealthy and wise did not yet see what this man saw.

Luke 5:13

And He stretched out His hand, and touched him, saying, I am willing; be cleansed, And immediately the leprosy left him.

The compassion, the touch, the healing all were a response to what this man said when he so accurately told the Lord what the Lord had the power to do.

Principle

Jesus will always respond to our pleas when we are accurate regarding His work, His person, His power, and our helplessness.

We are helpless but with Jesus we are never hopeless.

All the miracles of healing in the physical being were parallels of what we all are in the spiritual being.

Leprosy is what we all have apart from Christ Spiritually.

What was the former condition of this man. The man was in bondage to the physical disease he had. He was an outcast from society, relationships severed, no fellowship

In every area of life, physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual, he suffered. Under the total depravity of leprosy we can see ourselves under the total depravity of sins

But it was Jesus who *willed* that he be clean, who had in him the very power of God to make him clean.

That word for *cleansing* that Luke repeats in verses 12-13-14 is the same word that John later uses of us as believers in Christ.

1 John 1:7, But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

1 John 1:9, Even though we confess our sins, he is always faithful and just to forgive us our sins (having done so at the Cross), and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Principle

As Jesus had the power in Him from God to cleanse this man from leprosy, He had the same power from God to cleanse the sinner from his sins.

This man came to the Savior dependant upon him, knowing with confidence that if the Lord was willing he had the power to cleanse.

We must also come to the Savior dependant upon Him, having the confidence in Him that he can cleanse us from our sins.

The Gospel of Luke 55

As this man did not focus on his disease but rather on the Savior, we must not focus on sin but rather the solution in the Savior.

In the analogy the man has now been cleansed from his leprosy as we, at salvation, have been cleansed of our sins.

So we might look at these next verse and seek to answer the question - After salvation, What?

And after cleansing or spiritual restoration, What?

Luke 5:14

And He ordered him to tell no one, But go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded (Leviticus 14:2-32), for a testimony to them.

He ordered him, this is a very strong statement.

Jesus did not allow this man to tell anyone of this miracle.

There are a number of miracles like this that we call the *tell no man miracles*.

And the question of course is why?

Why not tell everyone?

Because of His purpose, that is why.

His purpose was not to be a sought after miracle worker but the one who would proclaim the Kingdom.

Even as His ministry would later shift from public miracles to public parables, people still sought Him for the miracles He could do and not the salvation He would bring.

Some assume that this meant that the man had to go to Jerusalem but the first part of the cleansing ceremony occurred outside the camp, outside the Temple.

Anyplace there were local Levitical priests who could begin the process.

The first offering by the way was two birds.

One to be slain which looked to Jesus' death upon the Cross and the other to be dipped in the blood mixed with water of the slain bird and then set free.

Picture of the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

That is where new life would begin for this former outcast and that is where new life begins for us as redeemed sinners.

The man was to do this as a **testimony**.

The Testimony would be of Christ.

In Matthew 7:5 and Luke 7:22 the power to cleanse the leper is an undeniable sign of the Messiah.

If the priests declared the leper clean but rejected the one who healed him, their unbelief would be incriminating evidence against them.

Luke 5:15

But the news about Him was spreading even farther, and great multitudes were gathering to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses.

The word BUT is a contrast to what has previously been stated. And the reason this contrast is there is given to us in Mark 1:45

But he, going out, began to proclaim many things and to spread about the matter.

The light contrast indicates that the man did not totally disobey Christ but only partially. As he was perhaps seeking a priest, he began to talk.

Enough people apparently knew the man and could see that he was no longer in bondage to the terrible disease.

As he went, he talked, and then talked even more.

Now look at this man for a moment. Would he purposely intent to in any way harm the one who had just healed him? Was he acting out of spite or malice?

No - but his enthusiasm and sincerity was wrong. He was in disobedience to the Lord Jesus Christ,

Enthusiasm and sincerity are not the issues, whether the man was right or wrong is the issue and he was wrong. Furthermore, his actions had a damaging effect on the freedom our Lord had to fulfill his purpose of proclaiming the truth, to fulfill His purpose.

Mark 1:45b, . . . So that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city but he was outside, in the desert, and they came to him from all directions.

Now look at Jesus for a moment.

56 The Gospel of Luke

He is now being popularly accepted in Galilee.

People are seeking Him wherever He goes.

The crowds are always there, but for the wrong reason.

They do not want to hear the message, they only want to see the miracles.

In His humanity this was troubling. It was perplexing. He no doubt wondered what is the world is going on. Should He just go along with the crowds?

Set His purpose aside for a while?

Do miracles and forget the message?

And it is the midst of this confusion that we have

Luke 5:16

But He Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.

And it would be alone, in that solitude of prayer, in the wilderness alone, that the answers would come.

That prayers would be answered and He would not be deterred from His purpose.

He would proclaim the kingdom of God.

Notice just the first part of the next verse, verse 17

And it came about one day that He was teaching -

Now we will still see miracles but His prayers were answered, He made the message primary and anything else, even healing the sick, secondary.

Oh that we will spend the still small hours in prayer, in the wilderness seeking God's answers to the confusion in our own lives.

Up to this point in Luke's account of the Lord's earthly ministry we have seen how the miracles which were designed to draw people to the message and display the power of God had become a distraction for some.

They viewed the method or the man above the message and were distracted.

It was his miracles, that were a very legitimate part of His ministry, that the shallow and subjective looked at rather than the message of truth.

But we will now be introduced to another group who did not understand the Savior, the religious

leaders who came out of every quarter to examine the ministry of Jesus.

They brought with them a preconceived opinion regarding what the ministry should be and in their inflexibility they were unwilling to repent of their erroneous opinion

In these ten verses we are going to see some FRIENDS, FAITH, FORGIVENESS, and confrontation.

Luke 5:17

And it came about one day that He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing.

In this verse and the parallel account in Mark 2 we see that Jesus is in Capernaum and he is at Peter's house..

He is teaching which was His purpose.

Jesus had been in Capernaum before.

It was there the first jolt of popularity hit him but it was a distorted popularity as the people got involved with the miracles rather than what the miracles taught which was a spiritual truth.

But this an illustration of giving another chance, which is the standard of grace, Jesus came to Capernaum again and he taught the Word.

We see however two additional things in this verse.

Pharisees, scribes and rabbis were present.

They had come from every village in Galilee and some from as far away as Judea and Jerusalem.

And we also see that that the *power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing.*

And with that statement we see yet another indication that Jesus' power was from God and not from His own deity.

In the union of deity and humanity, he had set aside the use of His divine attributes and depended totally upon the Father and the Holy Spirit.

The Gospel of Luke 57

The term Lord, κυριος, can be used for God the Father, God the Son, and even for God the Holy Spirit.

It was the custom in the ancient near east to go to someone's home uninvited especially if there was a distinguished guest and even more so with a distinguished teacher.

So the people crowded at the door as we see in v 19.

Now Jesus is teaching but in the midst of the teaching we will have an interruption, in the midst of the message something unusual is going to happen.

Luke 5:18

And behold, some men were carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in, and to set him down in front of Him.

The word paralyzed is the Greek word παραλυω from which we get the word paralyzed.

So this man does not have the ability to walk but he has something else, four good friends.

They wanted to bring their friend who was paralyzed to Jesus.

They wanted him to be healed.

Luke 5:19

And not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, right in the center, in front of Jesus.

The roof of a house in those days was made of a composition of grass, clay, tiles, and laths.

A staircase would run along the side of a home to the roof which had to be strong enough to support four men carrying a fourth.

It's interesting that Peter never complained about his roof being torn up. Peter was there and all of a sudden his roof goes and he is relaxed about the matter. Why?

Because he was in the presence of Jesus, and that meant no worries.

Well, these men made a whole in the roof big enough to let down their friend.

Since fishing was a major industry in Capernaum they lowered the cot or mat on fishing ropes and

there as Jesus was teaching, down comes this paralyzed man and, we assume, his friends jumped in after him.

Luke 5:20

And seeing their faith, He said, Friend, your sins are forgiven you.

The word for FAITH is PISTIS and we have studied before that faith must have an object.

Here the object was what they believed Jesus Christ could do for their friend.

It is a noun which means that faith is a response to something else.

Here the something else is the belief that Jesus can heal this man.

Jesus responded to the faith of the friends.

Principle

The four friends and their faith brought blessing by association to the paralyzed man.

You can put yourself in a position between God and those you love to bring divine blessing to those you love.

God will bless and protect others because of his love and compassion for you.

When you pray for others it can be your faith in God and your intercessory prayers that can unleash the power of God in the life of another.

Faith can be seen by others.

Their actions of carrying their friend, coming to Christ, going up to the roof, tearing the roof away just to get their friend into the presence of Christ was a result or manifestation of their faith, which came from their belief in what Jesus could do.

Eight principles of faith

Faith unleashes the omnipotence of God. His divine almighty power.

Romans 1:16, For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that 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 (in Habakkuk 2, even in the Old Dispensation), BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.

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The power of God is available to you but only through faith.

Faith is a one-word summary of the Christian life.

Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38 all state *that the just shall live by faith.*

Faith is the foundation of Christian Virtue: 1 Co 13:13

Faith is the first part of the trilogy of *faith, hope, and love* and as your faith grows, so does hope and as hope grows, so does your love.

And on the negative side of this is Romans 14:23 *whatever is not from faith is sin.*

Romans 10:17 we find that *Faith increases through study of the Word of God*

Faith is the substance and foundation of our assurance in Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 11:1, Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:2 and 6

Faith alone can please God and when God is pleased with you, you are happy and fulfilled.

Hebrews 11:6, And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Faith Works, it has production in obedience, service and ministry,

James 2:14, 17, and 26.

Ephesians 2:8-10, By grace are you saved through faith - created by Jesus Christ unto good works.

Faith alone overcomes the world, I John 5:4-5.

You are a winner by a margin of faith.

Luke 5:20

He said, Friend, your sins are forgiven you.

FORGIVEN is the word ἀφίημι and as early as the days of Homer meant the release of actual or legal control over a person.

Now that would have been a greater let down than the man just experienced coming from the roof - he and his friends sought healing in the

physical realm and all Jesus provided was the forgiveness of sins.

But sins are something that stand between you and God while a physical infirmity stand only between you and your body.

The forgiving of sins is much greater thing to do than the healing of a physical problem.

And the physical problem parallels the spiritual condition of all mankind being paralyzed in the bondage of sins.

But the Old Testament never spoke of the Messiah forgiving sins.

The Old Testament always put the power to forgive sins into the sovereign domain of God.

A bit of logic.

Only God can forgive sins (II Chron 7:14, Ps 41:4ff)

Jesus Christ forgave this man's sins

Therefore, Jesus Christ is God

But the religious leaders, rather than allow for that possibility, immediately attacked the Son of God.

Luke 5:21

And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

We have seen the Friends, their Faith, the Forgiveness, and now we have the confrontation.

They reason in their hearts (or souls) but they do not ask Jesus any questions.

It will be the Lord who will inquire of them rather than they of the Lord.

On our first visit to Capernaum with the Lord we saw the men of the synagogue debate among themselves rather than ask the Lord any questions.

Here, subjectivity and arrogant pride, has caused these scribes to reason in their souls rather than ask a question of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When you ask a question you have to admit you do know understand or do not know something.

And in our culture we have developed a false sense of pride thinking that if we ask a question we are displaying stupidity.

The Gospel of Luke 59

BUT we are only ignorant when we have not been provided the opportunity to get understanding. Whereas we are indeed stupid when we have the opportunity and yet reject it.

Principle

These scribes and religious leaders just crossed from ignorance to stupidity.

If they would have asked a few questions and been teachable they could have crossed the barrier between ignorance and enlightenment -

And now they accuse Jesus of speaking blasphemies, which is slander against God.

The interesting thing that demonstrates their pettiness is that their complaint is not even valid.

In the Old Testament, blasphemy is never associated with saying that sins are forgiven.

At the time of Christ, there were many second rate Rabbis running around saying the same thing, you sins are forgiven.

Principle

If a person is negative to the truth of God, they will find a reason to attack.

They have to major in the minors to do it, but they will find something and if not, they will stretch a point or make something up.

Luke 5:22.23

But Jesus, aware of their reasoning, answered and said to them, Why are you reasoning in your hearts?

Which is easier, to say, Your sins have been forgiven you, or to say, Rise and walk'?

Do you know what this is?

It is a trick question, whatever they answer is going to get them in a bind.

The reason it is a trick question is that it is dealing on two levels, the spiritual level of sins and the need for forgiveness and the physical level of paralysis and healing.

The most difficult thing to do is to forgive sins, but it is the easiest to say.

The easier thing to do is heal a physical paralysis, but it is visible and therefore provable.

I could say to you, your sins are forgiven, you cannot see that.

But only God can truly do that and I am not God..

But our Lord is going to validate the forgiveness of sins and his acceptance of this man by that which is easier to do but provable.

Luke 5:24

But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, He said to the paralytic, I say to you, rise, and take up your stretcher and go home

The forgiveness of sins that was declared in verse 20, questioned in verses 21, is now validated in verse 24.

Jesus will validate the spiritual by way of the physical, as this man was paralyzed by sins and was set free by Christ, he was also paralyzed physically and was physically set free by Christ.

Luke 5:25

And at once he rose up before them, and took up what he had been lying on, and went home, glorifying God.

Here is a picture of the world paralyzed in sins.

Christ has offered healing by way of forgiveness, but we must do as this man did - we must get up and that takes faith.

If you have ever been injured, taken a fall, ended up flat on your back, or perhaps after surgery, you are afraid to move, you lie very still - and that is where most of the world is, even most believers.

Not having the faith to rise up, knowing you are no longer in the paralyzing grip of sins.

This man did as we must all do - he rose up.

Luke 5:26

And they were all seized with astonishment and began glorifying God; and they were filled with fear, saying, We have seen remarkable things today.

I would like their response much more if we would read *We have learned a remarkable thing today.*

They should have been astonished at the message and that here was JESUS, THE CHRIST

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HE IS GOD, THE MESSIAH.

Illustrations

In the frigid waters of the North Atlantic there are countless icebergs, some little and some gigantic. If you'd observe them carefully, you'd notice that sometimes the small ice floes move in one direction while their massive counterparts flow in another. The explanation is simple.

Surface winds drive the little ones, whereas the huge masses of ice are carried along by deep ocean currents.

People are very much like those icebergs, some people are driven and moved by what is on the surface. The shifting winds that change from moment to moment. They are pushed through life and Paul said tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

Others are like the large icebergs which respond and are guided by the deep and consistent ocean currents.

Sometimes going directly against the ever changing winds.

Principle

Their astonishment was not over the truth, it was not the deep unchanging currents that moved them, it was the winds that toss to and fro, they only perceived that which was on the surface.

They were not astonished by message and they would not be astonished by what Jesus would do and that was to go to Calvary and be the sacrifice for sins.

Charlene Myhra said.

Lord, let it be that I follow you not merely as a leader but let me follow you as my master, the master of every step I take.

Luke 5:27

And after that He went out, and noticed a tax-gatherer named Levi, sitting in the tax office, and He said to him, Follow Me.

Mark 2:13 adds: *He went out again by the seashore; and all the multitude were coming to Him, and He was teaching them.*

We see again, Jesus fulfilling His purpose, to teach the people, to preach the Kingdom of God.

The call of Matthew

In calling Matthew, here called Levi, Jesus broke the pattern even he had followed in calling his earlier disciples.

They had either been followers of John the Baptist or fishermen the common men of Galilee.

But now he calls to a tax-collector and says, follow me, - and he does!!

In calling Matthew to be a disciple and in Matthew's following of Jesus, our Lord demonstrates that he has authority and power to cleanse, to forgive sins, and save even the most horrible of people.

We cannot appreciate the attitude of Israel towards these tax-collectors.

Israel, remember, was under Roman authority and these tax-collectors collected taxes and tariffs for the Romans who were seen as the enemy of occupation.

He is called a PUBLICAN but that is a mistranslation of the word for tax-collector (verse 15).

But Matthew would have worked for a Publican.

Taxes are essential to any empire. Part of the drive to incorporate new territories into Rome was a desire for a broader tax base. In early Rome the system of tax-collection became riddled with fraud and corruption.

Julius Caesar came up with a plan that was refined by Augustus Caesar. Use the EQUITES, the equestrian class of Roman Knights, as the Publicans. A Roman Knight would be given the privilege to bid on being the Publicans for a region. An imperial contract was then issued to him to collect so much in taxes. His wealth and integrity of nobility precluded fraud.

He would hire locals, usually other wealthy men, to serve under him and actually collect the taxes. There was always more collected than contracted for so that they collectors and even the Publicans could be paid a salary.

The one thing to remember is that these local tax-collectors were themselves men of wealth and nobility but they were hated, despised by the religious leaders of Israel.

The Gospel of Luke 61

Tax collectors were not allowed in the Temple, they were snubbed in the streets, viewed as being a traitor to their country.

What is unusual about him is that the name Levi would indicate that he was from the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe.

Matthew was a man who was so close to the religious leaders of Israel as he was growing up and seeing the hypocrisy, the religion, ritual, legalism - turned his back on all of it and became a tax-collector working for Rome.

Maybe a man who has grown cynical regarding what he sees, a man who looks, thinks, considers, and has until now dismissed the religion of his peers - but now there is something new in Israel, and it is Jesus Christ.

Luke 5:28

And he left everything behind, and rose and began to follow Him.

We have three things that happened as a result of Jesus saying Follow Me.

He abandoned everything and he rose up.

Principle

He used his volition and his faith, he made certain decisions and one was to be dependant upon Christ.

He left it all - and now all that was left was Jesus Christ

Then he followed.

And this is an imperfect tense indicating he continued to follow Jesus until he could follow him no more - and that time came at the Cross when Jesus Christ had to pay for our sins alone.

In these verses we have the three phases of the Christ Centered Life.

Salvation

(He followed Him)

Growth

(He wanted to be with Christ - in fellowship)

I am sure Christ sat right next to his host

Ministry

(He invited others to come and meet Christ)

Luke 5:29,30

And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax-gatherers and other people who were reclining at the table with them.

And the Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, Why do you eat and drink with the tax-gatherers and sinners?

Picture of fellowship, having a great time together.

A great company of publicans and sinner sat down with them.

The Scribes and the Pharisees were the ones Matthew grew up around, the religious leaders of Israel.

Those who taught works, religion, ritual - and here they are to pick apart the Son of God.

And the Pharisees and the scribes *began grumbling at His disciples*

They did not have the nerve to go to Jesus Christ himself so they went behind his back to his followers.

Why do you eat and drink with the tax-gatherers and sinners?

And being very skilled at complaining they even made it sound worse. Used present tense verbs, i.e., always eating with tax-collectors and sinners.

“Sinners” is a word that was commonly used for female prostitutes. Prostitution was considered immoral but it was not illegal in Israel, Rome, or Greece. Rather than a legal problem it carried a personal and social stigma.

Prostitution was very common in the ancient world. All the inns had resident prostitutes. In order to avoid that temptation Jesus instructed his disciples to find their lodging in private homes (Matthew 10:11).

The one thing a prostitute was not allowed to do is worship God, they were prohibited from the Temple until they decided to break with their profession and be ceremonially cleansed at the Temple (Deuteronomy 23:18).

So we have two groups.

Tax-collectors and prostitutes and both groups were prohibited from Temple worship.

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But they were received by Jesus Christ and many who the religious bigots would have nothing to do with, became believers and followed Christ.

Luke 5:31,32

And Jesus answered and said to them, It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick.

I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

Although the scribes and Pharisees complained to the disciples, it was Jesus Christ who would answer them.

In answering them he puts them down, but I don't think they got it.

The wording, the grammar here is so subtle I would love to take a few hours and exegete every word, but time only allows for an expanded translation.

And Jesus, answered and said to them.

The ones who deem themselves to be strong will never think that they need a physician.

BUT the ones who are ill they know they need a physician.

Repentance: A turning from something and a turning to something.

We turn from sin - why?

How?

When we sin we must repent in order to have a relationship with God at salvation 1 or recover our with Him at salvation 2.

We must turn from our sins and turn to Him.

But that may mean something very different than what religion has made it to be.

We can turn from our sins only because they are paid for at the Cross.

Sin is like a debt we owe.

How can you just turn away from a debt?

Banks and lending institutions do not really like you doing that unless the debt is paid.

Our debt of sins has been paid so we can turn away from them.

This is not remorse, guilt, sorrow, repudiation, or anything that we might do or feel (although sorrow can lead us to the point of repentance).

It is the objective reality of the Cross, Christ died for our sins and we can even admit, confess them to God, and turn from them and turn to the Lord.

As the Lord did with Matthew when he said, one time, follow me and Matthew who was a sinner, a rejecter of the religion of Israel followed Jesus Christ.

He gives these religious leaders a chance to turn from their arrogance (He will die of the cross for that sin too) and follow Him, but they do not.

As we pull this together I want you to see three groups of people.

Matthew represents the person who has been raised in religion and rejected it all.

He gets involved with the world, the money that could be made from being a tax-collector.

But when Jesus calls he follows him

The sinners, including the prostitutes.

No self-righteousness, no delusion about self.

Knew exactly that they were sinners.

Yet when they saw and heard Christ, they followed him.

The Scribes and Pharisees.

The religious leaders, members of all the right councils, the big shots.

Yet all they could do is stand by and complain and criticize.

Now here is the issue.

What are you going to do with your life, are you going to follow Jesus Christ?

Who are you going to stand with, the arrogant religious Pharisees or the tax-collectors and sinner.

They may not be the most respectable, but they are the ones who will follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

One last verse, turn to the parallel account in Matthew 9 and go to verse 13.

We have basically the same story to this point but then we have one verse added.

Remember that Matthew is writing to the Jews who had elevated the Old Testament law and sacrificial system to be the foundation of a relationship with God.

The Gospel of Luke 63

Notice what Jesus says to these rigid religious legalists.

Matthew 9:13, But go and learn what this means, I desire compassion, and not sacrifice, for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

And this is what Jesus expressed to Matthew - compassion.

And He is our example.

Matthew was will to come to Jesus, to follow Him, just as he was, a sinner, a traitor, because He recognized the compassion of this man Jesus. His Love, His Grace, His forgiveness, His acceptance.

Matthew was enough of a sinner to know that he could not change himself

Look back at Luke 5:8 Peter's words to Jesus.

Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

Peter felt so much guilt that he felt shame in the presence of the Lord.

Matthew felt so much more guilt and shame that he knew he could be with no one else except the Lord. Matthew came to Jesus just as he was without one plea

In this final paragraph of Luke chapter two we see the continued harassment of Jesus and His disciples by the religious leaders.

Last week we saw that they certainly could not stand for Jesus to be with tax-collectors and sinner.

And now they are going to criticize not what Jesus and His disciples are doing, but what they are not doing.

It is interesting to me to see how the religious leaders bring other into the argument.

Kind of reminds me of the little poem by Alexander Pope who was know as being exceptionally irritable himself.

*Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike.*

Just a hint, of fault, just a subtle sneer - why do your disciples not fast?

Remember that these criticisms occur outside Matthew's home.

While Jesus in inside with tax-collectors and sinners, the religious crowd is outside.

Luke 5:33

And they said to Him, The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers; the disciples of the Pharisees also do the same; but Yours eat and drink.

By this time John the Baptizer had been put into prison by Herod Antipas (we will see more about that in the next chapter in Luke.

Although some of his disciples had become followers of the Lord Jesus, others had joined with the Pharisees upon the removal of John.

In Israel at the time of Christ, the Rabbis had established two days a week for fasting.

These were on Monday and on Thursday.

So we can assume that the feast at Matthew's house was on one of these two days.

The Pharisees and John's former disciples were fasting while Jesus, his disciples, the tax-collectors and sinners were feasting.

Hence, their complaint.

Why do the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?

Fasting

Under Old Testament Law, fasting was never commanded although it was observed by the Jews. The only national fast was on the day of atonement, one day a year.

Fasting is:

Taking time normally used for eating and sleeping and using it to study the Word of God or prayer. Fasting is a result of proper priorities in life.

The food of the Word and the fellowship of prayer being more important than eating and sleeping.

Fasting never impresses God.

It cannot persuade God.

It is useful, but only when the time is used for spiritual growth.

These religious leaders got impressed with their own fasting, regulated it, commanded it, and expected others to follow their lead.

64 The Gospel of Luke

Their fasting was more of a farce, it only lasted from sunrise to sunset on Mondays and Thursdays.

Matthew 6:16-18, Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

So it is from a hypocritical position of human good that these Pharisees were critical of Jesus and his disciples.

Jesus will give three short parables to explain an important point.

You cannot mix the old or false with the new and true.

Luke 5:34

And Jesus said to them, You cannot make the attendants of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you?

In this short parable, Jesus is taking a social truth and putting alongside a spiritual truth.

The children of the bride chamber are the guest invited to the wedding.

In Galilee, where this occurs, it was not common to have groomsmen, only invited guests at a wedding.

A wedding is a time of celebration and not a time of fasting or mourning (except for maybe the father of the bride who has to pay the bill). But at a wedding the priority is to have a great time, be happy, celebrate.

As Jesus represents the bridegroom, and is present with mankind, there can be no mourning, no fasting, but only celebration.

Luke 5:35

But the days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days.

This is looking ahead to the Cross, the days of betrayal, trial, and crucifixion.

But the fast is to be in THAT DAY, singular.

Which looks specifically at the Cross, a day of mourning.

But is followed by days of celebration of the resurrected Lord.

So this statement is teaching that there is proper timing, and the proper timing for fasting is not then while the Lord is present.

Luke 5:36

And He was also telling them a parable: No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment; otherwise he will both tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old.

Back before the days of pre-washed, pre-shrunk clothing, you had to be very careful in putting a new patch on an old garment.

The old garment had been shrunk, the new patch would not be shrunk.

First time the patched garment was washed, the new patch would shrink, and rip the old garment.

Principle

You cannot mix the old with the new, else both are ruined.

The OLD GARMENT here is the Old Testament Law, the old Covenant and all the other Rabbinical laws that were being enforced by the religious crowd.

The word OLD is from *παλαιος* which means old as in worn out or useless.

And that is what the Old Covenant is, worn out and useless in the presence of Jesus Christ.

The NEW PATCH is the new ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ in preaching the truth in grace.

It is the New Covenant.

Under grace and not under law.

These cannot be mixed.

Later on the Lord will teach that even a little leaven leavens the whole loaf.

Galatians and Colossians, especially chapter 2, teach that the old is out.

The Gospel of Luke 65

Principle

Cannot mix together old law and new grace.

Luke 5:37,38

And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins, and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined.

But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.

The King James Version we have the word bottles but in the Greek New Testament it is wineskins.

These were made of the stomach of the goats and had a certain pliability to them.

As the wine fermented they would stretch, but once stretched they could not be used for new wine, which expands upon fermentation, again.

Very often to speed up the fermentation process, the new wine in their new wineskins were hung in the chimney.

Now if they burst because of an old wineskin being used, it not only wasted the wine, but would put out the fire.

By analogy, when the believer combines the new wine of grace with the old wineskins of the law, the result is QUENCHING the Holy Spirit.

The Lord goes on to teach the correct process for wine and wineskins and by way of analogy, for the believer.

BUT new wine into fresh wineskins. *αλλα* the strongest contrast

NEW wine, *νεος* which is new in a point of time
FRESH wineskins, *καινος* which is new in a point of use

Principle

The new in a point in time ministry of the Lord bringing in a covenant of grace and truth must be put into the believer who is new as to their use as new spiritual creatures.

2 Corinthians 5:17, Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Luke 5:39

But the acceptance of the new is not natural to man.

And no one, after drinking old wine wishes for new; for he says, 'The old is good enough.'

Man becomes so accustomed to what is old, what is comfortable, what he knows, that he refuses even to taste the new.

The *old is good enough* they say.

Lessons to learn from Luke 5:33-39

The complaint regarding fasting dealt with something that was not even a part of the Old Testament Law.

Man will elevate his legalisms to divine command in order to find justification for his actions of the flesh.

Jesus taught that even with the superfluous, the non-essentials, there is proper timing.

There is no time for mourning when you are celebrating the presence of Christ

You cannot combine the New with the Old, worn out, and useless.

If you try you will render both useless and ineffective.

We are new wineskins, new containers, for the new ministry of grace and truth.

And we are reminded by the Lord Himself that man is not given to change, and would rather stick with the familiar than to even try the new.

Now remember, all this took place outside of Matthew's home while the Lord was at this wonderful; feast.

So during the giving of these parables there were two groups present.

One group was inside Matthew's house feasting with the Lord.

The other group was outside, involved in a legalistic fast and complaining about the other group.

The group that was outside saw themselves as respectable and they probably were in their society - but respectability can be a trap that ensnares a person into arrogant thinking.

The assumption would be.

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If I am respected by men, then God must respect me also - and that is pride, arrogance, and blasphemy

Man may praise us, give us the applause, but never forget what you are in the plan of God.

A sinner saved by grace!

2 Chronicles 7:14, If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

James 4:10, Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

1 Peter 5:6, Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

The people inside with Jesus, Matthew, and the disciples; the tax-collectors and prostitutes, had no delusion about themselves.

They knew they were sinners in need of a Savior.

The people on the outside, the respectable religious leaders, thought of themselves as being something, and thought that Jesus had to conform to their standards, in their pride and arrogance they attacked and would soon try to kill the Lord of Glory.

Where would you be?

Outside fasting with the religious crowd of complainers or inside feasting with the Lord?

Galatians 6:3, For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

2 Corinthians 13:4-5, 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. Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test?

Chapter 6

Luke chapter five and six tells us of the conflict, the controversies, the confrontations, that

eventually lead to the conspiracy by the religious leaders to destroy the Lord Jesus Christ.

As our Lord faced his antagonists, he consistently presented them with the Truth, the very Word of God which was His Word. So often, in the midst of conflict, our first option is to compromise.

In the area of the non-essentials, compromise may be a virtue - but too often the church today and its people, have compromised on the essentials.

They have allowed compromise over that which they have no right to allow compromise - the Truth of God.

A story is told of a hunter out hunting for bear.

...

who had his gun aimed at a large bear and was ready to pull the trigger.

Just then the bear spoke in a soft, soothing voice saying,

Isn't it better to talk than to shoot?

Why don't we negotiate the matter?

What is it you want?

The hunter lowered his rifle and answered, I would like a fur coat.

That's good, said the bear.

I think that's something we can talk about.

All I want is a full stomach; maybe we can reach a compromise.

So they sat down to talk it over.

A little while later the bear walked away alone.

The negotiations had been successful--the bear had a full stomach, and the hunter had a fur coat!

In negotiation and compromise, you can end up the loser!

We have seen that our Lord was not about to compromise with those who attempted to bring him into the bondage of legalism.

At issue was the Rabbinical Fast Days, Mondays and Thursdays, and the fact that Jesus disciples did not fast.

In His defense, the Lord presented three parables of Truth.

Each parable taught that you cannot combine the old with the new nor the false with the true.

The Gospel of Luke 67

The interpretation dealt with the Lord's ministry of grace and truth as compared to the religious leader's embracing of the Mosaic Law and their false system of petty laws and rules.

(One interpretation and many applications) we can take these parables of the new patch on old clothing and new wine in old wineskins and apply their truth to ourselves - we are new creatures in Christ.

Why do we think that we can go back to some old system of the flesh, the thinking of Human viewpoint, the thinking of the Law, or any reliance on the strength or the trends of personality.

We are new creatures in Christ and we are the recipients of all the provisions of Grace that were provided by God in His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17, Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Ephesians 4:20-24, Paul questions how they have learned Christ: If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus.

That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Principle

You are a new wineskin, a new piece of cloth, you have a new purpose, a new power, a new position.

Don't combine the old Law with the new Grace, the false with the true.

Luke 6:1,2

Now it came about that on a certain Sabbath He was passing through some grain fields; and His disciples were picking and eating the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands.

But some of the Pharisees said, Why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?

What we have here is an Old Testament Law regarding the Sabbath Day of rest, the interpretation of that law, and also another Old Testament rule regarding the picking of grain in a neighbor's field.

Principles: Sabbath and the grain field.

First of all, Deuteronomy 23:25 indicates that it was permissible for those who were traveling in a grain field to pick grain to eat at that time.

When you come into the standing grain of thy neighbor, then thou mayest pluck the grain with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbor's standing grain.

The Old Testament Law regarding the Sabbath indicates that no work is to be accomplished, no harvesting of crops, no reaping of what is sown.

Leviticus 23:3, Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

So the question is, does the casual and permissible picking of grain constitute working or merely eating?

On a Sabbath Day in Israel, food was prepared the previous day to be eaten on the Sabbath.

So eating was permitted - but what about picking the grain that was to be eaten?

Here is the interesting thing regarding our story.

The Pharisees gave their interpretation of these Laws and one would normally think the Lord would give His - but he did not.

Principle

The Lord did not engage in a debate with the Pharisees, no point and counter point type of arguments.

He just stated the facts.

Application

We argue too much about that which is true.

Sometimes, in witnessing, we win the argument and lose the soul.

These Pharisees already stated not only their interpretation but also their attitude.

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Why do you do what is not lawful.

Their minds were already made up

They were argumentative, they were antagonistic.

Would they have reasonably listened to a dissertation on the distinction of picking grain and harvesting grain, do you think with their preconceived ideas that they would have been persuaded?

NO!

And many people you run into today will be in exactly the same situation.

You could present the greatest arguments, the most sound logic, you give the best evidence, and you will get no where because of the attitude of negative volition.

So what do you do?

The same thing the Lord did, bring the discussion back to the person of Christ.

Look down to verse 5.

The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath.

Principle

When you are dealing with antagonistic people, argumentative people, the best thing you can do is focus the discussion on the person of Christ - not you or your church or a specific doctrine, but on Christ.

And if they are negative to Him who has done everything for them, then you leave them in the Lord's hands.

Christ's response

A Story and a Principle.

JESUS was not involved in the picking of the grain, so his position was unique in that he could defend his disciples while being outside the line of attack.

You might wonder also where the Pharisees came from.

They were following Jesus around, as did many people.

But while many were following him to learn from him, the Pharisees were following him to entrap him.

Jesus refers to I Samuel 21 and David as he fled for his life from Saul.

Luke 6:3,4

And Jesus answering them said, Have you not even read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him, how he entered the house of God, and took and ate the consecrated bread which is not lawful for any to eat except the priests alone, and gave it to his companions?

Jesus knows that these religious leaders know this Old Testament .

He asks them if they have *read it* .

The word is *αναγινωσκω* which means not only to read but to read and intensely understand.

All reading at that time was out loud.

Silent reading was not figured out until the monastic period in the third century AD

Jesus establishes that the prerequisite of reading and understanding is necessary for any theological discussion.

Hence, this is a very sarcastic statement by our Lord.

These Pharisees prided themselves on their knowledge of the Scriptures, but the Lord now ask - have you not even read this portion of the holy Scriptures?

Summary of 1 samuel chapter 21

In 1 Samuel 21, David is fleeing for his life. Jonathan has warned him that his father the king, Saul, wants to kill David. Saul suspects that David is to be the next king and his anger towards young David is intense. David's life is on the line so he flees and enroute needs two things, food and a weapon.

The Tabernacle had been temporarily set up in the village of Nob, their David can find a weapon, Goliath's sword, and food. But the only food available is the showbread that was placed in the Holy Place. Twelve loaves baked fresh every day, and represented the promised Messiah as the bread of Life to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Now the priests were allowed to eat of the bread, but David was not a priest - but David was the anointed of God, anointed to be the next king over God's Old Testament people.

The Gospel of Luke 69

The priests were Abiathar and his father Ahimelech, while in fear regarding what they were doing, decided that David's life was more important than rules regarding day old bread.

Principle

They considered the higher law.

They saw David's survival as being more important than a minor law regarding who can eat and who cannot.

Illustration

Even God was not concerned about keeping the Law when compassion was more important.

We have rules for our church. but the rules are not etched in stone. There are times when the rules are set aside for a greater cause.

Another rule, more personal and a true mandate to believers: Coming to Bible Class.

Hebrews 10:25, Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some.

But there are times when a higher law goes into effect and you miss Bible class. Illness, work, even a family vacation, being out of town.

There are legitimate reasons to not follow the mandate, but they had better be a reason pertaining to a higher law or principle.

We need to first of all, in any discussion regarding the law of God, remember that God's higher law is not written in stone or in words but on the heart.

2 Corinthians 3:2-6, You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts.

And such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

We must seek to live by the Spirit and the word and not the law.

It is at this point as recorded in Matthew 12:7 that the Lord quotes the Old Testament grace principle found in Hosea 6:6

But if you had known what this means, I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice, you would not have condemned the innocent.

And in both Matthew and Mark we also find that the Lord then said.

The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

Do we get that?

Do we understand what is being said about the Sabbath, a Law that finds its roots in creation and restated as part of the Ten Commandments.

That is heavy stuff, important Law. But it was never made to force man into bondage only to bring grace to man.

Man is not made for any of God's Law but rather the Law was made to teach man, to bless man, to administer grace to man.

The reason God gave a Sabbath to Israel was to provide them with a day of rest, a day off.

The Sabbath was created by God, given to man as grace. These religious leaders took the grace that God had given and turned it into a yoke around the neck of the people.

That which was a gift became a burden . . . And that was not God's intention, plan, or design became the standard by which men tried to live.

Galatians 5:1, For freedom Christ has set us free.

But people today have done the same thing with grace in the Christian way of life.

There is only one way to know the will of God and that is to know the Word and then be led by the Holy Spirit.

Knowing the Word by the way is not enough. All that will do is confuse you with the rules. We need the other comforter who will lead us in all truth.

Apart from the Word of God and the Spirit of God you could make two mistakes.

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You could set aside the ideal grace of God for something you think is more important and it is not more important.

That was Saul's problem in I Samuel 13.

He thought he could set aside the ideal of only priests offering sacrifices because there was no priests around.

But he was wrong because he did not know what the Bible had to say about offering sacrifices.

God was really trying to delay his entrance into battle with the Philistines by delaying the arrival of Samuel the priests.

Saul put his real situation above the plan of God

The second mistake is that without doctrine you will turn grace into a legalistic standard.

Like no stripping of grain and eating on the Sabbath even when hungry. The Rabbis made 360 Sabbath laws.

The Sabbath became a day not of rest, but of trying to live up to some legalistic standard.

Illustration

There was young man who was going on the mission field had and worked very hard at developing a devout life. He arose every morning at 5:00 and prayed for an hour.

Then he would read his Bible. Then back to prayer before going off to chapel service. He spent every waking hour reading, praying, handing out tracts.

Soon he came to the new American colonies, Georgia to be exact, and while there even sacrificed the opportunity to marry the woman he loved because he felt God's calling to be more important.

But eventually he was recalled from the mission field, a failure. He went home in shame. And then one night while walking past a mission, he heard the Gospel and only then became a Christian.

John Wesley spent years in bondage to things that were given by God as grace. He even came to America as a missionary but it was only after he received Christ as his savior that he recognized that God's gifts were made for man, not man for the gifts.

And by using the grace of God, he was never a spiritual failure again.

Believers take that which is given in grace, given to man by God for his enjoyment and edification, and they turn it into a yoke of bondage.

Luke 6:5

And He was saying to them, The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.

Through this series of confrontations with religious leaders that Luke includes in Chapters five and six, we see Jesus Christ presenting truth.

Basically, he was shutting down the arguments of these Pharisees, scribes, and other supposed leaders of spiritual Israel.

Now when you find yourself in the wrong in your attitude, you have an important choice to make.

You can either repent, change your mind and line up your thinking with what is right - or you can dig in, and in stubborn arrogance allow your wrong attitude to result in wrong action.

Principle

There is nothing wrong with being wrong, but there is everything wrong with staying wrong.

The arrogant, religious legalistic leaders of Jesus day and the those of the same ilk today are no different than that convict.

Jesus gave the chance after chance, he provided pardon after pardon for their sins, yet they decided to dig in and their decision to continue in error lead to the actions of decadence.

No where in the gospels do we see the evil, vile character of the Pharisee more clearly than in Luke 6:6-11

Luke 6:6

And it came about on another Sabbath, that He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered.

Jesus' purpose is still his priority, he came to proclaim the truth and in doing so he took the opportunity to teach in the synagogue.

In the second half of verse one we have some curious exegesis.

The presence of the man is indicated words *And there was there*, making his presence in the synagogue very specific, as if he is there for a specific reason.

The Gospel of Luke 71

The verb is imperfect looking back to a specific point in time that it was crushed and to Luke, a time it would no longer be crushed (Luke know the rest of the story).

In Marks report of this in Mark 3 the wording uses two participles.

The participle shows action and the first one is passive indicating that his had had been crushed by someone else.

It is also a feminine participle, as is the fem adjective here in Luke, and that shows the hand had received the crushing from a source apart from the man or his actions.

In other words. This was no accident.

And then we add that statement to verse seven.

Luke 6:7

And the scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely, to see if He healed on the Sabbath, in order that they might find reason to accuse Him.

That is a tremendously loaded statement!!!

The wording indicates that what we see going on in verse 6 and 7 is part of a plot to get Jesus to heal this man on the Sabbath.

The circumstances and the wording of v 6 and Mark 3:1 strongly suggest that these religious leaders crushed this man's hand to see if Jesus would heal him.

They crushed his hand and sent him to the synagogue and then sat back and watched.

Remember, Jesus is teaching and yet it is apparent that this man's hand is crushed, withered.

Why is it so apparent?

There is a person here today who only has partial feeling and use of his hand yet it is not apparent.

The only way it would be is if the man was in pain because these religious leaders had taken his hand on a block and smashed it that very morning, on the Sabbath!

Principle

Evil has no regard for the innocents.

These evil men were willing to sacrifice this man's hand just to catch the Lord Jesus Christ in what

they determined was a sin, healing on the Sabbath.

They have come to this point of decadence because of their constant rejection of the truth presented by the Lord, they are, as we will see, hardened in their souls.

1. Of the 360 Sabbath day laws established by the rabbis, one prohibited healing by touch on the Sabbath
2. This absurd law had nothing to do with the Old Testament law of God. It was man's plan given a position superior to God's plan.
3. This combination of evil and legalism was doubly decadent and lead to a plot to catch the Lord in a supposed fault.

The word for accuse is κατηγορεω and is used in the New Testament for the evil accusation of those who opposed the Lord and the evil accusations of Satan against believers in Revelation 12:10.

Satan's job is to accuse the brethren, don't do his work for him.

The prefix κατά means to be against so the idea here is that they were already against the Lord and just waiting and plotting to catch him in a fault.

Principle

They had pre-judged the Lord and his actions and were now out to find justification for their pre-judgment,

Application

As Christians we are not to judge others much less pre-judge others based upon our own bias and prejudice. But too often we do.

We have our standards, some that are even anti-biblical, and we judge others by those standards.

We become judgmental, assuming, and involve ourselves in unrealistic Ambition, Competition, and Expectation.

Luke 6:8

But He knew what they were thinking, and He said to the man with the withered hand, Rise and come forward! And he rose and came forward.

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Jesus knew what they were thinking because the Holy Spirit revealed it to Him. In his perspicacity he will use the evil plot to communicate compassion and truth. Jesus, in his discernment, doctrine + the situation + the leading of the Holy Spirit., knew exactly what was going on.

In the midst of the synagogue service, Jesus calls to the man to Rise and come forward (was this the first altar call?)

A command and the man was obedient to that command. With this Jesus now has a visual aid of this man with a painfully withered hand standing in front of the people.

Luke 6:9

And Jesus said to them, I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good, or to do harm, to save a life, or to destroy it?

Then Christ directs two questions to the Pharisees.

Is it lawful on the Sabbath - (now these are really tough questions)

1. To do good (from *αθροπος*) or to do evil, harm or wrong?
2. To save life or to kill?

But they were silent. There is no indication of an answer because they had none. They could not answer even the most simple question.

The answer to both questions is obvious, but because they were involved in this conspiracy of evil, they could not even answer the simplistic of questions.

Illustration

Have you ever caught your child in a lie, and as you question them they do not even give answers to the simple unrelated questions.

Another place you can see this is in a congressional or senate hearing.

Did you live in Washington, D.C. at that time?

Could you repeat the question - I did not understand the question - I refuse to answer that on the grounds -

Later on James would write that we believers must: Let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation (James 5:12).

What Jesus did was bring the confrontation down into some very simple terms and some very absolute terms.

While the world sees everything in various shades of gray, God deals in absolutes

Either saved or unsaved

Either spiritual or carnal

Either divine viewpoint or human viewpoint

Either divine good or human good.

As Christians with doctrine we can live our lives according to God's absolutes.

We can know the truth and we can know what really matters in life, the absolutes.

Too many believers today see a god who is sloppy in his dealings with mankind, a god who holds no absolutes.

But God's Word tells us that He has determined certain absolutes and we are under that determination.

To that we can say that in this there is no divine opinion, not my opinion, but thus saith the Lord.

Some think that if you get close to salvation, you will make it.

There is no close about it - you are either saved or unsaved, that is it.

Luke 6:10

And after looking around at them all, He said to him, Stretch out your hand! And he did so; and his hand was restored.

In Mark 3:5, Mark adds a bit more that we should consider.

And after looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, Stretch out your hand.

This is *οπη* which is legitimate anger that is based upon knowledge and understanding.

The word LOOKING is an aorist middle participle which looks at resulting anger in a point of time, and precedes the next participle.

Then being greatly grieved at the hardness of their hearts.

This is a present participle,

The Gospel of Luke 73

He went from momentary anger to continual action of being grieved.

Grieving must have a cause and here the cause is their hardness of heart.

Hardness is the word *πωρωσις* which was a type of marble found in the ancient world.

Eventually it was used for a callous formed on a broken bone or on a hand.

We would call it scar tissue on the soul, or hardness of heart.

The human soul is a delicate thing and a terrible thing to waste.

Principles on scar tissue.

We tell our kids to Just say no - Knowing that the more you say no to the influences of evil, drugs, sex, booze, the easier it becomes to keep on saying NO.

Just as saying no to evil brings resistance, saying no to spiritual things builds resistance to spiritual things.

As you say no to God, no to the Savior, no to the Word of God, no to Bible class you build a resistance to the relationship God wants with you.

Every time you exercise negative volition to the things of the spirit of God and say NO, you build scar tissue on your soul.

It becomes easier and easier to say NO.

Solomon referred to this in Proverb 5:12-14

How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me! I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly.

Just as scar tissue is insensitive to feeling, scar tissue on the soul results in insensitivity to God and to others.

This insensitivity is seen as these religious leaders in Mark 3 planted an man with a withered hand in the synagogue to try to trap the Lord in a supposed fault.

Scar tissue is removed for the unbeliever at salvation and for the believer as he takes in the Word of God.

For too many Christians, saying NO to God and his perfect plan of spiritual growth has become too easy through their scar tissue and insensitivity.

And Christ heals the man's hand.

Stretch forth. an imperative command

The hand was restored. indicative mood, fully restored

Luke 6:11

The results of their scar tissue.

But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.

Implied by Luke is what is made clear in Mark.

The ones who discussed this together was the Pharisees and also the Herodians

And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

They could have given the glory and praise to God, but they did not - instead the Pharisees took counsel with the Herodians to destroy Jesus.

Pharisees.

Religious Jews

Herodians.

Secular political Jews

Principle

These two groups had nothing in common, even hated each other under normal circumstances.

This is called a concordat, and agreement between those who have nothing in common but have found an area in which they both can work and both be benefited.

You see, they had a common enemy and they were willing to join together to destroy the Lord.

The word for DESTROY means to utterly destroy and when used of a person means to kill.

So these religious leaders who tempted Christ to heal on the Sabbath, contrary to their laws, thought nothing of plotting a death on the Sabbath.

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That is hardness of heart, scar tissue of the soul, to refuse to allow healing on the Sabbath and yet to plan a murder on the Sabbath.

How does a person get into such a decadent way of thinking?

Through religion.

Religion destroys, tears down, withers.

And religion refuses the truth that is presented and today scores of Christians are refusing to hear the truth of God as it is taught from his word.

Your soul is too important to waste and grace is too big to waste. Don't let religion cause you to wither.

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*.

For neither Man nor Angel can discern Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks, Invisible, except to God alone. A religious man is one who feels Repentance on a Sunday For what he did on Saturday And is going to do on Monday.

Andre Gide, *Journal of The Counterfeiters*.

The true hypocrite is the one who ceases to perceive his deception, the one who lies with sincerity.

Charles Caleb Colton, *Lacon*.

Men will wrangle for religion, write for it, fight for it, die for it; anything but live for it.

Lenny Bruce.

Every day people are straying away from the church and going back to God.

Jonathan Swift, *Thoughts on Various Subjects*.

We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another.

In this portion of the Gospels, Luke covers an extended period of time by describing the Galilean ministry of Jesus and his disciples.

When we look at the Lord's dealings with His disciples we can see three phases.

Salvation, Growth, and then Ministry.

Here is where we see the move from growth to ministry on the part of the twelve disciples.

They were trained and while this training would continue even long after the ascension of Christ, they were ready to minister to others.

Jordan Grooms said.

That if God calls you to minister to others do not stoop to be a king.

And every believer in Jesus Christ is called to a ministry, both collectively and individually. We all have the ministry of ambassadors of Christ, we all have the ministry of evangelism and reconciliation, and as well we all have spiritual gifts that allow us to minister to others in a specific and peculiar way.

But too many Christians today walk away from their ministry and stoop to become kings.

Luke 6:12,13

And it was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.

And when day came, He called His disciples to Him; and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles.

Jesus is about to make a very big decision.

He is going to select twelve men from the many who are following Him at this time.

Prior to this decision the Lord goes off alone to pray, and we are told that he spent the whole night in prayer to God.

We see in this four things about Prayer.

This may seem obvious but when we pray we should ask ourselves, why are we praying, what is our purpose?

There are many reasons to pray.

We can pray for others, we can pray thanking God, we can pray praising Him, we can pray for ourselves, and we can pray that we will do thy will O God.

And that last prayer is what we see here.

Jesus, in His humanity, is faced with a decision, and He desires to do the Will of God.

We might ask ourselves if finding God's will is really that hard to find?

Remember, God's wants you to know and do His will more than you want to know and do His will.

In preparing to pray we want to consider what we are asking, if we are F/HS, if we are praying consistent with what God has revealed in His Word?

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Have we made the preparation to spend time in prayer?

Jesus went away, alone, no phones, no interruptions.

And He prepared in such a way that should He take the whole night, He had the whole night, and He did pray the whole night.

Which is part of persistence.

Why do we pray about something over and over again.

Do we think that God may not hear us?

Mark 6:7, And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition, as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.

Prayer persistence is not prayer repetition but it is concentrating on your prayers, modifying, changing if need be, to bring your prayers into line with God's will and God's glory.

And in this we often see in the Scriptures that people pray and as they pray the content of their prayers change.

Has this happened to you? Have you ever started praying about one thing and end up praying about something else?

That is what can come from prayer persistence.

In this part of prayer we pursue the opportunities that are now open to us.

Having prayed about having a ministry, we seek a ministry, if someone comes along and offers us the opportunity to minister we do not say I will pray about it, because we already have. Prayed about it.

Do we pursue the opportunities God gives us to answer our prayers.

Or are we like the man on the top of the house in the flood praying that God will save him?

Along comes a rubber raft, then a boat, then a helicopter.

He refuses them all saying God will save me.

He dies, goes to heaven and complains that God did not answer his prayer.

God says I sent you a raft, a boat, a helicopter, what more could I have done?

He did not pursue his prayer.

Now having prayed, Jesus comes down from the mountain and now will pursue His prayer.

Luke 6:13

He called His disciples to Him; and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles.

We have mention of *disciples* and the *twelve* and that these are also named by Jesus as *apostles*.

He is choosing twelve disciples, followers who will not only continue to learn from Him but also be sent to minister in His name.

We have three things the Lord did.

He called all the disciples. He chose twelve. He named them as apostles, those who are sent The call is like a general call that goes out to all.

Then a specific number are chosen to serve in a specific way, and then they are sent out.

In the same way we were called unto salvation, we are given specific gifts and ministries and we are equipped and sent out to minister.

In Mark 3:14-15 Mark tells in this parallel account what the ministries of these twelve would be.

Luke reveals this progressively.

that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out the demons.

As disciples they were followers of Jesus, as apostles they are to be sent.

We see in this Mark passage that they are to be with Him, **His fellowship**.

They are to be sent to communicate truth, **His message**.

And they are sent with authority over evil forces, **His power**.

We see from the many a few who will walk with Jesus and they will be with Him, have His truth and His power.

They go from disciples to apostles - those who follow to those who are sent.

Now we do not have apostles today, that was a unique and unparalleled office in the first century church.

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But we to follow Jesus as His disciples and we are sent, not as apostles but as Ambassadors of Jesus Christ.

And we too are in His fellowship, have His message, and are given His power.

Luke 6:14-16

Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew; and Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot; Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Twelve disciples who became apostles.

The number of tribes of the Old Testament and since the message will go to and the kingdom be offered to the Jew first, it was fitting that twelve disciples take the message to the twelve tribes.

And the message is going out to the twelve tribes.

The King is offering His kingdom.

The church is not in view in any way at this time.

We are on Kingdom ground in these passages, both in the choosing of the twelve and as we anticipate the Sermon on the Mount - a message for the Kingdom not for now.

And notice verse 16.

Judas Iscariot who became a traitor.

The particular form of the Greek word for *traitor* is found here and only in two other passages.

In Acts 7:52 Stephen calls the Sanhedrin, the high Jewish religious council, nothing more than a bunch of traitors.

In 2 Timothy 3:4 Paul uses the term to describe the believer who loves self and pleasure more than God.

So this word can apply to unbeliever like Judas and the Jews of the Sanhedrin or to apostate self centered believers.

Notice that we read that Judas became a traitor. He did not start out that way.

He became a traitor at a specific point in time and he did so thinking this was for his own benefit.

We might even say the self centered middle voice of personal deception

Luke 6:17

And He descended with them, and stood on a level place; and there was a great multitude of His disciples, and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon,

Verse 17 is setting us up for the Sermon on the Mount.

Luke 6:18

who had come to hear Him, and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were being cured.

Luke recognizes that there are those who were coming not just to see and experience the sign, wonders, and miracles.

That some truly did come to *hear Him*.

But I want you to consider that the calling of the twelve, the ordaining of apostles, the message of the kingdom that we will study next all began with prayer.

Jesus in His humanity went alone to pray to His Father and seek his will and of all the things involved in prayer I want us to see just two things in closing.

Prayers must be offered with faith

Prayers are to honor the Word and all three members of the Trinity.

We are going to examine what is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount. This is one portion of two of the synoptic Gospels that is very misunderstood. This message is recorded extensively by Matthew and by a shorter version here in Luke. It is not mentioned by Mark or John. That alone should tell us something.

Jesus appointed twelve of His disciples to become apostles.

In Luke 9:2 Jesus is going to send the twelve out to minister in His name and I want you to listen to the commission.

And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God.

In the sending of these twelve apostles, the twelve, the King is sending them to preach the Kingdom.

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The King is offering the Kingdom and in the Sermon on the Mount he is describing the Kingdom.

We know that while all Scripture is profitable for us, not all Scripture is directly interpreted for us. Different Dispensations have different regulations and relationships.

The foundation is always man's faith in what God provides, the form is always faith. God does not change, His truth does not change.

But the application of that truth in the time in which it was written may have been specific and yet now in the Church Age it would be general.

Example, in Psalm 51:11 David prayed *Take not thy Holy Spirit from me.*

Today, in the church age we have the permanent universal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We would not and should not then pray that prayer.

But by way of application we can use that passage to encourage ourselves to do nothing that would quench or grieve or lie to the Holy Spirit resulting in carnality.

Principle

The Sermon on the Mount teaches man what the kingdom, the millennial reign of Christ, will be like.

Mark and John do not mention this Sermon because their audiences are largely Gentile and Church.

The term Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew's term) or Kingdom of God (used by Mark and Luke) describes three things.

John's Gospel is the gospel that is written to us in the church age.

It uses the term *kingdom* in only three verses, twice when Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus in John 3 and once when Jesus is speaking to Pilate in John 18 and there is a very general sense]

In all the epistles the term is found only four times relating us now to God's present kingdom rule]

The Spiritual Kingdom of God which includes all believers of all dispensations.

But even that is not fully enjoyed until we are with God in eternity.

The mystery kingdom mentioned in Matthew 13:11 in which the Lord uses the word kingdom to describe in terms the disciples could understand the Church Age and His relationship to believers while He is in heaven at the right hand of the father.

Hence, the church age and the Tribulation period.

The literal Millennial Kingdom promised in the Old Testament, ruled over by Christ, lasting 1000 years, mentioned by John the Baptist and by offered to Israel by Jesus Christ.

And that final kingdom is what is in view here in the Sermon on the Mount.

Principle

In every dispensation God is moving man to greater and greater freedom and in the millennial reign of Christ this freedom will almost be absolute.

Almost because freedom be totally perfected forever as part of the New Heavens and New Earth.

Luke 6:17,18

And He descended with them, and stood on a level place; and there was a great multitude of His disciples, and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear Him, and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were being cured.

Some had come for the right reason, the hear him. Others we see in the next verse did not

Luke 6:19

And all the multitude were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing them all.

As we have seen before, many, too many are just wanted to see the miracles and ignore the message.

Luke 6:20a

And turning His gaze on His disciples, He began to say ...

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Jesus has called His disciples and now He is going to instruct them.

In Matthew 5 it is even more clear that He took His disciples away from the crowds and started teaching them privately.

But soon more and more people gathered around.

The Beatitudes.

Luke deals with four beatitudes (Matthew refers to eight)

The word BEATITUDES is from the Latin for *blessed* which is *beatus*.

The Greek word is μαρκαριος and describes one who is totally satisfied.

Aristotle used it in contrast to one who had a unfulfilled needs.

As believers we have from God all we will ever need.

He provides for us and as a result we are blessed.

Zodhiates says of this word that it means to possess the favor of God, that state of being marked by the fullness of God in the believer.

Luke 6:20b-22

Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and cast insults at you, and spurn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.

The poor, the hungry, the saddened, the hated - while he only mentions four, they are very comprehensive.

While each one has a physical interpretation each one also has a spiritual interpretation.

Blessed are the poor (Matthew adds, poor in spirit).

The issue is spiritual poverty because the antithesis is spiritual enrichment, possession of the kingdom.

This is a dramatic way to begin because the Jews in their arrogance would never admit to being spiritually poor.

They saw themselves as having all wisdom and knowledge.

Yet to possess the kingdom one must recognize that they are not qualified to enter the kingdom.

This true humility says *no way* and God says *my way*.

So the first beatitude describes the believer who is poor in spirit, humble, knowing all is grace and that one is a believer who is blessed.

Blessed are the hungry (Matthew adds: *those who hunger and thirst for righteousness*)

So here we have the believer recognizing His need for spiritual food and hungering and thirsting for the righteousness of the Word.

Righteousness comes by depending upon God and what He has to say.

We desire to be right, nothing wrong with that, but that is not the goal, the end, the purpose.

It is only the vehicle that then allows us to live a life that conforms to God's standards rather than man.

And what is the power of that vehicle?

The Holy Spirit, and how is His power obtained?

By the only coin of the realm we have in God's plan . . . Faith.

And even this faith increases as we hunger and thirst after the +R of God.

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the applicable word (rema) of Christ.

And we can be assured that God will fill our hunger.

The one who thirsts will be satisfied.

This is a future passive verb which sees the certainty of what God will do.

Are you hungry for God's word? He will feed you with His truth.

Take it to the bank, the future passive says it is so.

The word SATISFIED is χορταζω.

The word was used for feeding horses, filling them up with food so they could do their work.

Filled up like on Thanksgiving, to where you could not eat another morsel.

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That is what God will do for the one who hungers and thirsts for His righteousness in His divine plan.

The longer I study the word the more and more I become unimpressed with man's standards.

Even when we have allowed these to become a part of our church traditions, God is not impressed.

We then have the ones who weep.

Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

We too often diminish the emphasis God places on man having fun.

This is a promise of good times even if the now times are not so good.

The believers Joy was a major subject during the last supper and the farewell discourse.

It is the first major concept dealt with in the New Testament as James wrote the first epistle and said *count it all joy brethren.*

But we know that life is not always something to laugh at.

It is full of sorrow and sadness, of loss and pain.

We mourn but not as those who have no hope.

And yet we can have the same assurance that Jesus gave to these believers regarding the Kingdom.

For we know that in heaven there are no tears, no sorrow, no pain - only great Joy in the presence of Christ.

But even now, in the Spiritual Life, joy can be yours now and great joy is just around the corner.

If you are walking down the right street.

We know that nothing remains the same.

Think back on some heartache, so point of sorrow I the past.

Has it changed?

Has the mourning of the death of a loved one been replaced by a sweet fragrance of memories?

And have you ever had the Holy Spirit reach right into your soul and turn sorrow into peace, to turn weeping into joy?

If we recognize our spiritual poverty, our need for grace, and if we hunger and thirst after all that

God has for us, and even though we face the sorrow and sadness of this life, we know God has a plan for us.

And because of that we have the next promise.

Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and cast insults at you, and spurn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.

Where as the last promise dealt with the inevitabilities of life filled with its occasional sorrow, this last promise deals with something that will only befall you who have put your trust in Christ as your Savior.

The only one who will endure this kind of ill treatment is the one who is taking a stand for Jesus Christ.

The one who is motivated in all that he does by His faith relationship with the Son of Man.

The little word *sake* looks at what motivates us in life and if we are motivated by Christ, there will be times men will hate us, attack us.

The carnal Christian is never attacked for his faith, what faith?

But the ones who want to live their lives unto Him who saved them, they will come under attack.

And the answer to those who hate, insult, reject . . . so what?

Did not Paul say in His great epistle of the love of God, 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.

The believer who takes His stand with Christ will suffer and that is a badge of honor, a badge of blessing, to suffer with Christ.

Now, these four beatitudes that Luke records summarize the blessings of God not only in the future millennial reign of Christ but in any dispensation.

Man must set aside his tendency towards arrogance and recognize his need for Grace to meet his spiritual poverty.

We must then continue to hunger after God's word and will.

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And when life attacks and sadness comes remember God has His joy for us, his laughter that turns away our sorrow.

And when being a Child of God get rough, so what, wear the suffering you suffer for Christ as a badge of honor as Peter states in I Peter 3:14

But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed.

Peter recognized this and accepted the suffering he faced as a badge of honor in Acts 5:41

They (Peter and young John) went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.

At verse 23 Jesus makes the interpretation of this specific, for Israel in the Kingdom.

We have looked at application but now we must look to the interpretation.

Luke 6:23

Be glad in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.

Be glad in that day - Mark and Luke use the phrase in that day to refer to the Kingdom, John uses it to refer to the Church Age.

It looks ahead for Israel and these Jews to the Kingdom and in the kingdom there will be cause for great Joy.

The reward spoke of here is the reward of Israel and the Gentiles from Adam to Abraham that will be given at the wedding feast of the Lamb at the end of the tribulation.

The rewards for Christians, church age believers, are at the βῆμα while the rewards for all others are at the wedding feast.

This was a major part of the teaching of Matthew's Gospel if you recall.

And then we see that such persecution is nothing new. It has been going on since the days of the prophets and notice who does the persecution, not the heathen, the pagans, but the religious crowd who can not stand the grace of God.

The four things the believe who is called blessed will have:

First, a humility, recognition of the poverty of the spirit.

This poverty- humility will result in dependence, dependence on Christ for salvation #1 and the Holy Spirit for salvation #2.

Secondly, the blessed believer will have a hunger and thirst for righteousness that can only be satisfied by the Word of God.

With those two things, dependence on the Holy Spirit and the power of the Word, the believer is ready for the tragedies of life knowing that mourning will be turned to laughter and secondly, ready even for persecution.

We had four beatitudes and now we have four woes. This is a part of the message that is unique to Luke.

Matthew saves up all the condemnation until Matthew chapter 23. Each one is an antithesis to the previous four blessings.

If you are not a blessed man then you are under theses woes.

The Greek word is οὐαί and expresses great grief or denunciation. And both concepts are present here.

The Lord is grieved when people do not take advantage of what He alone offers and yet when they do not, He is left with nothing else but to denounce them.

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.

Have you ever considered that when God does have to judge, condemn, and denounce that it is totally opposite what He desires to do?

We so often picture God as a harsh judge and yet at the Cross He went the distance, did everything He could do to prevent Him from ever having to judge a single member of the human race.

God is not in the business of judging but in the business of saving.

Yet He does have to denounce and will have to judge because mankind rejects His the provisions of His grace.

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Luke 6:24-26

But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full.

Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for in the same way their fathers used to treat the false prophets.

Woe to you who are *rich*

Woe to you who are *well fed*

Woe to you who *laugh* now

Woe to you when all men *speak well of you*.

Because while the fathers persecuted the prophets they honored the false prophets

Now, lets consider what the Lord is saying. And lets not take these out of the historical, prophetic and balanced context in which we find them.

Some thought so.

In Psalm 59:8 it is God who laughs at the foolishness of man. And Paul said that there were times that he was very hungry but also times that he was well fed.

This word well-fed is found when Jesus fed the 5,000.

At what God does in providing the rains which produce the food by which we are well fed (Acts 14:17).

And when Paul tells the Romans that when he goes to Spain he wants to stop in Rome to visit then and be well-fed (Romans 15:14).

So we see some of things condemned here as things that God does, the Lord did (did he cause the 5,000 to sin by providing food?), and Paul did.

So this tells us that it is not the ACT is the ATTITUDE that matters in these things and indeed, all things.

The issue here as Jesus is speaking to these people and to us also is what is the focus of your life?

What is at the center of your existence?

And how do define yourself?

That last question is very important.

What is your identity?

What do you think of yourself?

Do you see yourself as rich?

Well-fed?

Needing nothing?

Well regarded by others and like by men and thinking this puts you in favor with God?

Or do you recognize that your are nothing except one for whom Christ died.

Paul said in I Corinthians 8:1-3

We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.

If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know;

but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.

Galatians 6:33, For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

2 Corinthians 13:5, Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test?

Conclusion

Blessings and Woe - Where are you all this.

Does God look and you and see a man, a woman, a young person who is blessed?

Or does God look at you and say - Woe?

It all depends on your attitude.

What do you think of Christ?

What do you think of the Word?

Are you hungering and thirsting after only what God can provide or are you trying to fill yourself up, satisfy your hunger with the things that perish.

If you are you will go through life empty.

Luke chapter six, verses 27 through 31

Luke 6:27

But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

A qualifier in this verse, *to you who hear*.

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The following five verses are addressed to believers of the Kingdom who are willing to listen to the Word of the Lord.

The word *hear* is ακουω and is transitive in that the object must be in view.

We all may listen but to what are we listening? The Lord here calls believers to listen to Him.

Later in Luke 6:47 is the wise man who hears to the Words of the Lord and acts upon them.

This word *hear* then means to listen and to act or apply. The value of the Word of the Lord is in its application.

The instructions for the Kingdom include nine things:

Luke 6:28-30

Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either.

Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back.

In the analysis of these things we must remember that the Lord is looking ahead to the Kingdom. In the sermon on the Mount He is describing the kind of law that will be in effect in the Kingdom on earth over which He will sovereignly rule.

The law we see here is the application that the believer can make in the Kingdom because of the New Covenant, Jeremiah 31:31

Luke 6:31-34

Behold, days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, declares the LORD.

But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD, I will put My

law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know the LORD, for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, declares the LORD, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.

In the Kingdom and under the direct authority of the King of kings and Lord of lords, mankind will also enjoy a New Covenant.

This Covenant is based on the finished work of Christ on the Cross.

That is why we enjoy part of that covenant now especially within the body of Christ.

Now the question.

How much of this can be applied to us and how extensive is the application?

Let me propose this. We know that these passages are not interpreted for us.

But all Scripture is profitable (one way or another).

And the these passages that look at the Law in the Kingdom can be profitable to us.

There is an old saying, ask the wrong question and your get the wrong answer and I think that asking how far do we apply these things to us is the wrong question.

Instead lets ask where can we apply them.

Rather than intensity of application, we need to look at the extent of the application.

And when we do that I can see a place we can apply every one of these rules for the kingdom and that is right here, in the body of Christ, the church. And in a way, let me prove that to you.

In verse 27 we are to love our enemies, in verse 32 we are to love based upon us not the one being loved, and in v 35 we are again told to love.

Now at the last supper Jesus gave us, the church, a new commandment.

John 13:35-35, 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.

This is spiritual love within the body of Christ, loving other believers with a supernatural love poured out within us by the Holy Spirit.

So what is interpreted for the Kingdom is now a reality, not in the kingdom but in the body of Christ.

In Luke 6:29 we have the well know turn the other cheek passage.

In the Kingdom man will never have to defend himself because Jesus Christ the King will be the perfect judge.

Isaiah 2: 4 (and Micah 4:3)

And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.

Isaiah 11: 3-4, And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; But with righteousness He will judge

There will be no need whatsoever for anyone in the Kingdom to do anything but put all judgment in the hands of the perfect Judge, Jesus the King.

But there is an application here for us.

We are also under the care of the Jesus the perfect judge and there is not reason we must seek vengeance.

Romans 12:19 and Hebrews 10:30 both quoting Deuteronomy 32:35

Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay says the Lord.

Romans 12: 17-18, Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

As believer in Christ in the church age we can turn the other cheek, not because of law but as we are led by the Holy Spirit.

Principle

We can apply these to other members of the body of Christ, we can love one another, give to one another, and even when others take advantage of us, put them in the Lord's hands.

Sometimes called the golden rule, this is good wisdom, for anyone.

It is the final statement in this list that gives us the characteristics of unconditional love. The love we can have within the family.

These are not naturally done by man but are supernaturally enabled by God the Holy Spirit.

Now in the Kingdom all men will be FREE TO LOVE this way, but not we can only hope that we can have the freedom to love one another as Christ loved us.

The kingdom of Christ on earth, the millennium, will be a time of perfect environment, perfect justice, perfect order, and perfect freedom.

And in that perfect freedom man will be able to love, give, do good, to others unconditionally.

Can we have some of that now - *love one another just as I have loved you - disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit*

Luke 6:35

But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.

Love, do good, give - expecting nothing in return.

This is selfless unconditional love.

The word expecting looks at payment in return.

Now be careful with this.

Back in verse 31 we saw the principle of treating others in a way you would want them to treat you.

But that is not a demand or expectation for the reason we are to love, do good, and give.

Two reasons for the actions of unconditional love.

Your reward will be great.

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God often motivates us with the promise of reward.

This is something Paul had in mind on the eve of his physical death.

2 Timothy 4:8, There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day;

We will be rewarded, not because of what we do but because of the power in which we do what we do.

Are we loving, doing good, giving in the power of the filling of the Holy Spirit?

You will be sons of the Most High, for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.

This looks at sonship in terms of practice rather than position.

The position of a son of God comes by faith alone in Christ alone.

This looks are imitation, the son imitating the Father, believing man being able, in the power of God to be like God in loving, doing good, and giving even to the evil and to the ungrateful.

Now what do we call that when God gives and gives and gives even to those who are ungrateful and even to those who reject?

We call it GRACE.

And we can treat others with the very grace of God and when we do, we are in practice and in application, sons of god.

Luke 6:36

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

The mercy of God holds back the what we deserve from a holy God and the grace of god gives us what we neither earn or deserve from a God who loves us.

The adverb is καθως, just as, exactly as - and the only way we could ever think to do anything just exactly as God does it is to be totally in his power and influenced by His truth.

Luke's brief account of the Sermon on the Mount concludes with four parables that illustrate the doctrine the Lord has taught.

And in the last verses of the teaching and in the parables we see a major theme - do not judge.

Luke 6:37

And do not judge and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned.

This is really the negative side of the Golden Rule stated in v 31, how do you want others to treat you?

When we step into God's position of judging fellow believes and condemning the unbeliever we step in-between God and them.

And when we dare to do that we end up receiving in part what was intended for the other.

Let God deal with others, you have the freedom not to judge, not to condemn.

Are some people deserving of judgment and condemnation?

Of course they are!

But God do the job, it is His job, not yours.

Luke 6:38

Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.

In the following parables the Lord first gives two short parables and then a longer parable on judging.

Luke 6:39,40

And He also spoke a parable to them: A blind man cannot guide a blind man, can he? Will they not both fall into a pit? A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.

These two parables teach that the attitude of man cannot be hidden and a man will emulate the one who teaches him.

It is important to recognize our blindness.

Jesus would later call the religious leader of Israel *blind guides*. They were unable to lead anyone to anything except a pit.

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And the pupil must consider who is listening to because after he is trained he will be like his teacher.

The adverb *ο̅ς* is used to indicate that he should not be an exact copy but to observe that it is inevitable that the pupil will be like the teacher.

This is a challenge to the ones who are there, who will they listen to? To the religious leaders or to the Lord.

Now at verse 41 we see the parable of judging.

Luke 6:41

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?

Freedom from judging.

Have you ever done a job that you found out did not need to be done?

When it come to the believer, judging others is a job that we do not need to do.

I don't know about you but that is sweet to my ears.

We have so much to legitimately concern ourselves with that it is good to hear that there are certain things we just don't have to do.

Now there are two forms of judgment in the New Testament.

One is seen as a corporate responsibility of leadership in any group or people such as a nation, or state, or city.

Judges judge, juries are given the responsibility to pass judgment.

In churches there is a corporate responsibility to judge but even then for a purpose.

But when it comes to individual judging, we are greatly limited, and even prohibited from judging.

God is the righteous judge.

Yet His judgment and His finding of guilt is for a purpose.

Even divine judgment, which is God's prerogative as the creator, does not end with judgment.

God's judgment precedes his mercy, grace, and forgiveness.

Psalms 89:14, Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Thy throne;

Lovingkindness [mercy] and truth go before Thee.

Isaiah 30:18, Therefore the Lord longs to be gracious to you, And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the Lord is a God of justice; How blessed are all those who long for Him.

Divine judgment occurs so that reconciliation can follow.

2 Corinthians 5:19, God was in [or through] Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Romans 2: 4, Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

Judgment never ends with judgment. That is true for God and it is true for us.

When we do have to judge we do so not for the purpose of judgment. As with God, our judgment is a step to something better.

Let's consider some of the kinds of judgments we make.

We judge what we like and what we do not like. Food, movies, clothing, weather, hobbies, sports, on and on.

In these judgments there is no right.

We judge information as to its validity, its truth.

1 John 4:1, Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

We make that kind of judgment to protect ourselves from that which is false and would harm us.

This type of personal and individual judgment is made to protect ourselves not to punish others.

It may even result in separation which as we have studied, which is for the purpose of keeping ourselves from being pulled into another's unrepentant sin.

This is expressed in the statement in:

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1 Thessalonians 5:22, Abstain [middle voice] from every form of evil.

The middle voice see the avoidance of evil as a benefit to yourself.

This principle is also expressed in

Galatians 6:1, Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted.

But there is also found in the Scriptures a type of judgment that is corporate and the responsibility of those who are leaders of any group of people.

And the responsibility that is found in leadership with that kind of judging is very grave.

It is a heavy responsibility but even then, it is not for the purpose of judging but for the purpose of restoration.

Example: 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, there are three factors present here that required Paul, an apostle, to make this judgment.

The man involved in this sin was unrepentant

The church leadership was refusing to take the responsibility of going to him and making the issue of sin clear. Quite the opposite, they were laughing it off.

This sin was well known in the church and in the community and even the community at Corinth considered it to be deplorable.

Excommunication, the man was thrown out but not for a punitive purpose but that he would repent.

And this worked, 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Here, the man of 1 Corinthians 5 has repented of his sin with his father's wife. And he is to be received back into the fellowship of the local church.

I call this Luke passage and similar passages, freedom from Judging We do not have to judge others! And who would want to?

Do we want to be involved in that kind of judgment? I think not.

God has given us, within the body of Christ, in the church, freedom from judging.

This is something we just do not have to do unless we are in a position of corporate authority. And yet so many Christians take this responsibility upon themselves. They sometimes try to pass it off as *helping* another believer but what does the Lord say in these parables about helping others who have fallen.

Luke 6:42

Or how can you say to your brother, Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye, when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

It always assumes some prior or established relationship. A friendship, a cooperative relationship that one is in for mutual benefit.

So you SAY to a fellow believer, a friend, LET ME.

The word SAY is *λεγω* and is found in narrative portions of the Scriptures and when used in connection with other verbs expresses the content of what is said and puts it in a mood of request or of asking permission.

The other verb is LET is an imperative that await permission to be given.

These two verbs are further strengthened by the subjective mood of TAKE, the word EKBALLW.

Between the imperative of LET and the subjunctive mood of TAKE, we await permission from the fellow believer to do this.

And with the illustration used we can see why permission to help remove the splinter is required.

The eye is the most protected part of the body

Before you give permission for someone start digging around in your eye you have to trust them You will want to make sure there hand is steady and they can see clearly to do the job

The one doing the task of removing the splinter does so to help the person. The end result is not the procedure but the removal of the splinter and the restoration of clear and painless sight

Practically, to give permission to someone to do this you are going to want them to be of steady

hand, clear vision, and having your restoration and your best health in mind.

Spiritually this works the same way.

And so these verses end up challenging the person who may have a beam in their eye - remove it by way of self judgment so you can be a help to your friend, your fellow believer in Christ.

But, often, this is not they way we judge.

Christians judge to condemn, to put themselves up by putting others down, to be able to snicker and laugh and roll their eyes at others who do not do things they way they would do them.

In doing so they put themselves and others under bondage.

Remember the context of this message the Lord is giving, the freedom to love that will be so much a part of the Kingdom and can be a part of the church right now?

If we really desire to help the fallen believer we must do so out of love, not judgment.

Romans 2:4, Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

What will it be?

The Parable of the Tree and its Fruit.

Luke 6:43,44

For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit; nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit.

For each tree is known by its own fruit.

For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush.

Trees produce fruit after their own kind. The type of fruit that is comes on the end of the branch or the vine depends on what kind of tree or bush it might be.

Also there is an element of expectation in this. You expect to get figs from fig trees, and grapes from grape vines. You do not look for figs from a thorn tree and you would not expect thorns from a fig tree.

The Application of the Parable.

Luke 6:45

The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.

When talking about trees the Lord used καλος for good. But now, talking about men, those who can follow Him by faith, He uses αγαθος, The word for divine good.

So as it is with trees, the same is similar with men.

What comes out will be determined by what is in the inside. You cannot expect good to come out of an evil heart.

This is the principle of fruit which we find here in the Gospels as well as in the Old Testament

Psalms 1:2,3, But his (the believer) delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

And the negative is seen in Isaiah 10:12 where God says: *I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria*

In the letter to the churches we have the fruit of the Holy Spirit mentioned in Galatians chapter 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

The use of this analogy show us that we must not be involved in trying to make fruit look good.

We might do that but so what.

The issue is whether or not the tree itself is healthy, is the tree good?

John 15:4,5, 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. 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.

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That is where the emphasis must be, not at the end of the branch but at the root, are we rooted and grounded in Christ, Is He our source of strength?

Is the power of the Holy Spirit running through the trunk, the limbs, on to the branches where the fruit is produced.

Illustration

If you have a fruit tree that is producing rotten fruit, you do not work on the fruit, you work at the root.

Principle

The goodness of the fruit will be determined not by what is seen on the end of the branch but what is on the inside.

How do we Determine what is on the Inside?

Luke 6:46

And why do you call Me, Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?

Here is the contradiction and the hypocrisy.

To call, *καλεω* (which puts emphasis on the content of the title) Jesus Christ *Lord, Lord* and yet not obey His is a contradiction.

What does it mean to obey Jesus Christ -

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.

In the context of this message the Lord did say something very specific to them in verse 27

But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.

John 6: 27-29, 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.

They said therefore to Him, What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?

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

So doing what the Lord says in this context is to love your enemies.

This is only possible in the power of God which comes when we obey the Son of God, Jesus Christ, and believe in Him.

And that is the issue in the next verse.

Luke 6:47

Everyone who comes to Me, and hears My words, and acts upon them, I will show you whom he is like.

Three things mentioned in this verse and one conclusion.

Comes to me.

Hears my words.

Acts upon them.

The conclusion that describes this type of man.

I will show you whom he is like

And what he is like is like the one described in the next verse

The Parable of the Two Foundations.

There is no question that the ROCK in this parable is the Rock of Ages, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now as we search this word through the New Testament we can find who the foundation is, who lays the foundation, and what comprises the foundation.

1 Corinthians 3:10-11, According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it.

For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:19-20, So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone.

The apostles and prophets have laid the foundation. The building blocks are you your hands, the Bible, the writings of faithful men of God were inspired by the Holy Spirit to tell us about the grace of God.

Hebrews 6:1,2, Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

The foundation is made up of basic principles of the teaching of Christ which include an understanding that dead works do not work and that faith does work.

The rituals only point to a reality in Christ, and that we have escaped eternal judgment by way of the resurrection which is our assurance of security in Christ.

So Christ is the foundation, set by the apostles, and includes basic truths that will allow us to build upon the foundation a structure leading to maturity.

Luke 6:48

he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation upon the rock; and when a flood rose, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.

When we set the foundation of our faith on the Rock, Jesus Christ, we will not be washed away by the storms of life.

Luke 6:49

And this is what he is not like, in Matthew this man is the Foolish man.

But the one who has heard, and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house upon the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.

The RUIN is great because it is not expected.

The one who tries to build a spiritual life on the foundation of sand thinks he has something that will last, but it will not.

Adversity come, pressure comes, and that which man had set his life upon is found to be of no value, possessing no stability, indeed, great is the fall.

We must build our lives upon that which will last.

I am reminded of Paul's words in Colossians.

Colossians 2:6, As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

The person who builds upon the sand, upon a foundation other than the Lord Jesus Christ and faith in Him makes two mistakes.

He wants to **avoid toil**.

The foundation of a building is not the fun part of construction. It is hard work to dig down to bed rock. Moving dirt, shoveling, back breaking work. It is just so much easier to build upon the sand.

In the same way it is so much easier to take our own way, to stick with human thinking, works that we can do, rather than rely by faith upon the grace of Jesus.

Grace is tough, at times it cuts through human viewpoint like a knife. It runs contrary to the logic of man. But it is God's viewpoint and God's divine viewpoint echoes the words of John the Baptist who is looking at Jesus Christ declared *I must decrease and He must increase*.

We are so self absorbed, so self involved, so self determined, so self centered - we avoid the toil of saying no to self and yes to the Savior.

Second mistake.

When we build upon the sand we are **short sighted**.

We never trouble ourselves to think what the outcome of our actions will be. The house built upon the sand may look good now. Maybe even better than the house built upon the rock. We save the time of digging a foundation, put more effort into the structure itself - but what will happen when the river rises.

When pressure comes? It will be washed away.

In every decision of life there is a short view and a long view. The short view ignores the destiny God has for us as His children. The short view ignore the eternity we will have with Christ. So often we do what we do in the light of the moment rather than in the light of eternity.

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In our very lives and in the life of our church we are now building a house that will stand. And it has stood!

At times the river has risen to buffet what we are and what we are doing. At times the rising waters of adversity have looked like they would destroy what God has done - but we are here. We are a living testimony to what Jesus said to Peter 2000 years ago.

Matthew 16:18, And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hell shall not overpower it

Chapter 7

Now we are going to meet a man of Faith, an unusual man of faith because in the earthly walk of Jesus Christ he is not one to whom Christ came.

He is a Gentile, and he is a Roman, and he is a Soldier.

And we are going to see that his faith is greater than any Jesus has come in contact with among the Jews.

FAITH is a one word summary of the Christian's Life.

In my 25 years in the ministry I have seen those who replaced faith with knowledge and obedience with out even knowing it.

Sometime all I had to do to see those who did that was look in a mirror.

But I do not think I would ever live to see the day in which some teachers actually reject faith, saying there must be no faith, only obedience, in order to enjoy the plan of God.

That, is beyond me.

A.W. Tozer said.

"We test our faith by our commitment to it and in no other way.

"Any belief that does not command the one who holds it is not a real belief--it is only a pseudo-belief.

"It might shock some of us profoundly if we were suddenly brought face-to-face with our beliefs and forced to test them in the fires of practical living."

And I like what E. P. Meijering said as he balanced faith and theology:

"In our time we cannot overemphasize that theology can never be the object of faith. Anyone who fails to acknowledge this exposes himself to the severe criticism which other have made of Christianity. When a theology is made the object of faith, faith becomes the rationalistic acceptance of truths. On the other hand theology has a task to prevent faith from becoming completely irrational."

Perhaps it is because of the false idea that faith is not needed and even wrong or that it is totally irrational, that I like this Roman soldier so much.

He has great faith and he had it fore a reason.

Turn with now to Luke chapter seven, verse one.

Luke 7:1

When He had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum.

Jesus concluded the Sermon on the Mount and went back to Capernaum which served as His home during His Galilean ministry.

Luke 7:2

And a certain centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die.

Here we are introduced to this centurion, a professional soldier, and his slave, who according to Matthew's account, was near death.

The occupation of soldier is honor by time in conflict and forgotten in time of peace. Every civilization owes its security and freedom to its military.

Omar Bradley put is very vividly when he said that *In war there is not prize for runner up* - Our military as with every army of any age is heralded in war and forgotten and ignored in peace.

A part from the context, the very fact that this man is called a centurion tells us a great deal about him.

Originally a centurion was in command of 1000 men but by Jesus time this had changed.

The Roman Military looked for certain characteristics in those they chose as centurions. Men who could command rather than seekers of danger

Steady in Action

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Reliable

Not overly anxious to rush into a fight, but when pressed hard ready to hold their ground

Willing to die at their post for the Empire

Men of Fortitude

Men of Character

The integrity of the centurions can be attested to in that every one who is mentioned in the Scriptures, Luke 23:47, Acts 10:22, 22:26, 23:17, 24:23, and Acts 27:1 and v 43.

So of the seven centurions mentioned each is presented as a man of character and integrity.

This particular centurion would have had responsibility over a small force of men who guarded the trade routes both land routes and the port on the sea of Galilee.

But this was an important post so while he may have directly commanded only a small force, he was probably a TRIARII, the highest rank of centurions, and he would have commanded about 6000 men throughout Galilee.

He may have been Roman or Syrian and was directly attached to the forces of Herod Antipas.

And in our account as well as the parallel account in Matthew he is seen as a humane, wealthy, devoted, humble man.

And yet this must be seen as a very unlikely encounter. It would have seemed that everything about this man would have prevented him from coming to Jesus.

He was professional soldier, Jesus was a man of peace.

He was a Gentile, Jesus was a Jew.

He was in charge of this city, Jesus was an itinerant rabbi.

But there was one thing this soldier had that was working for him, he was a man of great **faith**.

Luke 7:3

And when he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave.

As the leading military man and Roman representative in Capernaum he would have kept informed of who was in the city and he was

responsible for being up on any news worthy events.

Jesus had been there now for sometime and the whole city was aware of His miracles. And this man would have known of Jesus but now he has need for Jesus.

There is a difference between knowing of and needing Jesus Christ.

He sent some Jewish elders, At first we may think this a bit unusual that a Roman Military man would have the authority or influence to dispatch Jewish elders to seek Jesus on his behalf.

But we soon learn that this man of integrity was a man of benevolence and love for the Jewish people.

The need that he has at this point is that his servant is near death. The fact that we read that it was *his slave* indicates that this slave was most likely a personal servant and one who had become close to this man. We know from v 10 that the servant was in the centurion's home.

God had put his centurion in a place of problem.

And every problem has the intention of bringing you into dependence upon Christ.

He had a need that he finds he cannot fulfill.

But Jesus is coming into the city.

Luke 7:4

And when they had come to Jesus, they earnestly entreated Him, saying, He is worthy for You to grant this to him;

This request and the way it is stated gives us some insight into the thinking of the Jews in that day.

They appeal to the Lord Jesus on the basis of this man's worthiness.

This word is ἀξίος and means to be deserving.

The Jewish elders, so attuned to thinking in terms of worth or lack of worth, merit or lack of merit, those who deserve God's grace and those who do not - that they appeal to the Lord to do something because this man is such a worthy man.

And yet notice at v 7 that this man certainly does not consider himself worthy to receive the help of the Lord Jesus. *I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You.*

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But centuries of Judaism had made these Jewish elders think that God only helps those who are deserving of the help.

And yet throughout the Scriptures we find that it is the weakness, the helplessness of man that is met by the power of God,

Luke 7:5

The elders present their case.

for he loves our nation, and it was he who built us our synagogue.

I think the Lord saw much more in about this Roman soldier in this statement than in his professed worthiness by the elders.

For he loves our nation - the word *nation* could be translated *people*, specifically the Jewish people.

The word for love is agape

Luke 7:6

Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof;

Matthew indicates the centurion came while here it is his friends.

Two ways of making this correspond.

First, the friends came and then the centurion.

Or the friends in representing the centurion and speaking for him were the same as him being there.

I opt for the first explanation, I think the centurion stayed with his servant as long as he could and then joined the ones he had sent to meet the Lord Jesus.

Luke 7:7,8

for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.

For I, too, am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, Go! and he goes; and to another, Come! and he comes; and to my slave, Do this! and he does it.

The man presents himself as one under authority although he was in authority over many men.

In doing this it shows us that he understood the power that was in the humanity of Christ came from God the Father.

Luke 7:9,10

Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the multitude that was following Him, I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith.

And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

Now, in contrast with the centurion, we are going to see someone who is on the opposite end of the social scale, a poor widow in a poor town who has suffered a great loss.

Now the event in the following verses, and the miracle, are found only here in the Gospels.

Jesus leaves Capernaum to preach the Kingdom and come to the city of Nain.

Now the chronology may be a bit imprecise at this point. Luke is collecting great stories about our great Lord and presenting them to his readers.

Remember, in many ways Luke writes to prove of show who the Lord is in both power and position. It is most likely that this event occurred following Jesus rejection in Nazareth that we studied in chapter four.

If so, then this display of power and compassion comes on the heels his rejection in His own home town.

Nain is south of Nazareth and we see that as he come to the village, he and his disciples encounter a crowd.

Luke 7:11

And it came about soon afterwards, that He went to a city called Nain; and His disciples were going along with Him, accompanied by a large multitude.

I think the fact that there was a large multitude or crowd with Him will prove to be significant in this story.

We know from other accounts that many of the religious leader followed Jesus, some seeking

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truth, some seeking an opportunity to accuse Him of wrong doing or violating the law.

Get a large number of people together and you will have critics.

Luke 7:12

Now as He approached the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her.

In one sense we have the meeting of two multitudes. One following the eternal life in Jesus, and the other following another son, a son who had died. One group would have been enjoying the day, perhaps laughing, rejoicing, the other group mourning.

And then there would have been the mourning of the mother, the widow, who has now lost her only son.

We perhaps cannot appreciate how much she has lost.

In that culture a widow with no sons was truly at the mercy of relatives and friends.

No income, no help, no one.

This of course is the picture we see in the book of Ruth in the Old Testament as Ruth, having had her husband and sons die in Moab, returns to Bethlehem.

Ruth 1:20-21, Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara (bitter), for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.

I went out full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has witnessed against me and the Almighty has afflicted me?

This widow of Nain may have echoed the same desperation.

But when we are helpless we are not hopeless. Every calamity that enters our life is designed by God or allowed by God that we can learn three things.

First, that we might see that we cannot depend upon the arm of man, even our own strength.

Jeremiah 17:5, Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his

strength, And whose heart turns away from the LORD.

Secondly we can see in our suffering that every problem has a biblical solution.

We can trust not in ourselves but in a God who loves us and has done for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

And then thirdly, the sufferings of life can draw us closer in faith dependence upon God and His matchless Grace.

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.

Now this woman, this widow is certainly learning these things under the pressures of her lost of husband and now her son.

Helpless but not hopeless, because Jesus is there.

Luke 7:13

And when the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her, and said to her, Do not weep.

The Lord sees the widow, His compassion is directed to her not to her Son.

Jesus knows that in death there is victory over this life.

The boy has been dead for perhaps a day. His body lay in an open coffin wrapped in grave closed covered with spice.

But his soul was in paradise, the abode of Old Testament saints who have died prior to the resurrection of Jesus. So His pity is not for him but for her, the one who now has no one.

To be alone is a terrible fate. Yet we are really never alone, the Lord is always there. We just do not recognize it.

He has said *I will never leave you nor forsake you.*

We are told that *He felt compassion for her.*

This is a statement in the passive voice.

We might say, he was *caused* or *moved* to have compassion on her.

This is but another incident in which we see the humanity of the Lord, not dependant upon deity.

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Deity would not be moved to compassion because in omniscience deity knew all of the situation and its outcome in eternity past.

But humanity did not, humanity saw the pain and suffering, and in Jesus humanity there was some identification with the tragedy.

Jesus, while not the only son of His mother Mary, was the eldest son and when Joseph had died, Mary became a widow and Jesus did know of His destiny and that one day His mother would be following His dead body in the much the same way.

So He, in his humanity, was caused to have compassion on her.

Luke 7:14

And He came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, Young man, I say to you, arise!

This is the only record of this miracle in the Scriptures and this is the only place in the New Testament we find this word, coffin, in the English as well as in the Greek text.

Remember I told you not to forget the multitude and the ones in the crowd who would have been ready to find fault in what the Lord did?

Well can you imagine their reaction when He touched to coffin? They would have gasped in shock.

By touching the coffin Jesus became unclean - so here these people are following someone who is unclean just like the people of Nain are following someone who is unclean.

The boy's mother, in caring for the body was unclean and now Jesus is unclean.

Imagine the crowd stepping back away from him - And He speaks: *Young man, I say to you, arise!*

He is very specific as he addressed the young man, He issues a command and as the two crowds stand in disbelief they see a miracle

Luke 7:15

And the dead man sat up, and began to speak. And Jesus gave him back to his mother.

He sat up, shook off the burial clothes and began to speak . . . wouldn't you want to know what he said?

So do I but we will have to wait for heaven for that revelation.

No place in this miracle is faith mentioned, it is not the faith of the young man, he is dead, it is not the faith of the mother, she is in mourning.

But what we do see is the sovereign power of God working through His beloved Son and because of Jesus dependence upon the Father, God gave the power for this miracle to occur.

The Gospels record three miracles of resurrection: this young man who had been dead perhaps a day; a twelve-year-old girl who had just died (Luke 8:41-56); and an older man who had been in the tomb four days (John 11). The boy proved he was alive by sitting up and speaking, the girl by walking and eating, and Lazarus by shedding the grave clothes (Col. 3:1ff).

Very literally do we see the reality of John 5:24: *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.*

So a miracle has occurred but Jesus is still unclean - or is He?

How can the sinless Savior who will conquer death ever be unclean?

The idea of something being unclean has come to mean, in the Jewish religion, that which must be rejected.

Topic: Uncleaness in the Jewish System

Jesus says it as something different, he saw that which was unclean as something that must be made whole.

In a very simple way are not we all like that young man, dead in our trespasses and sins until the touch of the Master.

We are now alive and able to speak because of Jesus Christ.

And while we may not know what this young man said at that moment of being brought back to life we can be pretty sure what he said decades later to his grandchildren as they sat in his lap and he told them what Jesus has done.

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But there is something else here also.

All the demands of the Old Testament law that dealt with things that were clean and unclean was for a purpose, to teach Israel the separation of life and death.

In coming out of Egypt God's people had been influenced by Egyptian paganism that saw death as a simple parallel to life and that it was circular, live die live in after world, die, live in another world die, on and on.

God wanted to break His people of that thinking, to think in terms of life has as one life and death bringing on an end to life here and then the question of whether or not they are prepared by faith to enter life everlasting?

In Exodus 34 we have all the wonderful laws of Israel's feast and then in v 26 in the last statement we read: *You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk.*

Deuteronomy 22:11, You shall not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together.

In Deuteronomy 12 we find repeated to avoid blood and yet the priests at the tabernacle were to use the blood of the sacrifice in the rituals.

Why such unusual laws and rules?

Because nothing that was identified with death was to be identified with life.

The kid or calf was dead but the milk was for life.

Wool was from life sheep and linen was from dead flax.

And blood was to avoided, it was identified with death or lack of production and yet the priests took the blood of the sacrifice and used it in the ritual to look ahead the to the one who was the prince of life and on this day was touching a coffin.

And who would at the Cross bring together life and death and live again, forever!

Jesus conquered death and in that, all these laws were finished once and for all.

That is why God was able to say to Peter in Acts 10:15

What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.

No Christian would dare say the Cross of Christ was not able to save and yet whenever Christians

go back to the Old Testament Laws they are holding Christ and Cross out to open shame saying it was not able to make that which was unclean Holy.

The disciples who were there that day would soon learn that truth, have we?

Luke 7:16

And fear gripped them all, and they began glorifying God, saying, A great prophet has arisen among us! and, God has visited His people!

Indeed a great prophet had visited them.

No doubt they were identifying Jesus as the one Moses spoke of when in Deuteronomy 18:15

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.

And they were right in saying that God has visited His people - but what they failed to see was that this great prophet after the likes of Moses and God himself was one and the same, Jesus Christ.

Luke 7:17

And this report concerning Him went out all over Judea, and in all the surrounding district.

And as we can well understand, the report of this miracle went out to many

Reasons for this miracle.

In the next section of Luke chapter 7 disciples of John will be sent to inquire if Jesus is the one who was promised.

This miracle helped show John, who was in prison that this one who he baptized truly is the Son of God, the Savior, the Messiah.

Secondly, this miracle demonstrated to the people the power of God in Christ, a power ever over death.

This miracle also brought glory to the Father and helped in spread the fame of Jesus the Messiah to the Jews

his miracle shows us the compassion Jesus has still today on the helpless.

Application

We too were dead, until the Lord spoke and made us alive, all who come to Him have life and life eternal.

John 10:10, I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.

All that was once unclean is now clean, holy, because of the finished work of Christ on the Cross, Jesus is not unclean because He touched a coffin and we are not unclean because Jesus has touched us.

And Jesus had compassion on the helpless widow, and we should also have compassion on those who are in need.

People, we have the greatest gift to give, and the world is hurting and helpless, what will it take?

Our compassion?

Our Love?

Jesus saw the need, moved to help, will do the same in giving the Gospel that give life and life eternal?

Are you ever unsure, do you ever have doubts? I think we all do, about many things.

How about spiritual things. Do you ever wonder just what is God doing, do you ever doubt His purpose, His plane, maybe even His promises?

When we do we find ourselves in the company of the one who was Jesus cousin and more importantly the one who was His forerunner, announcing to the world that the Lamb has come, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Our uncertainty and our doubts are most often the result of things not going the way we think it should. We have expectations, we think we know what something should be like, even what the plan of God should look like.

But then our expectations are not met and instead of laying fault at the our own erroneous expectation, we cast blame on another for not living up to what we thing should be.

When that happens, we are confronted with a disharmony between what you think, your expectation and the reality of a situation you have a choice.

You can either get bitter, reject, dismiss, even attach or you can seek the truth.

John the Baptist, the one of whom Jesus said no one greater to that time had been born to woman, is going to have unmet expectations and doubts about Jesus but he is going to ask question.

Now verse 17 tells us that Jesus was become well know in Galilee.

People are beginning to wonder if this could be the promised One, is this the Messiah?

Many who heard about Jesus as well as those who followed Him were very confused.

They had, prior to meeting Christ, an idea of what the Messiah was to be like.

They were under Roman rule and they wanted freedom but their definition of freedom and their expectation of the Messiah was very limited.

They had wrong expectations, they thought they knew what the plan of God was to look like - NOW, were their expectations wrong?

No, they were just not for that time.

In the Old Testament their are two lines of prophecy that predict the coming of the promised one, the Messiah.

One line portrays this coming deliverer as the *Lion of the Tribe of Judah*.

Hosea 5:14, For I will be like a lion to Ephraim, And like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear to pieces and go away, I will carry away, and there will be none to deliver.

Isaiah 11:4, He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.

Zechariah 9:4 was directly applied by the Jews to Rome

Behold, the Lord will dispossess her And cast her wealth into the sea; And she will be consumed with fire.

The Jews wanted the lion of God to come and tear to pieces the Roman enemy.

And there is coming, even future for us, when Jesus will come as the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

Revelation 5:5, Behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of

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David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.

The other line of prophecy portrays *Jesus as the Lamb of God*.

The Lamb of God comes to defeat the invisible enemies of Israel, sin, death, and Satan.

In the Servant Songs of Isaiah 40 through 54 no less than twenty times is Messiah referred to as a Servant.

Isaiah 53:2-4, 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.

And two thousand years ago at his first Advent Jesus came as the Lamb of God and defeated the unseen enemies of Israel and of all of mankind.

But that was not what Israel expected, not even what John the Baptist expected.

And when Jesus did not fulfill their expectations, well, on the part of most there was rejection.

But this was not the reactions of everyone.

Some were willing to ask questions.

Luke 7:18,19

And the disciples of John reported to him (to John while he was in prison) about all these things.

And summoning two of his disciples, John sent them to the Lord, saying, Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?

John the Baptist by this time has been put into prison by Herod Antipas.

Matthew deals with this in detail in

Matthew chapter 14.

The charge against him arose out of the pettiness of Herod who had been living with his sister-in-law, Herodias, his brother Philips' wife.

John had publicly condemned this relationship and Herod had John bound and thrown into prison.

Now John sends his disciples to Jesus to ask Him if He is the Messiah.

Now why did this doubt occur in the mind of the one who was the very first to proclaim that Jesus was the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world.

Who witnessed the approval of God upon His Son at His baptism?

Well, John was apply doctrine, right doctrine but for the wrong time.

Isaiah 61:1, The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners; Psalm 146:7, Who executes justice for the oppressed; Who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free.

Isaiah 45:2, I will go before you and make the rough places smooth; I will shatter the doors of bronze, and cut through their iron bars.

John knew these promises and he believed them.

He believed that the Messiah would come and set prisoners free and the iron bars of the dungeons would be cut through.

And yet as reality set in John concluded that he was a prisoner and the iron bars of his cell were just as strong today as they were the day he was first bound and thrown into the dungeon.

So he wonders - what giveS!

If I am the Messiah's forerunner, and Jesus is the Messiah, *why am I still in prison?*

Now this makes perfect sense, John is in a situation in which he had very specific promises he can apply and he does, but he is still a prisoner.

So he begins to wonder, maybe there is another who will come, maybe Jesus is just Messiah number one, maybe there is another.

Now we have to understand his conclusion in light of his background.

He spent a lot of time in the wilderness and while in the wilderness he no doubt came in contact with the Essenes (the separatist sect who wrote the Dead Sea scrolls).

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The Essenes believed in two Messiah's or Righteous Ones, who would come.

One as a *Lamb* and the other as a *Lion*.

That is the way they reconciled Scripture regarding the Advents of the Son of God.

We of course reconcile these prophetic descriptions by seeing two advents, not two Messiahs.

Now before we see Jesus answer, I want you to consider one thing - John had made an assumption but did not leave it at that.

He sought answers, he sent some of his disciples right to the source.

And asked specific questions.

Consider what John could have done.

He could have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah. Many in Israel did.

He could have kept quiet, as some say just quietly walked away causing no problem.

But why do we assume asking questions is causing problems?

He could have vocally criticized Jesus for not doing what he was supposed to do, not getting John out of prison

John had doctrine, he had promises, he was in a situation in which the promises very appropriately applied - but something was wrong so he asks questions.

I think many people today do not ask questions because they prefer to remain in the darkness of their own conclusions or their own understanding.

They would rather assume what someone thinks then find out for sure.

Satan likes that by the way.

He is really good at getting people to assume and put more stock in their assumptions than the truth.

Do not make judgments where no judgment is necessary.

Consider if you are part of the problem, part of the solution, or no part at all.

If no judgment is required on your part, then leave it alone and when asked, do not comment.

Your refusal to join into senseless chatter of things that do not pertain to you may serve as a warning to others not to talk of these things either.

1 Timothy 5:13, And at the same time they (younger widows) also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention.

Principle

There are some things that are not proper to mention.

Do not accept hearsay.

When dealing with a problem deal with only accurate first hand information.

It is rather amazing how quickly we will jump to a conclusion of wrongdoing by the word of someone who heard something from someone who overheard someone who thinks they knew and might have seen.

Even news reporters require verification by at least two sources before they print anything and yet we so often listen to the word of someone who knows someone who knows.

Do not come to any conclusions on anything other than first hand information.

Communicate, Satan wants you to jump to a wrong conclusion.

He does not want you to communicate.

So communicate.

If you hear something has been said or done that will effect you, talk to the person or people involved.

Ephesians 4:15, Speak the truth in spiritual love.

Do not build facts on assumptions, feelings, prejudices.

Build facts upon the truth.

When someone is found to be deceitful, avoid them.

Psalm 101:7, He who practices deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who speaks falsehood shall not maintain his position before me.

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Our attitude towards others must be one of spiritual love and forgiveness.

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; 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.

Proverbs 10:12, Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all transgressions.

Yes, Satan loves to cause discord, division, disdain among believers - but John asked questions and the Lord responded.

Luke 7:20-22

And when the men had come to Him, they said, John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?

At that very time He cured many people of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and He granted sight to many who were blind.

And He answered and said to them, Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.

Jesus did not provide a direct answer but instead told them to report what they heard and what they saw.

This was an invitation to stay and observe and then report back to John which they did.

Jesus describes five miracles of physical healing and then one example of His message and method;

Part of these follow Isaiah 35:4-6

Say to those with anxious heart, Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; The recompense of God will come, But He will save you.

Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.

Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy.

Blind receive their sight. This was the most telling of all the miracles. This is the one miracle that prior to that time had never occurred.

No one had ever healed the blind.

In Isaiah 42 it is seen as a validation of the Messiah, God's servant-Son.

Now remember that although these were actual physical miracles of healing, the message of them is one for all generations, even us today.

We are spiritually blind and we can see as a result of the Master's hand.

The lame walk.

And spiritually as a result of Christ's life and death, we can walk by faith and walk by the Spirit.

Lepers are cleansed.

Leprosy separated and through Jesus Christ we are united with the Father, the Son and the Spirit and with each other.

The deaf hear.

By hearing the Gospel we can now hear the very Word of God.

He who has ears to hear, and we do, let him hear.

The dead are raised up.

We have a new life in Jesus Christ.

John 10:10, I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.

The poor have the Gospel preached to them.

And this is perhaps most important for John because that statement is part of the verses from the Old Testament that were causing John to question.

Isaiah 61:1, The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners.

By quoting the one part of that prophecy, Jesus is telling these disciples of John that all is being

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accomplished in it proper order, according to God's plan and perfect timing.

Part of that prophecy is fulfilled now and John must be patient for the remainder to be fulfilled in God's perfect time.

We have to make the same application today.

God's plan is perfect.

We may want what is for a future time even in our own lives right now.

And God says no, you must wait, my plan for you is perfect, my plan for you is gracious. *Trust Me.*

Luke 7:23

And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me.

The word STUMBLE is the word we have studied in Romans. It is to be SCANDALIZED.

Romans 9:30-32 (quoting Isaiah 28), What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith;

31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.

32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works.

They stumbled over the stumbling stone,

What is Jesus saying to John? The same He says to us when we have doubts, when we are uncertain, when we wonder - . The Son of God, our Savior says *Trust Me.*

Isaiah 61:1, The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners.

Jesus answers, but more so, shows the disciples who came from John that He is the promised One.

Luke 7:24

And when the messengers of John had left, He began to speak to the multitudes about John, What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind?

What follows from verses 24 through to verse 35 is a message, a sermon, Jesus gives to the crowd.

And he begins this message with a defense of John and then brings this message around to Himself as the Son of Man.

Because John asked questions some, perhaps even the some of the disciples were critical of John.

One of the saddest things that we have within the body of believers is that when believers begin to ask questions others begin to doubt their seriousness about their faith.

I like questions. I guess I like them because I know God has all the answers. I certainly do not. But I have asked some pretty tough questions of others or at pastor's conferences.

What really has surprised me a couple of times is when I ask a question regarding a doctrine or principles and I end up being accused of embracing the position to which the question relates.

It is like if I asked *Does the sun always rise in the East.* And have someone go away and say *Dan Hill doesn't believe the Sun always rises in the East anymore.*

See how foolish it is to ascribe position as a result of questions?

And even more so, how the negative reactions to questions can end up impeding our growth!

Well John asked questions and that is good.

And Jesus demonstrated an answer and that is good.

But some reacted by thinking less of John for asking the questions.

So lest anyone would draw a wrong conclusion from these questions, Jesus defends John.

This is a comfort to those of us today who have questions regarding the Scriptures.

To know that our Lord is not critical of us but defending of us.

So Jesus has a few questions of his own to ask.

His message keys off three questions.

What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind?

This was a picture of that which is effected by exterior conditions. A reed, when there is no wind is still, when it is windy, it is shaken.

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Reeds do nothing on their own but outside forces effect them.

In the same way the religious leaders in Jerusalem were like reeds shaken in the wind.

What ever the popular opinion happened to be they went along with it.

They wanted to be popular rather than faithful to God and His Word.

So they would bend to the wind of opinion

This was not the case with John.

He asked the hard questions regarding man's faith.

Matthew 3:7, But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Jesus acknowledged the courage of John and his faithfulness to the Truth in this question.

The second questions asked what those in positions of power thought of John.

Luke 7:25

But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are splendidly clothed and live in luxury are found in royal palaces.

When the crowds went out to the Jordan river and saw John, what did they see?

A man in rough clothing, camel hair, a real desert dweller. What we used to call in Arizona, a desert rat. They did not see a man in soft clothing.

This was in contrast to the white robes of the Pharisees. The ones who wear the soft clothing are accepted by earthly kings even into their palaces.

To be a man of the court meant that the King accepted you and rewarded you with a soft life and soft clothing.

Jesus asks why would the people travel the many miles to the Jordan to see what they could see every day in Jerusalem and in the palaces of power?

John stood for truth and had nothing to do with the evil authorities of his day.

He was even now in prison because he spoke out against the sin of Herod Antipas in having an

affair with his sister-in-law which violated the expressed law of God for His people (Leviticus 18).

Luke 7:26

But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and one who is more than a prophet.

The word SEE means much more than merely to observe or look at.

They went to intently look at and learn from this man who was a voice in the wilderness.

John the Baptist was a prophet but he was also more than a prophet, he was the forerunner of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

There was prophecy in the Old Testament that predicted John and his ministry

He was the first prophet since the close of the Old Testament in more than 400 years, since Malachi.

He was the only prophet who was the personal forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the people came to listen and learn from John they got more than the message of a prophet, they got the message of the Messiah

And for some who were there the day Jesus came to John, they certainly saw one who was more than a prophet, they saw the lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world, they saw their Savior, Jesus Christ.

The next verses build on that last question and describes John and his ministry, v 27-28

Luke 7:27

This is the one about whom it is written (Malachi 3:1), Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.

He was the one who prepared the way for the Messiah.

The wording used gives us the analogy of those who would prepare the way for the king.

In the ancient world when a king would travel others would go ahead and smooth out the road, enlist the townspeople to clean up their villages, to be prepared to come out and cheer on the king.

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This is what John did, he prepared the way, the people for the coming of the King of kings.

Luke 7:28

I say to you, among those born of women, there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

Believer, this is one of the greatest statements ever made about you - as great as John the Baptist was, he would be the least in this present kingdom because of what you have that He did not have.

Now he had the Holy Spirit but not like you have.

His filling of the Spirit as described in Luke 1:15 uses a word that is not nearly as strong as the one used of the Christians filling by the Spirit in Ephesians 5:18.

We can be filled to overflowing,

πληρωθῆτε to fill to overflowing.

A passive imperative which is a command to us that God's grace will fulfill.

John was part of an earthly kingdom whereas we are citizens of heaven

John had the Old Testament, we have the full counsel of God's Word

John lived under the Law, we live in a dispensation where Christ has fulfilled the Law

John looked ahead to a Christ whose work was predicted, we look back, focused on the finished work of Christ as the center piece of history.

We serve a risen Savior who both sits at the right hand of the Father and lives in us.

Reaction and Response

Luke 7:29

And when all the people and the tax-gatherers heard this, they acknowledged God's justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John.

The ones who were the recipients of God's mercy and grace were the ones who understood the justice of God.

This almost seems like a contradiction.

We might think that the ones who are the legalists, the one who are so involved with the Justice of

God would be the ones who understood His justice, but they do not.

But that is not the case, it is only when you truly understand grace that you truly understand justice.

Because it is at the Cross that the justice of God was forever satisfied and it is from the Cross that mercy and grace forever flows.

Luke 7:30

But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John.

The legalist reject the purpose of God which is to know God and enjoy Him forever.

But this purpose begins with salvation and salvation demands a humbling of the heart and these religious leaders are too arrogant to ever think in terms of their need for a God to save them.

Jesus' Parable

Luke 7:31,32

To what then shall I compare the men of this generation, and what are they like? They are like children who sit in the market place and call to one another; and they say, We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.

Any generation stands or falls on the spiritual decisions it makes to trust in Christ.

And that generation is pictured as children who sit in the market place and they call out to other children who are sitting by and they have played for them, try to move them to either dance or mourn - and there is no response.

The message of John and Jesus was one that called out Israel to wake up, to have joy and be moved to faith in Christ or to mourn their situation and have faith in Christ. But there was not response.

You want a picture of this for today?

Think of how bored your kids children when you take them to the marketplace, shopping. They sit by, bored, unmoved.

Now, realize that this is what most people are like when it comes to spiritual things.

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Even here today sitting in a church, worshipping, learning, there is not response.

The greatest danger to the church today is not false doctrine but apathy and indifference.

Luke 7:33

For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine; and you say, He has a demon!

John came with a warning, calling Israel to mourn, repent, for the kingdom of God was at hand.

John was a Nazarite, he was a separatist, he stood a part from people, he lived in the desert and did not party with others.

And he was rejected

Luke 7:34

The Son of Man has come eating and drinking; and you say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a drunkard, a friend of tax-gatherers and sinners!

Jesus was with the people, involved with them, He laughed with them, partied with them.

Yet this was rejected.

That generation was unmoved by the message of John and the message of Jesus.

They rejected the esthetics of John and the involvement with the people of Jesus.

That generation just would not respond.

They were not happy with John because he was so apart.

And yet they rejected Jesus because He was so involved.

Like our generation today, they could not be pleased by anything.

Apathy and indifference rule the day and Spiritual things are set aside.

Luke 7:35

Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children.

The vindication of the wisdom of the ministry of John and the ministry of Jesus will be proven right by the results.

Many will come into the Kingdom even to this day.

By their fruit you will know them -

For The Rest of the Story . . .

READ Mark 6:17-28

Harry Ironsides during his ministry to the Indians of Northern Arizona once asked a man if he knew what the conscience was.

The man replied that he did, it was like a three cornered stone in his heart. When he was doing what he knew was right the stone was still.

But when he did what he knew was wrong the stone turned and the corners hurt very much.

But if I ignore this and keep doing wrong the corners wear smooth and it doesn't hurt anymore.

We are going to meet a woman who felt that stone turning in her heart, who felt the hurt and in doing so, expressed her love for the Savior.

Luke 7:36

Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him. And He entered the Pharisees house, and reclined at the table.

As his fame grew, one of the Pharisees of Capernaum, a man named Simon (v 40) invited Jesus to a dinner party.

Earlier we saw Jesus at a dinner party hosted by Matthew, attended by tax collectors and sinners, and there the religious leaders were critical of Jesus and the company He kept.

Well now He has come up in the world - or has He?

We told that the guest reclined at the table.

It was the custom to eat at a low table, to lay down on ones side, supported by the left arm, eat with the right hand, and one's feet, with sandals off except for the Passover meal (Messiah could come anytime, better be ready) pointed away from the table.

We might wonder why Simon invited Jesus to his home for this meal.

When you think about it, a dinner invitation can be for one of two reasons.

The host wants to enjoy your company --OR-- the host wants you to enjoy his company.

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The host is honored to have you in his home -- OR—he thinks you should be honored to be in his home.

Now which is it here?

I think we see, and sadly see, it is Simon who thinks Jesus should be honored to be in his home, the home of this important Pharisee.

He could have been enjoying the presence of Jesus Christ, but he did not have the capacity to do so.

Luke 7:37

And behold, there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisees house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume,

With our customs and even the architecture of our homes, this would be unlikely.

But in the ancient world it opens were more open to the street and it would have been common for others who were not a part of the meal to drop by and sit away from the table and listen to the conversation.

Especially when a noted rabbi was at the dinner.

So we can see that for this woman to come into the house is not uncommon but what is uncommon is for this woman, who is called a sinner, a prostitute of Capernaum, to come into the home of a Pharisee.

This took a lot of nerve.

Do we know who this woman is?

Yes!

Each of the four Gospels includes an account of a woman anointing Jesus.

In Matthew, Mark, and John the incident occurs during the passion week, in Bethany just prior to the Cross.

But here in Luke we have a woman anointing Jesus in Capernaum, and much earlier in His ministry, in while it was in the home of a man named Simon and the other accounts also tell us that the anointing took place in the home of a man named Simon, that name is as common as our name *John* and here it is Simon the Pharisee while in Bethany, later, it is Simon the leper who Jesus had cleansed.

So with that in mind, read John 11:2

And it was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

John's readers would have been familiar with Luke's Gospel and he states this prior to the anointing in Bethany so this must look back to a previous anointing that the readers who had not read of the account in Bethany would have know on and that is the account before us.

So who is she?

Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus and by some accounts, a childhood friend of Jesus.

What was she doing in Capernaum and why is she called a sinner?

Here is where I have to get into some conjecture but follow with me in this possibility - Mary, Martha, and Lazarus are without parent.

They are poor, they need money.

Capernaum was near a sea port, near a military post, on a major Roman road.

But while there Jesus comes to town.

She knows Him, perhaps even from her childhood. She hides from him, ashamed.

But the conviction of the spirit is working, that three pointed stone in her heart is turning.

And now, this evening, she builds her courage and by faith, she, a known sinner, walks into the home of Simon.

She is seeking Jesus whom she loves.

The Alabaster Vial

In I Chronicles 29:2 David assembled the items for the Temple of God. We are told that there was alabaster in abundance.

Alabaster is a white, pure, marble type of stone that is formed from stalactites in caves.

Two interesting things about it. It is high in hydrated calcium sulphate and it takes a long, long, time to form. 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. The calcium looks at Jesus'

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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.

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 she remembers the alabaster vial, perhaps the most costly and precious thing she has, something she may have had with her for years, and she gives it to her Lord.

Perfume for the women of Israel was a valued commodity.

They would wear vials of perfume around their necks and this was so important that the Talmud even allowed the vials to be worn on the Sabbath.

The perfume was expensive.

One ancient Jewish record tells of a woman allotted 400 gold coins a year for perfume, and at that, she complained.

So this was a valued gift she brings to the Lord -

Luke 7:38

and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet, and anointing them with the perfume.

Normally the head was anointed but it while it is rare it is not unheard of for the feet to be anointed.

In the Talmud we can even read of honored rabbis whose feet were anointed and kiss.

As she anoints His feet she is weeping, her tears fall onto His feet, she lets down her hair which was normally never done in public by a Jewish woman, and wipes the tears from His feet.

Luke 7:39,40

Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner.

And Jesus answered and said to him, Simon, I have something to say to you. And he replied, Say it, Teacher.

A Riddle

Luke 7:41-43

A certain moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.

When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him more?

Simon answered and said, I suppose the one whom he forgave more. And He said to him, You have judged correctly.

An Object Lesson for Simon and for us.

Luke 7:44-46

And turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair.

You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet.

You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume.

Simon did not do the things that this woman now does:

No offer to wash his feet, or even provide a servant to do so or even provide water for Jesus to wash His own feet.

This was socially very rude and yet if you think someone should be honored to be in your presence, in your home, it would be true to form, poor form, but true to form.

Secondly, Simon did not greet the Lord with a kiss which would be as common as our handshake today.

Again, arrogance and rudeness

And third, Simon did not anoint the Lord's head with oil which would have been done to honor someone special and yet she went beyond that and anointed His feet.

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Luke 7:47

For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.

I shudder to think of how Simon responded to this statement.

Did he think that he was so righteous that he did not have much to forgive, especially to be forgiven by this itinerant rabbi he so graciously invited into his home?

And therefore, he did not need to love, after all, he was a Pharisee, others should love him, honor him.

We can see that there is sarcasm in what Jesus says and yet, I do not think Simon got it.

It is like the time I paraphrased the passage in Job to a man who was very full of himself and I said, you know, when you die I am afraid all wisdom will die with you and the guy didn't get it - he said *yes that may be true but the Lord will provide others.*

Have you ever heard sarcasm and known that others have not gotten it - or has it ever been directed at you and have you not gotten it?

No, really?

How do you know?

Now what kept Simon from getting the point, humbling himself, receiving the forgiveness of his sins and being saved?

In one word: **Arrogance. Another word Pride.**

I am sure he looked at what the woman was doing and said, *I would never do that.* I am too important, too special, too pure. After all, I am a *Pharisee* and indeed he was!

Luke 7:48

And He said to her, Your sins have been forgiven.

Now look at this verse, v 48 and then skip the next verse for a moment and look at verse 50.

We see four things.

Forgiveness of sins.

Jesus proclaimed to her a fact, her sins have been forgiven.

Jesus would go to the cross and die for the sins of the world, and even prior to that in the Old Testament that promised forgiveness as an assured fact.

The word used here for forgiveness is *αφιημι* and looks at the judicial dismissing and forgiveness of sins.

This is the work of God in Christ.

So strong is His work that even James said of the man who had been distressed in James chapter 5 that *if he has sins, they are forgiven.*

A concessive statement.

Even though you have sinned, they are forgiven.

And that is where salvation, both salvation #1 and salvation #2 begins, with what God did, not with what we did.

He sent His Son into the world to die for all the sins of all mankind.

Secondly we see in v 50 that she had faith.

How did Jesus know this?

We do not see any profession of faith, any testimony of belief.

Or do we?

What she did in coming to Simon's house took faith, what she did in the others, letting down her hair, anointing His feet, washing them with her tears, took faith.

Every thing she has done is an expression of her humility, her devotion, her faith.

Perhaps even more so if the tradition is true that she was a childhood friend of Jesus.

How ashamed she must have felt, the guilt, the sorrow, that which keeps so many from coming into the presence of the Savior and yet was set aside because she trusted Him, that He would not reject her.

The words of faith are not here, but the acts of faith certainly are.

She has been saved.

Her faith, passive, it was hers given to her by God as He gives to all mankind a measure of faith, saved her.

Her faith had an object and the object was Jesus.

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Saved from sins, her sins, saved to eternal life or restored to fellowship with God through Christ.

Whichever it may be, the issue is the same.

Faith in what Jesus Christ alone can provide.

He paid the debt he did not owe for those who owed a debt they could not pay, and she believed that!

Go in peace.

A peace that she can now have with God and the peace that is of God.

Peace has been called the most valued commodity of the soul.

We long for it, we fight for it, we seek it, and yet all the time it is there for us to have in Jesus Christ.

Others may taunt her, reject her, say she can never really be a believer, after all, she was a prostitute, a wicked woman.

But she is forgiven, she is delivered, she has peace even in the midst of persecution and rejection.

She knows Jesus, her friend, her Savior, her Lord accepts Her and that is true grace.

Luke 7:49

And those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, Who is this man who even forgives sins?

The other guests?

They did not get it, they did not understand it.

Rather than accept the gift of grace that only Christ can give, they questioned the giver - who is this man?

That is like saying, *who does he think he is?*

He knows who He is but more importantly, this woman, this sinner, know who He is.

He is one who can forgive sins and that is worthy of all love, all devotion, all of our faith.

Luke 7:50

And He said to the woman, Your faith has saved you; go in peace.

I have know people who sit in church, listen to a Bible class and have the attitude that what is being said is really great, for those other people.

They are like the Simons of the world, so full pride they do not see their need for forgiveness.

As you go from here today I hope you can take this last verse with you, not just by way of our study, but that you can hear the Lord saying this to you - your faith has saved you, your faith has delivered you, *go in peace*.

Chapter 8

It is very appropriate that the parable ministry of our Lord begins with a parable about the Word and how it is received.

We are the subject of the parable of the seed and the sower because this parable is really about the soil in which the seed is sown.

We can see in this parable how we will receive the Word of God: if we will learn it, think it, and apply it.

The Women who Followed Jesus.

Luke 8:1,2

And it came about soon afterwards, that He began going about from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God; and the twelve were with Him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out,

Mary Magdalene is often seen as a former prostitute yet no place in the Scriptures is that stated.

It was not until Pope Gregory who tried to dismiss the value of women in the church that this idea began.

She was healed of evil spirit so she had been under the control of demons, but now healed, now saved, she is a devoted follower of Jesus all the way to the end.

She was given the honor of being the first to see the resurrected Jesus in the Garden.

Luke 8:3

and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means.

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Remember that Luke is writing mostly to Greeks and Romans and in the Roman culture the woman had considerable freedom and autonomy.

It is most likely that Luke tells of these women disciples to show the women in the Gentile churches that many women of Israel followed Jesus.

We see that some of these women came from families of wealth and contributed to the work of Jesus financially.

It is a misunderstanding to think of Jesus and His disciples as being poor and destitute.

They were not rich but they were not improvised either.

I should also be remembered that as Jesus was crucified that it was the women who followed Him who were there at the foot of the Cross while the disciples except for John, has run away in fear and were hiding.

So we are told of those who followed Jesus and then we are given a parable that tells us why some follow and some do not.

The Parable of the Soils.

Luke 8:4

And when a great multitude were coming together, and those from the various cities were journeying to Him, He spoke by way of a parable.

Now here is we begin to see a shift from miracles to parables.

What are Parables?

The Greek word παραβολη which means to throw alongside.

Truth is thrown alongside life and life then interprets truth. Requires concentration, listening, thinking

The miracles were a display of God's power but also distracted the people. They became more involved with the miracles than the message.

There are three times in the Lord's ministry when parables were the method of communication.

Each time was a time to separate the ones willing to hear from the ones wanting to be entertained.

Read Luke 8:10

Jesus' mission was not to amass a huge following but to reveal the truth of God. As various groups reject the message the message was hid in the parable. This shift sets up a pattern for both the Church Age and the believer.

The first century of the church is marked by miracles and signs, but with the completion of the canon (the Bible) the shift is to truth. From the spectacular to the specific revelation of God.

And in our lives we may go through a period of the spectacular as God is caring for us as a Father would care for a helpless infant, but then we grow up and begin to concentrate, listen, and think on the Word of God.

Now Jesus will continue to heal and continue with miracles but they will lessen and be more for those who have put their faith in him than for the crowds of hangers-on.

Luke 8:5-8

The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road; and it was trampled under foot, and the birds of the air ate it up.

And other seed fell on rocky soil, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture.

And other seed fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it, and choked it out.

And other seed fell into the good soil, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great. As He said these things, He would call out, He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

The Explanation of the Parable.

Luke 8:9

And His disciples began questioning Him as to what this parable might be.

We must stop to commend that disciples at this point.

They asked a question and as normal as that may seem to be, it is not.

Too often when something that is taught is not understood, people fail to ask questions and instead they continue in their ignorance or even worse, they totally misunderstand and misrepresent what is being taught.

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Luke 8:10,11

And He said, To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, in order that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.

Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.

The common aspect of each part of the parable is that the seed is the Word of God.

The seed is spread, as is the Word. The sower is the teacher, the one who communicates both the Gospel and the doctrine of the Christian life.

In our age we see that this is empowered by God the Holy Spirit.

John 14:26, 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.

The WORD is the Word of God and it is sown on all kinds of terrain or soil.

There is no exclusivity in the sowing of the Word, it is to go to all.

Principle

The communication of the Word of God, especially in a local church, must be made available to all who wish to come and hear the word.

No special groups of key people, you are all key people in the plan of God.

Romans 10:14, How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

The First Soil: Remain in Unbelief

Luke 8:12

And those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved.

These are the ones who have some momentary interest with the Word but that is it.

They hear (aorist tense) and they have some cognizance of what was said but that is it.

Satan works on this type to keep the Word which is heard from ever becoming personal.

Historically, especially in the U.S., there have been preachers who had a certain popularity based upon their ability to communicate.

Many people would come to hear them but the Word never got to the personal stage with them.

They would hear, they listen, but the gospel of Salvation in Christ never becomes personal, never becomes something that involves them.

Satan, the evil one, the devil, takes away the Word.

the word for TAKES AWAY means to take by force.

Satan will stop at nothing to keep the unbeliever an unbeliever.

Principle

The word may be entertaining but its purpose is not to entertain.

John summed up the purpose of the Gospel this way.

John 21:31, But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

The unbelievers by the wayside are left by the wayside, never believing in Jesus Christ.

The Second Soil: Saved and then Fall away due to Sin

Luke 8:13

And those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away.

They receive the word of God and respond with appreciation or joy.

RECEIVE is present tense, keep on receiving and do so with JOY which is *χαρᾶς* from the same root as GRACE and it is a response to what God has given them.

But they have no root. There is no depth of doctrine in their souls. Their understanding is

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superficial like so many believers today who have a lot of talk and enthusiasm but no daily walk in the Word.

They never get past the Christian platitudes and bumper sticker type of theology. So when affliction or persecution comes on account of the Word, because of their position as a believer, they fall apart.

Affliction refers to the problems of life that come as test of the depth of doctrine. Persecution is opposition from others because of the Word in you.

Both of these categories of problems can be great opportunities for the application of doctrine but these Stony ground believers give up when the going gets rough.

Because doctrine is not in the thinking it is not going to be applied. Instead they are at the mercy of human viewpoint and become offended which is a word meaning to be displeased, indignant, resentful. The problems they face can even turn them against the Word they had learned.

This then is the believer who is distracted by problems and persecutions.

The Third Soil: Saved and then Fall away due to Distraction

Luke 8:14

And the seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

Here is the believer who doesn't have his priorities straight. Instead of having a passionate desire for the Word, his life lusts after other things. He is all wrapped up worrying about the present age.

The believer who worries rather than trust that God His heavenly Father is in control.

Now WORRY is a sin, it is an expression of our lack of faith.

We may have certain cares and fears in life but we must make sure they are the right ones.

We should fear that we let any promise of the Word go unclaimed.

We should care that we might miss out on some precept of Divine truth.

Application

I know some of the problems you are facing and the doctrine was given that could have encouraged, comforted, even solved your problem - but you were not here.

Do you care for the wrong things, do you worry rather than take every opportunity to build your faith through the hearing, learning, thinking, and applying of the Word of God?

These thorn believers are also deceived by the deceitfulness of wealth.

They are seeking wealth thinking that it can solve their worry problem.

We have spent time in past teaching on Christ Centered Finance and the tapes are available but let me repeat one point.

Wealth, prosperity is a tremendous test and while God can make you wealthy overnight, he will not if you do not have the capacity - he knows when wealth would be a distraction to you.

These believers also have a passionate desire for other things, things other than money, in which they seek pleasure and happiness.

Man is a passionate being, and we have to decide where our passion is going to be directed. And we must have a passion for the things of God.

You never sustain fulfillment apart from God's gifts to you. He can make you happier than you have ever believed possible.

What is the most important thing in life to you?

As you learn, think, and apply the Word of God I can tell you what it will be - the most important thing in life will be the Word because it will reveal to you the most important person in your life, Jesus Christ.

.Theses misdirected priorities are said to come in and choke off the Word.

We have a passive participle which puts the thorn believer in a passive position of being intruded upon by worry, caring about the wrong things, wealth, and a wrongly applied passion.

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This is not a position of any strength whatsoever, the passive verb see these wrong priorities enslaving the believer who does not.

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and allow God to add all things to him.

The result of failing the priority test is that the word becomes unfruitful.

Now if you had a orchard and you have trees that did not bear any fruit, you would cut them down and use them for fire wood.

When your priorities are misaligned you bear no fruit for yourself and none for others.

The Fourth Soil: Saved and Grow

Luke 8:15

And the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.

These believers welcome the Word with an honest and good heart. This is the place of faith.

In the Old Testament believers were to be obedient from the heart, which is to trust God and put faith in Him and His word.

You will never obey whom you do not believe.

They let the Word come alongside on them so the word is received along side of you as a trusted companion.

In the ancient world and even in the Near East today you never let someone you do not trust along side of you.

So here the Word is trusted to come along side. The result is bearing fruit and this is the application of the Word.

The best way to keep the Word is to give it away. As you apply it to God and your attitude towards Him, to self, and to others you increase momentum and build inner strength.

The momentum of application is seen in the increasing fruit.

Principle

The more you get involved in the cycle of learning, thinking, and applying God' Word the more you get out of the truth you have learn.

More fruit will generate from even the smallest seeds of truth.

Lessons learned from this parable

The unbeliever is being pushed around by Satan.

He is at the whim and will of the evil one.

He does not have the dimension of Divine control in His life.

Some believers are pushed around by problems and people.

They have enthusiasm but no depth of doctrine so even as believers they lack the dynamics of day by day Divine control in their lives.

Other believers are pushed around by wrong priorities.

They worry and care about the wrong things. they think money can make them happy, they have misdirected passion.

They to are living from a position of weakness rather than divine strength.

But others are seeking the manifold fruit of the Word in their lives.

And this is a reality because they welcome the Word to their side as a companion and they know the Word will change their lives.

Now we have some illustrations of how this hearing of the Word is to be Applied.

Summary Analogies and Illustrations.

Luke 8:16

Now no one after lighting a lamp covers it over with a container, or puts it under a bed; but he puts it on a lampstand, in order that those who come in may see the light.

The good soil describes the believer who hears, holds, and applies the word.

Now in these brief illustrations the Lord promises to the one who have ears and are hearing that the Word will be made available and will be taught, and will be interpreted for them.

The first picture is the lighted lamp. The light refers to the Word, the lampstand is the one who communicates the Scriptures.

God will provide these to those who desire the Word.

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God, in providing the Word, will also provide the communicators, the teachers.

And in doing this His Word taught will not be hidden under a bed or bushel but put on a lampstand for all to see - and then the issue become if the believer will look into the Light, look into the Word.

Luke 8:17

For nothing is hidden that shall not become evident, nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light.

Begins with the Greek word *γαρ* which makes this explanatory, *for you see*.

This verse is for those who may complain that understanding spiritual things is just to difficult.

Not so, because God will make all things evident, nothing that is hidden shall remain hidden.

We have a fascinating little grammatical principle in this verse.

The promise that the hidden will become evident or visible is future tense, a very certain and assured fact.

Now why is it unassured or uncertain?

Because knowing is up to you, to hear it, listen to it, think on it, learn it, know it.

And although God makes His truth known, we know, not all mankind, not even all believers, will avail themselves to it so to know it.

Luke 8:18

Therefore take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.

And in light of that fact, therefore *take care how you listen*.

Now this verse is not talking about prosperity or things or what you have by way of material fortune.

It is talking about a far greater wealth and that is the wealth of the Word.

Take care is *blepw* be on watch, be on the look out.

WE are to think about how we are listening. Are we depending on the Holy Spirit to teach us?

Have we prayed for concentration? Are we on the look out for distractions? Are we on the look out for the wandering thoughts?

And then we have two statements regarding capacity.

For whoever has, to him shall more be given

Totally contrary to the prevalent socialistic thinking of today.

God says if you have a lot of truth, you get more but if you do not have much or think you have a lot and do not, then you will end up with less

Whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.

The reason is capacity.

As you grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, your capacity for learning will grow both in desire and in content.

You will want more and you will absorb more and you will understand more.

But the one who throws off the word, or who thinks they do not need to be taught, will suffer the dissolution of even what they have.

First Opportunity for Application.

Now with these great principles we now have the chance for those around Jesus to apply them.

Luke 8:19,20

And His mother and brothers came to Him, and they were unable to get to Him because of the crowd.

And it was reported to Him, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wishing to see You

(Mark makes it clear they wanted Him to go with them, away from the crowds)

Luke 8:21

But He answered and said to them, My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.

This incident is recorded by both Matthew and Mark.

Luke's account is the shortest and I think it is so because the Holy Spirit wanted to get across a very simple point.

The Gospel of Luke 113

Our relationship with Jesus Christ is greater than any earthly relationship even family and it is a relationship that is of faith resulting in our listening to Him and doing His will.

Jesus mother and brothers did not understand this.

They wanted a relationship with Him, even to the point of taking Him away from ministry, based on the family.

Now while family is important, it is second to the relationship you have with God and that relationship is based on faith which results in learning, thinking, and applying the Word of God.

In this first opportunity to apply the answer to the question of what type of soil are you, Mary and Jesus half brothers failed the test - I often wonder, why were they on the outside, why not in the inside listening to the message of Jesus?

Second Opportunity for Application.

Luke 8:22

Now it came about on one of those days, that He and His disciples got into a boat, and He said to them, Let us go over to the other side of the lake. And they launched out.

Here in this second opportunity for application we see the disciples.

The issue here is going to be obedience but not just human obedience but the obedience of faith, do these disciples who have been with Jesus for so long now, trust Him?

And at v 22 we might say *so far so good*.

They respond to His words by doing what He says. WHY?

Because they knew He was such a good tour guide, or great sailor? Not at all, but because they trusted Him and were willing then to obey Him.

Obedience is our faith in God and further obedience can only come from faith.

Luke 8:23

But as they were sailing along He fell asleep; and a fierce gale of wind descended upon the lake, and they began to be swamped and to be in danger.

This event occurs (according to Matthew's Gospel) at the end of a long day of public teaching and giving of parables and their interpretation.

The mob was there to see miracles but Jesus taught the positive ones parables.

The fact that they left behind a great multitude, the fact that many of the people in other ships attempted to follow them, and the fact that once in the ship he fell asleep shows us three very important things.

Jesus was fulfilling his ministry of proclaiming the truth.

When volition was negative or misplaced on the miracles rather than the teaching of God's truth, he would leave and minister elsewhere.

He was not to be distracted from his mission. Not even by those things that seem close to what his mission might be.

How many pastors today would turn their back on the large crowds?

We must be mission oriented.

We all have a common mission and that is to grow in Christ, but we also have individual mission which require the application of the doctrine we have learned.

Secondly, when we see that the Lord fell asleep we know that he was fatigued after a long day of public ministry.

This action of fatigue and sleep remind us that we are seeing the humanity of Christ.

Deity doesn't get tired, deity doesn't sleep.

Here we see the humanity of Christ in this ship and we see Him in His humanity testing doctrine and faith and power that is now available to every believer.

It is often difficult for us to relate to our Lord's earthly ministry because we keep remember that he is the God-man.

But here we behold Jesus in His humanity, tired yet fulfilling his mission to proclaim the truth.

Also we see that the Lord needed to get away, alone with his disciples.

The people in the other ships would be driven away by the storm.

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He needed to be in the ship with his disciples because the disciples are now going to be tested regarding the truth they learned that day.

The test will answer the question.

Where are they placing their faith?

But as I am sure many of you know, as we walk by faith, a few storms can come our way. And this storm was a good one.

Now remember, many of these disciples has spend their lives on this sea and yet they storm was so great that they were in great danger.

But do not despair at this: Frank Clark stated: *Troubles and problems are what give a fellow his chance to discover his strengths, or his weaknesses.*

The word used for *fierce gale of wind* means a storm of hurricane proportions.

The Sea of Galilee, although an inland body of water, is prone to great storms.

It lays 700 feet below sea level and is surrounded by mountains and deep valleys.

It is only about 25 miles from the Med and what happens is westerly winds build up over the Med, come inward, and then drop over the Sea of Galilee.

But of the many storms these men had been in, this one was just a little more severe, a little more frightening, and it caused them to be a little more afraid.

To the point that they thought they would perish.

Luke 8:24

And they came to Him and woke Him up, saying, Master, Master, we are perishing! And being aroused, He rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm.

Other accounts tell us that He was in the stern sleeping on the pillow.

The oarsmen and rudder men used a leather pillow as a cushion in these large fishing boats.

The Lord was in the stern [rear] of the ship sound asleep.

The storm is raging and Jesus is sleeping.

Why?

Because he has faith in the Father that He is not going to die for the sins of the world by being drowned in the Sea of Galilee.

In His humanity, Jesus had faith in the Father's destiny for Him, faith in His plan.

His sleep was a sleep of faith but he was not the first to sleep in a ship during a storm.

All sleep is not the result of the rest of faith, some sleep results from apathy.

Illustrated by Jonah in Jonah, chapter 1:4

The sleep of Apathy

And for those twelve disciples in the ship with the Lord, it should have been an example of faith - But instead it became a motive of panic - *Master, Master, we are perishing!*

And here is where they do something we do all the time, they failed the test.

Now many of the disciples were experienced sailors, and they had tried everything their profession had taught them to bring the ship under control, but nothing had worked.

So they called upon the Lord, just as many of us who after trying everything call upon the Lord for Salvation. He is the only one who can save.

And even as believers we so often go our own way, trying everything and then realize that only the Lord can keep us from perishing.

Too often when the storms of life hit we fail the tests by not realizing that our Savior is greater than any of the storms we may face.

Also in this test we see a test of the Word.

What did Jesus say to the disciples?

Did he say Let's go out into the middle of the sea and drowned?

Or did he say: Let us pass over to the other side?

They hear him, they even acted upon his instructions, but when the pressure of the storm was on, they forgot what Jesus had told them.

Before we even get into the stilling of the storm we need to make a few observations.

When they left the shore they left with a purpose, but the storm caused them to forget their purpose.

The danger of the storm poised an opportunity for faith, faith in Christ and faith in His Word.

The Gospel of Luke 115

Christ's faith in His Father's plan allowed him to sleep, a picture of faith rest and an example to the disciples and to us.

Their cry for help is a cry born out of desperation.

But so often it is out of desperation that we will call upon the Lord.

We are too often too strong, to self-reliant, to recognize our need for Jesus.

They had failed the test prior to waking Jesus and now they express a lack of understanding about his care and concern for them.

In the subjectivity of panic they assumed an attitude of not caring on the part of the Lord.

An attitude of indifference and a lack of care.

Jesus Christ who came from heaven to earth to give himself as a sacrifice for their sins is now (In Matthew's account) accused of not caring for them.

And here is a problem that we have today and a principle.

We fail to see how Jesus Christ does care for us.

The fact that he was with them in the midst of this storm shows that he did care. He cared enough to give them the test of the storm.

Yet we too often want Jesus to care for us the way we think we need to be cared for. To only be given the tests we think we need.

And yet God says no to that because His way is our Best Way.

The one who created the wind, who made the sea now calms these tremendous forces of nature.

He stilled the storm and now He has to still the disciples.

Having rebuked the storm he now turn his attention to the disciples.

Luke 8:25

And He said to them, Where is your faith? And they were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?

A very good question, their faith was certainly not in what He had said?

Let us go to the other side - and it certainly was not in Him, in His presence.

They perhaps had faith in their abilities as seamen or just a faith in nature that this storm has to end sometime.

Where is your faith

With this they are beginning to get the point, this is not a mere man, this is the God-Man, the unique person of the universe, Jesus Christ.

Principle

Storms will enter our lives. But every storm is an opportunity to trust God and believe His Word

Even in the midst of the most violent storms, you can rest the rest of faith. Combine faith with promises and your mission

We need never fear being tossed to and fro for the Lord is with us. The choice is ours.

Faith or fear.

When we have fears we need to take them to the Lord and he will calm us as he calmed the sea.

One thousand years before this night on the sea of Galilee the writer of Psalm 107 knew where faith must be placed.

Read Psalm 107:21-32

This anonymous Psalm provides encouragement for the disciples while they were at sea and for any of us in the midst of storms.

God will always provide the solution to the problem prior to the problem.

The solution is there, will you learn it, think it, and apply it?

By faith?

Abraham Jeschel stated.

"There is an evil which most of us condemn and are even guilty of. the indifference to evil.

"We remain neutral, impartial, and not easily moved by the evil around us.

"Indifference to evil and the master of evil himself is more universal, more contagious, more dangerous."

In our text today we are going to meet a man who is possessed by a legion of demons.

And we might see him as the evil of this passage, but he is not, he is the one who needs to be delivered and yet we will see evil in this passage,

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we will see the ones who indifference to evil breeds a greater evil.

And they were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?

Luke 8:26

And they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee.

Jesus and his disciples have made the night crossing of the Sea of Galilee.

As we saw last week, this voyage became a test of faith for the disciples.

A test they failed when they panicked in the midst of the storm.

Although they failed they were able to see a manifestation of the power of Jesus Christ as having authority over nature.

And now they will see an power of different kind, and the authority Jesus has over even the power of evil.

Luke 8:27

And when He had come out onto the land, He was met by a certain man from the city who was possessed with demons; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs.

Matthew tells us there were two demon possessed men while Mark and Luke mention on the worse case.

The man is described as having or being in or indwelled by an unclean spirit.

These are both datives, an adjective and a noun indicating that it was to the advantage of the demon, the unclean spirit, and to the advantage of his master Satan to indwell this man.

Today we so often brush off the idea of demon possession, which is only possible for the unbeliever, you can be influenced but not possessed, as something out of Hollywood.

And yet when we ignore or even disbelieve in the existence and power of Satan we play right into the hands of the evil master.

We read in the Bible many instances of startling and dramatic outbreaks of Satan's evil power and demonic activity.

This was heightened when Jesus Christ was on earth preparing to complete the Father's plan for our salvation.

While we may not see these dramatic outbreaks of evil today except in cases of Satan worship and in more primitive cultures, that does not mean that Satan is not at work.

He has had centuries to refine his tactics of distraction and destruction and he is still hard at work.

Things to remember about Satan

Satan can present himself to the world as an angel of light.

2 Corinthians 11:14, For even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

Satan and his demons know God exists and will encourage talk about God apart from Christ.

James 2:19, You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

Satan can quote the Bible and use it for his advantage.

Read Matthew 4.

The temptations of Christ

Satan accuses the Christian before God.

Zech. 3:1, Job, chapters 1 and 2.

But Jesus is our defense attorney, I John 2:1-2

Satan hates you more than anyone else, his hatred for you goes beyond our imagination (I Peter 5:8).

He is our enemy.

Luke 8:28,29

And seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me.

For He had been commanding the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard; and yet he would

burst his fetters and be driven by the demon into the desert.

This demon possessed man shows us the horrific evil that befalls the unbeliever who finds himself in the grasp of Satan and his demons.

But, in the strength of the demons, he would tear the chains apart.

Principle

The strength of demonic power is far greater than human power or any power system man can come up with.

We also see that occasionally the people of the area would catch him and bind him with

Application: We must never think we can oppose Satan, his demons, or his evil system in our own strength.

The man had his dwelling among the tomb. His home was with the dead. This is an identification of his physical condition in society, treated as if he was dead. But also an identification with his spiritual condition - he was spiritually dead

And he was constantly crying out with a meaningless repetition of guttural cries.

Aristophanes uses this language for the croaking of a frog which he paralleled to politicians in his play the Frogs.

He inflicted himself with wounds. At times he would so despise the demons that indwelt him that he would inflict harm upon himself.

Have you ever hurt your toe so badly you thought about cutting it off to end the pain. That is the way this miserable man felt all over all the time.

In these verses we see who can do what for man.

What can Satan do for man.

Having him living like an animal, in the tombs, with the stench of the dead.

What can man do man.

Bind him with chains

What can man do for himself.

Cut himself with stones, self induced misery.

Conclusion.

The only one who can really do something for you is the one who came to save you, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke 8:30

And Jesus asked him, What is your name? And he said, Legion; for many demons had entered him.

A legion is Roman times would be from 1000 to 6000 demons. That is a vast number. They had possessed this man and through him terrorized the region of Gadara and Decapolis.

Knowing that Jesus had the power from God to exercise, expel the demons they decide to argue.

Luke 8:31

And they were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss.

They had had quite a work in this region which was seen as a center of unbelief and Satanic activity.

It was in this region, at Tiberias, that John the Baptist was arrested, imprisoned, and beheaded.

They did not want to leave this region and if they were exercised they would be interned in TARTARUS, angelic hell.

Luke 8:32

They come up with a plan, a plan born out of desperation, a plan that probably would not work anyway, but still held for the demons a thread of possibility.

Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and the demons entreated Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission.

Luke 8:33

And the demons came out from the man and entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake, and were drowned.

And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand {of them}; and they were drowned in the sea.

So repugnant was the presence of demons that the pigs, in fear and panic, ran over the cliff.

We have people today who pray for the power of the spirits.

Who seek spirit masters to indwell them.

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We have people today who do not even have the good sense God gave a pig.

Luke 8:34,35

And when the herdsmen saw what had happened, they ran away and reported it in the city and out in the country.

And the people went out to see what had happened; and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting down at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they became frightened.

At the beginning of this encounter the man wore no clothing.

Now he is seated and clothed.

Principle

Jesus dealt with his spiritual problem first, then his social problem.

Application

The greatest help we can offer the world is spiritual, then and only after the spiritual help can we offer social help.

The social gospel gets the order reversed and deludes the gospel of Christ.

Luke 8:36,37

And those who had seen it reported to them how the man who was demon-possessed had been made well.

And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to depart from them; for they were gripped with great fear; and He got into a boat, and returned.

Notice the reaction of the people, *they want Jesus to leave.*

Rather than seek the power of God, they mourned the loss of the profit they would have made from the pigs.

Principle

There are always those who will think more of profit and pigs than their salvation and the Savior.

Luke 8:38,39

But the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him that he might accompany Him; but He sent him away, saying,

Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you. And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

With his faith now in Christ, leading to obedience to the Lord and a desire to serve the Lord, he first wanted to go with them.

But Jesus would not allow him to.

But instead to stay and become a great witness for Christ.

Where once there was evil a light now shined out of darkness.

Jesus and His disciples left those who wanted Him to stay, endured a night crossing of the sea of Galilee, faced the terrible storm, confronted a legion of demons, put up with the rejection of the people of the region to help just one man who needed to be saved.

Principle

There was no limit on Jesus' love, no journey was too far, no difficulty too big.

What are our limits as we now represent Christ as his servants, as his ambassadors, taking the gospel to a lost and dying world ?

One thing more

As He returned to Capernaum, he was welcomed. He was rejected in Gadara, but welcomed here in Capernaum.

God provided, and He always provides for us, the encouragement we need as we serve Him.

E. Stanley Jones said.

"Your Power is either dead or dedicated.

"If dedicated to God you are alive with God and possess surprising power.

"If power is saved up, taken to care for its own ends, it is dead.

"We are living in an age of power but too often is a power that is dead because it is a power not dependant upon God"

The Gospel of Luke 119

In this section of the Gospel of Luke, Luke has presented us with information that authenticates Jesus' earthly ministry.

There should be no doubt that in the mind's of the readers that this Jesus is the Son of God who has come from heaven to earth and is endowed with power.

We now are seeing in Luke 7 and 8 the extent of his ministry in Galilee.

He came to present Himself and the Kingdom to others, many others, not just a select few and while He did call disciples and minister to them His message, His power was for the people and that is true to this day.

In these next two miracles we see this demonstrated. We have in this section a miracle that occurs within a miracle. And two very different people benefit.

One a ruler of the synagogue, one of the VIP of Galilee and the other a woman who would have been considered unclean and an outcast.

Luke 8:40

And as Jesus returned, the multitude welcomed Him, for they had all been waiting for Him.

Quite a contrast to the people of Gadara who just wanted Him to leave.

The one they waited for was now welcomed by them.

God seemed to always provide during the earthly ministry of Jesus a group of people, sometimes just a small group, who welcomed Him and gave Him encouragement and we see that here.

Principle

If God will do that for His Son, He will do it for you His child.

He will always provide someone because we are not to be solitary saints.

Now we can assume he was preaching to the people and in the midst of this an important high ranking Jewish official comes into the midst of the crowd.

Luke 8:41

And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was an official of the

synagogue; and he fell at Jesus feet, and began to entreat Him to come to his house;

Now we will come back to Jairus and his daughter next week but right now I want you to see just three things. He came and worshipped the Son of God. Fell at his feet He sought the power of God not for himself but for his daughter.

He was desperate, his daughter whom he loved was dying. He did not presume the plan of God nor the actions of Jesus.

He wanted Jesus to come with him, but then (according to Mark's account) said that you may lay hands on her, that she may be saved, that she may live.

He may have been helpless, but once he turned to the Lord he was no longer hopeless - he put his hope in the Son of God.

And then put his faith in Christ not presuming upon Christ.

The mood of the request is very significant in that they show that while he recognized the power of God in Christ, he did not demand that the power be used according to his demands.

In these two miracles we see something that is lacking in the church today. A true dependence upon Christ not only depending upon his power but also upon His sovereign use of that power.

We have Christians today who are demanding that God's power be used according to their whims and wishes.

They have assumed an authority that they do not have.

Even when it comes to holding off demons and the forces of evil, Christians today are demanding that God do this and do that.

And that type of demanding is not seen in the New Testament.

2 Corinthians 12:7-9, And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me - to keep me from exalting myself!

Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

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And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Some of you have heard of the Power Team and these strong men put on a display of strength and while they give the gospel they also talk of ripping the face off Satan - and there is only one who has they sovereign authority to do that.

1 Corinthians 15:24, Then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

Principle

It is God alone who has the sovereign authority and power to abolish all other powers, not you.

Application

Our part is to move into dependence on Christ and his sovereign exercise of power.

And now here we have the two people of these miracles who demonstrate their dependence upon the Lord - and in that dependence will be great power.

Luke 8:42

for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying. But as He went, the multitudes were pressing against Him.

And a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and could not be healed by anyone,

The physical condition of this woman was bad enough, but we cannot appreciate how bad it was unless we understand the tremendous social and religious persecution she was under.

She had no control over her physical problem.

She was an innocent but it is on the innocent that religion and legalism so often prey.

The religious crowd would have assumed this was punishment for some past sin

Because she was considered ceremonially unclean she was not allowed to sacrifice, not allowed in the Temple, and her husband would have been forced to divorce her.

Socially she was considered an outcast and only one cast better than a leper.

In the midst of this persecution we are told what she did.

In Mark's Gospel he goes into a bit more detail and gives us a series of aorist participles preceding a main verb.

After hearing about Jesus, came up in the crowd behind Him, and touched His cloak.

For she thought, If I just touch His garments, I shall get well.

She endured or suffered much at the hands of the physicians.

She touched his cloak

Principle

She was on a frantic search to solve a problem.

Principle

Every problem in life has a biblical solution

Every problem in life is allowed by God to bring you into dependence upon His Son Jesus Christ

While her problem was physical it illustrates for us a spiritual problem.

We gain great insight into God's plan when we view every healing miracle as being an illustration of God's power over our diseased spiritual condition.

Her issue of blood for twelve years result in an inability to produce, no fruit, no production of offspring

The unbeliever has an issue of blood that result in no production of fruit spiritually.

Isaiah 64:6, For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy rags; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

The carnal believer lacking the power of God also has an issue of blood preventing production in the Christian Way of Life.

And man can do nothing to help, only hidens and abuses - only the power of the F/HS can turn this around.

The Gospel of Luke 121

But like the unbeliever and the carnal believer, she tried so much and suffered so greatly before she came to the Lord.

A reminder -

We must go to the Lord first, forget human merit, forget what men say they can do for you spiritually, the only real physician for spiritual healing is the Lord.

Yet people continue to seek extra spiritual solutions to their spiritual problems.

We must go to the right person with our problems. She did.

Luke 8:44

came up behind Him, and touched the fringe of His cloak, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped.

Her actions were a result of contemplated thought. But the thought she had was based largely on the false premise of superstition.

That is why by the way the procession to Jairus' house stopped. Jesus needed to deal with this woman's false premise of superstition.

She mistakenly thought that the fringe of Jesus' garment held some power. That is not true, the garment Christ wore had no power in it. It was special, but the power was in the one wearing the garment.

The word CLOAK or GARMENT is the outer robe and the word FRINGE that is mentioned here is more specifically referred to in Matthew 9:20 as one of the four tassels on the garment.

This was a tassel commanded on the robes in.

Numbers 15:38, Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue.

This tassel consisted of eight white threads wound around or braided seven times and then double knotted 8 times, then 11 times, and then 13 times.

The numbers represented Hebrew letters that spelled the phrase **YHWH is ONE**.

Its purpose was to remind Israel of all the commandments of God.

Numbers 15:39-40 And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the Lord, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot, in order that you may remember to do all My commandments, and be holy to your God.

So this woman reached for that which represented the commandments, the very Word of God.

Excluded from the Temple, barred from sacrifices, she reached for the Word, Her faith is in Jesus and in God's Word.

And what happened when she touched the tassel? **and immediately her hemorrhage stopped.**

Now if the story ended there she would end with a superstition that all she had to do was touch the tassel.

So Jesus stops everything to personally confront this woman who was now healed.

Remember also that the crowd did not know she was healed and would have still seen her as an unclean outcast, but that never stopped Jesus from stopping to help the outcast.

Luke 8:45,46

And Jesus said, Who is the one who touched Me? And while they were all denying it, Peter said, Master, the multitudes are crowding and pressing upon You.

But Jesus said, Someone did touch Me, for I was aware that power had gone out of Me.

The power that went from Christ is *δυναμις* a word that always refers to supernatural power.

Romans 1:4 Given by the Father to the Son

Romans 15:13 It is the power of the Holy Spirit

And is now given to us.

2 Cor 4:7, 12:9, Ephesians 3:20, and 2 Timothy 1:7

But always remember the gift is to be used in keeping with and dependant upon God's sovereign omnipotence and according to His will, not our demands.

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Jesus, tossed about by a crowd, bumped and buffeted by many, stops and asks Who touched me.

Basically he said - everyone is touching you

This was a very dramatic moment for this woman, she knew she had been healed.

She would have been grateful for that but Jesus wanted to make sure she was eternally grateful.

Jesus wanted her to move away in her thinking from her religious superstition, move though the Word represented by the tassel on his garment, to a personal relationship with Him.

Do you know where most people are today, back here in superstition, never coming to the Word and never coming to a personal relationship or dependence upon Christ.

History goes through cycles of rationalism, to skepticism, to cynicism, to mysticism.

And while we live in a very technical age we are also in an age of mysticism - techno mystical thinking.

This woman had been so abused by the doctors, society, and religious Judaism that she was skeptical if not cynical, and Jesus would confront her and keep her out of mystical superstition.

Luke 8:47

And when the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling and fell down before Him, and declared in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched Him, and how she had been immediately healed.

Jesus stops and looks around and his eyes rest upon this woman, he approaches her and she comes to him and worships the Son of God and tells him the whole truth, opens herself up to him in all honesty and transparency.

No longer a possibility, no longer the touching of a tassel, no longer a superstitious hope - now a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, her Savior.

Luke 8:48

And He said to her, Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.

Very similar by the way to the new believer who knows he is saved but may takes many months of

Bible class to begin to learn what happened when you believed in Christ.

And He said to her, *Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace*

He called her DAUGHTER showing to everyone around a relationship existed.

No longer an outcast, now a child of the King.

Your faith has healed you.

Faith must have an object and the object of her faith is the one she reached out to touch, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Principle

When you reach out in faith make sure it is for Jesus Christ and what His Cross provided.

Not some superstition, not some human solution, reach out for the one who can solve the problem of salvation and every other problem in life.

God could be saying to us today.

Go in peace and be healed of your affliction.

Summary of lesson

While this woman was helpless she was not hopeless.

You are never hopeless when Christ is present.

Religion is always quick to condemn and slow to offer help.

Religion held no hope for this woman.

Legalism traces every problem to sin without looking at the blessing that can come from suffering.

God does not help those who help themselves.

God helps the helpless.

Take your problems to the Lord first.

While we may be dealt with poorly by those who distort grace we must look beyond man to perfect Son of God.

And as Jesus stopped to respond to the silent cry of this desperate woman we must be sensitive to the cry for help that are around us.

It is when you are at the end of your rope, when all options are gone, when you are desperate, when you seem to have no where to turn that you

The Gospel of Luke 123

are in place to witness the power, the force, the dynamic, of God through Jesus Christ.

In previous verses we saw what happened as our Lord went off to the home of Jairus. How a poor and desperate woman who for twelve years had an issue of blood reached out to the Savior and was healed.

From that miracle within a miracle we saw that Jesus took time to respond to the silent cry of help from that desperate woman.

We were challenged to be sensitive to the silent cries for help that surround us and to take the time, as our Lord did, to stop and help.

But now we see a wealthy man, a ruler of the synagogue, coming to Christ for help in a time of need.

Principle

There is no class distinction where desperation is concerned.

The poor, the wealthy, the unimportant and the V.I.P.s all need what Jesus Christ has to offer.

That was true then - and that is true now.

Luke 8:49

While He was still speaking, someone came[^] from the house of the synagogue official, saying, Your daughter has died; do not trouble the Teacher anymore.

Those who had been standing by at the house come with some bad news, Jairus daughter has died.

But in communicating this tragic information they add a statement.

Here is where they shift from the objectivity of death to the subjectivity of what the Lord could and could not do.

They had assumed the Lord could heal the girl, but had no thought that he could do anything now that she had died.

This is a picture of human limitations placed upon the power of God.

And this pictures what we so often do today.

We go beyond the objective understanding of a situation and try to subjectively figure out what God can and cannot do.

We end up thinking in our own little minds what the will of God, the love of God, the grace of God. The mercy of God, the compassion of God should look like.

In doing this we limit God and we put God into a box of our own making.

And then when God does not act the way we think he should act, we reject.

And we do not only do this with God, we do it also with those who serve God.

We expect a pastor to act a certain way, a teacher to act a certain way, a deacon, a member of the choir, an usher, anyone who serves God and His people and when they do not act they way we have predetermined they should act we reject.

Isn't this what the nation of Israel did to the Lord Jesus, their Messiah, their King?

Jairus, hearing all this, would have been torn between the compassion he felt for the woman Jesus had just healed, and the desire he had to get Jesus to his home as soon as possible to heal his daughter.

We can only imagine how he now felt knowing that his daughter was dead.

Luke 8:50

But when Jesus heard this, He answered him, Do not be afraid any longer; only believe, and she shall be made well.

Only do what? Only believe, the verb form of the word for FAITH. Do not be overcome by fear but overcome fear with faith.

The statement shows that while Jesus *heard* the report, he did not *heed* the report. And then a promise - *she shall be made well*.

He is the Lord who Jairus sought to heal his daughter now giving a promise.

Why should this promise be believed? Because it makes so much sense? Because it is so logical? Because we have seen things like this before so our experience tells us to believe it?

NO - it is to be believed because of the one who said it, the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we put faith in the promises of God and rest in those promises we are really putting our faith in a person, Jesus Christ our Savior and our friend.

Luke 8:51

And when He had come to the house, He did not allow anyone to enter with Him, except Peter and John and James, and the girl's father and mother.

Jesus dismisses the other disciples and the crowd, and now with Jairus and his three closest disciples he goes to the house.

We have the connective *καί* used between each of these men and then a def article used before the *father*.

This binds these three together as a unit.

Peter, James, and his young brother John are often with Jesus when Jesus displays his greatest power and truth.

And here is the first time they were privileged to privately accompany the Savior and see his great power and compassion.

Luke 8:52

Now they were all weeping and lamenting for her; but He said, Stop weeping, for she has not died, but is asleep.

The people who were loudly weeping were paid mourners.

Weeping and lamenting are the word used to describe the activity of those who were paid to attend to the dead and mourn their passing.

Jesus give a direct order.

Stop weeping.

WHY?

The simple answer, the girl died and they were being paid to weep. But then a statement.

She is not dead to stay dead.

Luke 8:53

And they began laughing at Him, knowing that she had died.

The lack of faith that comes from unbelief goes beyond mere disbelief, to ridicule.

They laughed him to scorn. The word means to deride, to jeer, to scorn. And just like we see today, the world laughs - but God always has the last laugh.

Psalm 2:4, He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them.

Application

If you have ever endured the laughs of those who ridicule you for your faith just remember, they laughed at your Lord and also remember, your heavenly Father will have the last laugh.

But now we have those who are inside and outside.

OUTSIDE | INSIDE.

The Crowd | The Parents

The Mourners | The three Disciples

The other Disciples | The Girl

The ones on the outside are the ones seeking the spectacular and the ones being paid to do a job.

Also the other disciples who are not yet mature enough to witness what the Lord will do.

But on the inside, in fellowship with the Lord we see the parents who are there by faith, the three disciples who are ready to learn more of the Lord's power, and the girl, who is in need of the power of Christ.

Inside we see faith, a desire to learn, and need. And that is where the Lord is.

Outside we see those seeking profit and those who seek the spectacular - and just like today, the Lord is not there.

Luke 8:54

He, however, took her by the hand and called, saying, Child, arise!

The words **TOOK BY THE HAND** means to take possession, to control, to take command of - she was in the control of Jesus Christ.

Child arise.

Mark records the complete statement.

The Lord used the Aramaic phrase.

TAL-I-THA KUM, which translates into Greek, *Little girl, I say to you, arise.*

Luke 8:55

And her spirit returned, and she rose immediately; and He gave orders for something to be given her to eat.

The Gospel of Luke 125

The LAW OF CORRESPONDENCE comes into play in this miracle.

What we see in the physical realm the death of this girl, is true of all mankind in the spiritual realm.

As she was physically dead man is spiritually dead.

And yet the Savior hold the solution.

This was a resuscitation.

Resuscitation: To be brought back to life to eventually die again.

Resurrection.

To be brought back to life never to die again.

The Lord Jesus Christ only.

Translation.

Enoch, Elijah, and Church Age believers at the Rapture.

To be alive on earth one moment and face to face with the Lord the next.

Notice also that while Jesus gave her life, she still had to eat.

He then ordered food be brought to her.

This is a picture of salvation and spiritual growth.

How do we grow?

By taking in, digesting, the Word of God.

Christ has given us life, now we need to feast on the Word of God, we need to have a hunger and a thirst for righteousness.

A hunger and thirst that can only be satisfied by God's Word.

Luke 8:56

And her parents were amazed; but He instructed them to tell no one what had happened.

This was not a miracle for the crowds.

More and more often the Lord will extend his compassion, grace and power to those who have faith in him while retreating from those who want only the excitement of a miracle.

Three lessons from this miracle

The Lord Jesus Christ has power over life and death.

John 11:25, Jesus said I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies.

To witness the power of the Lord we must be with Him by faith.

And that faith triumphs over the fears we have and ridicule we face as we live our lives in fellowship with the Savior.

Chapter 9

Luke 9:1

And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons, and to heal diseases.

Prior to sending the twelve disciples out separately (in Mark's account we find they went out in pairs, two by two), *Jesus called the twelve together.*

We see in this the principle of unity.

While they will go out and exercise their ministries separately, they begin by being in unity, together.

This unity is not because they were so much alike or had so much in common.

Quite the opposite in fact.

They were very different in ever social, economic, geographic, and political sense.

But what they had in common was that they were CALLED by Jesus Christ.

He called them together. Just as He has called us together. And it is when we are together with Him that we are prepared in our faith community for the ministries we will have.

We are called into fellowship with Jesus Christ and it is in the sphere of the fellowship that together we are prepared to serve, prepared to minister.

1 Corinthians 1:9, God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

And we see in v 1 that when we are with Him that He gives grace gifts.

And gave them power and authority over all the demons, and to heal diseases.

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We see that he gave them authority over demons and the power to heal diseases.

Their ministry was to reflect the ministry of the Lord's at that time.

In Galilee the people had seen Jesus as one who had the power of God to healed the hurting and the One who had authority of over demons.

For His disciples to go out they would have to have their ministries validated by the same power and authority.

They were to minister as an extension of the Lord's ministry and minister in the same was as He did then.

The word used for authority refers to delegated authority.

Here an authority over unclean spirits or demons mentioned in the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and Revelation.

This was an essential authority that the disciples needed because Satan and the demons had launched a full out attack against Christ and, thus, against his representative the apostles.

But this same divine authority is noT extended to the believer today.

Instead we are told.

Ephesians 6:11, Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

James 4:7, Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Romans 16:20, And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

Even the great Apostle Paul did not have this same authority.

1 Thessalonians 2:18, For we wanted to come to you, I, Paul, more than once, and {yet} Satan thwarted us.

2 Corinthians 12:7, And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me - to keep me from exalting myself.

Therefore, our power over Satan and his fallen crew is though putting on the assets God

provides, resisting the temptations of the Devil, through prayer to the Father.

FAITH -- THE WORD -- THE HOLY SPIRIT --
FAITH DECISIONS -- PRAYER

1 John 4:4, 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.

But these disciples had delegated to them a divine prerogative of authority over the demons.

There would be no demonic interference with their mission.

Luke 9:2

And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God, and to perform healing.

The word SENT OUT is the Greek word αποστειλω which is the verb form of the word for APOSTLE which refers to an official representative.

It was used in Ancient Greek for the high admiral of the Greek navy who personally represented the king and the apostles word was the word of the king.

It is a word that carries tremendous authority with it. And it was a gift and office in the early church prior to the completion of the Bible.

There are no apostles running around today except those who are so appointed by self in arrogance.

Mark tells us that they were sent out two by two. There are three reasons they were sent out in pairs. For their own safety. Many areas of Galilee were dangerous. The robber barons prayed upon the weak.

The story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 illustrates the dangers that could befall a lone traveler.

Then, they went in pairs or encouragement and mutual support. Even today we see the greater effectiveness of believers working together and ministering to each other in encouragement.

Discouragement will come and that is when there is strength in numbers.

For a legal witness.

The Gospel of Luke 127

Jesus refers to the Old Testament law in John 8:17

Even in your law it has been written, that the testimony of two men is true.

And so by sending out the disciples in pairs there were two who would proclaim the testimony of Christ.

Luke 9:3

And He said to them, Take nothing for your journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not even have two tunics apiece.

The list here and the parallel one in Mark differ some but when we put them together we can see that they were not to take an extra staff, an extra tunic. Food, money, or a bag.

This is not a call to poverty, but a call to urgency.

They were to travel light and be quick about their business of proclaiming Christ.

We also have the prohibition against carrying a BAG which is interesting in that normally the word was used for a *bread bag*.

Common in the ancient world.

But the Lord already said, no bread, making the prohibition against a bag for the bread redundant.

But the bread bag was also used by beggars to hold out like the tin cup, so this prohibition is against going about begging.

We also find that the bag was often used by on a traveling rabbis who would go from village to village preaching and then hold out the bag for payment.

This also was not to be done - then or now.

In all this the Lord is going to teach the disciples that He can care for them even when he is not with them.

This is one way to teach Christ centered dependency.

There are many ways the Lord will use to get believers to realize that they can depend upon him.

Sometimes he may send us out with nothing and when he does we will see that as Paul states in II Corinthians 3:5

We are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God.

These disciples would learn that which we must also learn.

that even though absent, the Lord provides for us.

And we can depend upon Him.

Luke 9:4

And whatever house you enter, stay there, and take your leave from there.

This advise was given in light of a problem in Jesus' day with itinerant Rabbis who traveled to the villages and would move from house to house improving their quarters.

If a family invited them to stay, they would stay only until a better offer came along.

Then they would move up to a better home, wealthier hosts, more servants.

But the disciples were not to impose upon the hospitality of many nor accept a more attractive offer once they were settled.

This requirement of the Lord for his disciples has an application to us -

Principle

Be satisfied with what the Lord gives you.

Philippians 4:11-13, Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

We need to develop an attitude of contentment regarding the grace that God gives to us.

If he should give another more grace by way of logistical support, then rejoice for your fellow believer - do not envy them.

Luke 9:5

Now here is the main thrust of Jesus' advice.

And as for those who do not receive you, as you go out from that city, shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them.

The shaking of the dust off the feet was a common custom among the Jews when they would leave the home or business of a Gentile or when they had to pass through a Gentile town or village.

Here the disciples, visiting Jewish villages, were to treat rejection as if the ones who were rejecting were nothing more than Gentiles.

This act of contempt was to be done as a testimony against the unbelief of those who would not receive the message of truth.

God provides the truth, and when rejected the ones who reject do not have to answer to the disciples, but to God himself who provided the truth.

The disciples were to separate themselves from those who rejected the message of repentance.

With evil, human good, human viewpoint, and Satanic systems being so prevalent in our society, the Child of God must be well aware of the need to protect his soul.

This protection includes the correct application of separation which is part of fulfilling the great mandates of loving the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind and loving our neighbor as ourselves.

Ephesians 5:10-11, Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord and having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

The Mission

Luke 9:6

And departing, they began going about among the villages, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere.

The word for PREACH means to make a public proclamation with such gravity, formality, and authority that it must be heeded.

Because of the authority they had been given, they cast out many demons and also, they healed many anointing them with olive oil that was an ancient medicinal treatment practiced in the ancient world.

One principle comes through these instructions of the Lord and the ministry of these disciples.

A principle of urgency. They were to travel light. Stay in one place. Quickly move on when encountering negative volition.

And proclaim the simple message that calls for a decision, repent, change your mind and believe in Christ.

The Lord's Galilean ministry was coming to a close. He is getting ready to go on the Judea. But He wants the area to have one more opportunity to believe so in urgency He sends out His disciples.

And we are under that same urgency today.

A personal urgency to believe in Christ, to make his word the most important priority in our lives.

We may not have the time tomorrow.

The day is at hand.

And an urgency that should be a part of our ministries as we seek to tell others about Christ and His Word.

The uncertainty of unbelief

Luke 9:7

Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was happening; and he was greatly perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead,

The ministry of the disciples quickly spread the message of Christ throughout Galilee.

Eventually the news got to the palace of Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee.

He is called by Mark a king which would be in keeping with Roman chain of command under the Emperor.

Luke 9:8

and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others, that one of the prophets of old had risen again.

This report of what people were saying shows us that there really is nothing new about the New Age.

These people would rather believe in the reincarnation of Elijah than believe that Jesus is the Christ.

The Gospel of Luke 129

Luke 9:9

And Herod said, I myself had John beheaded; but who is this man about whom I hear such things? And he kept trying to see Him.

The Greek text makes this a very emphatic statement.

Whom I beheaded, John, this one was raised.

Sounds like Herod Antipas had been reading too many Steven King novels - he imagines that John has returned from the dead to haunt him.

I think we can easily see that Herod is suffering from guilt over putting John the Baptist to death.

Principle

A lot of very weird religious thinking can develop from guilt reaction.

But notice what the catalyst for the guilt was - the preaching of the disciples.

As the truth is presented those who are negative and rejecting become more hardened, more confused in the confusion of their own thinking.

The Gospel does not allow you to sit on the fence.

The disciples return

Luke 9:10

And when the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done. And taking them with Him, He withdrew by Himself to a city called Bethsaida.

When they returned they gave an account and then the Lord intended for them to have a time of rest together.

They went to Bethsaida which was where Andrew, Peter, and Philip grew up.

The village was located on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee. It would have been a wonderful place for R and R, but there would be no rest.

The multitudes followed Him and He welcomed them.

Principle

It is with Jesus and with others that we are prepared for ministry and service. There should be an urgency about our ministries and

evangelism, we do not know how much time we have left in Galilee.

We serve Christ the way He has determined for this time.

Where as the disciples were given power and authority, God has given us the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Word.

We must be satisfied with what the Lord provides.

We must move on to more positive fields when the message is rejected. Shake off the dust and do not look back

When the Gospel is preached one cannot take a neutral position, it is believe or reject

Even when ministering in the Lord's power, there is a need for physical and mental rest

In Luke chapter nine we see Jesus training His disciples. He has sent them out on a mission trip to show them they can depend upon Him.

This training will continue just as our spiritual training continues and our training is not so much from teaching as it is by testing.

I was once asked if there is an easier way than testing and brokenness to learn the lessons of God, and I am sure there is.

We could study the Scriptures, learn them, apply them, live them.

But we are, like these disciples, pretty thick headed so most often we do not learn as much by teaching as we do when that that we have learned is tested.

Luke 9:11

But the multitudes were aware of this and followed Him; and welcoming them, He began speaking to them about the kingdom of God and curing those who had need of healing.

The miracle of the feeding of the 5000 is the only miracle of Jesus that is recorded in all four of the Gospels.

Luke gives a very brief description of what had happened.

Jesus and His disciples had gotten into a ship and sail to Bethsaida (NE corner of the Sea of Galilee) but the crowds followed them by land and when they arrived they were there.

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Although His intention was to rest with His disciples (Mark is very clear on this point);

Mark 6:30,31, The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.

Matthew adds that another reason for this rest was the death of John the Baptist and Jesus desire to confer privately with His disciples on this tragedy.

And no doubt they had packed some food with them since they were intending to go to a remote place to camp out, to rest.

As the crowds gathered He welcomed them, ministered to them, served them.

We can see the reason for this change of plans in what we read in Mark 6:34 that when He saw the crowds *He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.*

So the people were more important to Him than His own need for personal rest with His disciples.

Notice that Luke tells us he taught them about the kingdom and then cured those who were in need.

The emphasis is clearly on the need the people had to be taught.

But we will also see that in what is about to happen there is a need for the disciples to be trained, not in the big things, but in the small things.

Luke 9:12

And the day began to decline, and the twelve came and said to Him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside and find lodging and get something to eat; for here we are in a desolate place.

In putting the accounts together we can see the progression of what Jesus is doing on this day with the disciples.

From John 6:5-7 we find that early in the day, Jesus asked Philip about buying bread for all these people.

This was a test, and Philip failed. He thought only in terms of the money, or lack of money they had and the inability of human resources.

John 6:6-7, 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.

Philip and the others had just returned from a missionary journey in which Jesus Christ, although not even present, promised and provided everything they need.

Not just one meal but many, over and over again.

Philip and the others had already seen Jesus provide in a very big way.

Let's face it folks, one meal is a luxury.

Anyone can miss a meal (so of us need to).

But Jesus had promised and provided for each two man team as they took the Gospel to the villages in Galilee.

But now Philip faced a smaller problem and did not trust Jesus to fulfill but rather tried to figure out the finances.

Through the day then Philip would have discussed the problem with the other disciples and now towards the end of the day we come back to Luke's account.

Luke 9:12

And the day began to decline, and the twelve came and said to Him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside and find lodging and get something to eat; for here we are in a desolate place.

Jesus was really into His teaching so the disciples figured out they had better remind Jesus of the time and then they offered a solution to the problem of no food for the supper.

And this shows us that they were able to trust God for the big things of sending them on a mission trip but not for a meal pass.

Now Jesus is going to solve the problem despite their lack of faith and trust in Him.

The Gospel of Luke 131

Luke 9:13

But He said to them, You give them something to eat! And they said, We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless perhaps we go and buy food for all these people.

Jesus, who would not command a stone to become bread, so as to satisfy His own hunger, commands His disciples to feed the masses. Jesus, who would not feed Jairus' daughter, but commanded her parents to do so, now tells His disciples to feed this crowd!

Jesus wanted these men to come to grips with their own inability to solve this problem.

He is really pushing them into a corner, *You give them something to eat!*

But instead of looking to Christ the solution, they looked at the problem.

All they had was five loaves of bread and two fish.

Not much - but God does not need much.

We so often do not consider the small things, we end of thinking that God only works big miracles, only is concerned with great things.

But God is the God of small things also.

In Zechariah's day, after the Jews returned from captivity in Babylon, they were preparing to rebuild the Temple.

Some of the old men had been alive before the captivity and had seen the splendor of Solomon's Temple.

And now, they saw the Temple being built out of the rubble of a destroyed city, and it look like a Temple built out of rubble.

They were disappointed, disheartened, and could not see how God would ever bless this mess of a Temple.

In Zechariah 4:10 God addresses the old men: *For who has despised the day of small things? But these - will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel-- these are the eyes of the LORD which range to and fro throughout the earth.*

What do we think about when we see small things?

When we face tremendous problems and all we may have are a few loaves and fishes?

Do we despise the small things or do we realize that a great God can touch the small things of our life and make them great?

Now Jesus is not going to sweep aside the disciple although they are having a crisis of faith.

He is going to use them in His solution.

Luke 9:14

(For there were about five thousand men.) And He said to His disciples, Have them recline to eat in groups of about fifty each.

Now 5000 men could translate into another thousand or so women and children.

He tells His disciples to have them gather in groups of 50 and recline as if ready for a picnic.

Okay - we don't see any food, no catering trucks coming down the road, all we have are a few loaves and fishes (which were not even theirs but came from a boy who was probably on his way to do some fishing when he got caught up in the crowd).

And yet Jesus tells them to get the people to recline as if they are getting ready to eat.

Principle

What the disciples were commanded to do, they had to do in faith. They had to act before Jesus provided.

Application

Are we willing to act in faith prior to seeing what God will do?

Luke 9:15,16

And they did so, and had them all recline.

And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and broke them, and kept giving them to the disciples to set before the multitude.

Jesus did nothing on His own initiative.

He sought the power of heaven in all that He did.

He asks the Father to bless the meal.

Luke 9:17

And they all ate and were satisfied; and the broken pieces which they had left over were picked up, twelve baskets full.

They ended up with more than they started with. Twelve baskets full, one for each of the disciples. God supplies in abundance and he supplies to us individually, in the personal relationship we have with Him.

I believe that we can see from our text that the purpose, the goal of our Lord's dealings with the disciples was to train them in the area of faith. The *Training of the Twelve* was, first and foremost, training them to trust in Him. The means of training the twelve in faith was not so much by *teaching* but more by way of *testing*.

The Lord teaches us to trust Him by commanding us to do that which is beyond our means to do. When you stop to think about it, all of the commands of God are impossible for fallen, sinful man to obey. That is why we must not only be saved by faith, but we must walk by faith.

God uses human *needs* as an avenue for teaching and testing our faith. In the first section of our passage, the disciples had to go forth, trusting in the Lord for their *bed and breakfast*, as well as for their power and authority to preach and to heal.

Whenever we say *We don't have*. We are recognizing our needs, but are we also recognizing the grace, power, and abundance of God.

Human needs will either be viewed as an occasion for faith, or they will become the excuse for our unbelief and disobedience. In the case of the feeding of the five thousand it was the lack of food supplies in hand which seemed to justify the disciples' conclusion that the crowds be sent away, hungry. In what appears to be *pseudo compassion* the disciples urge Jesus to send the crowds away, to meet their own needs. I think that the disciples were disappointed that they could not be alone with Jesus. I suspect that they did not want the crowds at all. This was their compelling reason to do what they wanted to do anyway. Jesus' response indicated that the disciples were wrong. That the peoples' need for food was to be met.

Lacking the means to do something is not necessarily proof that God does not want us to do what requires these things, nor that we should not attempt to do them. Having no food was not justification for sending the crowds away

hungry. How do we know when we should or should not do something? I believe that the ultimate answer is that we are always obliged to act to meet the needs of others when those needs are valid and vital, and when we have a clear imperative from God to do so. In my opinion, the Great Commission is a clear imperative from God to meet the need of a dying world to hear the good news of the gospel.

God's provisions come at the point of our inadequacy. The Lord did not provide for His disciples or the crowds until their human resources were expended. That is why Jesus did not feed Jairus' daughter, but He did feed the crowd. Our insufficiency, our inadequacy is the point at which divine power is provided, and usually not before.

Some needs are more important than others, and thus they must be prioritized. Some needs are not genuine needs at all. Satan, for example, fabricated a *need* for Adam and Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit so that they could be *like God*. Other needs are real, but of lower priority than others.

Jesus needed food during his temptation by Satan but food was not as important as resisting Satan. In the feeding of the five thousand the disciples learned that the meeting of their physical needs was to be subordinated to meeting the needs of the crowd for food.

God often chooses to use little to create much. Jesus could have created a sumptuous meal out of nothing, just as He created the world ex-nihilit, from nothing. But Jesus chose to feed the five thousand by multiplying the sack lunch of the little boy.

There is a frequently employed *little/much* theme in the Bible. Elijah used the little bit of flour in the widow's container, and it become, over time, much. God used the little thing of Moses' staff to become the instrument through which much was done. Gideon's army was whittled down to a more little group of 300 so that God could bring about a great victory through them. David was but a little shepherd boy when he killed Goliath. On and on it goes.

The Gospel of Luke 133

Conclusion

Jesus taught the Twelve an important lesson for their future work: no situation is impossible if you take what you have, give it to God with thanksgiving, and share it with others.

Matthew 7:31-33, So do not worry, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or What shall we wear? For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

One last thing to see - How many baskets?

Luke 9:18

And it came about that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, Who do the multitudes say that I am?

That question continues to be asked today.

Who do people say that Jesus is?

I have always appreciated C.S. Lewis answer to that question as he taught his students at Cambridge University said.

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people so often say about Jesus. That is I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I do not accept his claim to be God. That is one thing we must not say.

A man who was merely a man and said the things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher.

He would either be a lunatic - or else he would be the Devil of Hell.

Either Jesus was the Son of God or else a madman or something worse.

Luke 9:19

And they answered and said, John the Baptist, and others say Elijah; but others, that one of the prophets of old has risen again.

The disciples tell him what the popular opinion of the day is regarding Him.

And they told Him, John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the prophets risen from the dead -- **No Consensus of man's Opinion**

When man, by man's opinion and viewpoint, attempts to define Jesus Christ he concludes everything from the absurd to the trivial.

Go out today and ask that question and you too will get answers based on human viewpoint.

Especially in our New Age society, you will hear that Jesus was a good man, a wise teacher, the forerunner of us all and what we all can become.

One major cult even teaches that Jesus was the brother of Satan.

Mark Twain said, *the problem is not that we know too little, it is that we know so much that is not true.*

Luke 9:20

And He said to them, But who do you say that I am? And Peter answered and said, The Christ of God.

The YOU is a plural pronoun.

He asks this to the entire group of twelve disciples, *Who do you say that I am?*

In this the impersonal, objective declaration of what others say is set aside for the personal, specific understanding of who you say that Jesus is.

In these two questions we see the questions that the servant of God continues to ask a lost and dying world.

Who is Jesus, according to the World?

And then, Who do you say He is.

This second question brings the issue from the corporate to the personal.

Not merely what is said, but what do you believe?

Peter, bold and often brash, is the one to speak up. As spokes man of the disciples he make a personal declaration.

Peter states: *The Christ of God.*

The title CHRIST is the Greek for the Old Testament title Messiah.

This name means the one anointed by God. It implies divine election and appointment. It set a mission and divine power for that mission. It includes divine protection in service. It looks at the three fold office of Christ.

134 The Gospel of Luke

In the Old Testament prophets, priests, and kings were anointed to God's mission and Jesus is the prophet, the priest, and the king of kings.

Peter knew the Old Testament and by saying that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, he knew that he was the one who came from God and is God and will save His people. **This was not a recitation, but a personal confession of Peter's convictions about the identity of Jesus.**

Luke 9:21

But He warned them, and instructed them not to tell this to anyone,

The reason for this strange-sounding command is to be found in our Lord's second statement. As God's Messiah, He must be rejected by the leaders of the nation, be crucified, and then rise from the dead three days later (v. 22).

If the disciples were to make known the identity of Jesus, it would only hinder His rejection and crucifixion, something which must take place. This was a prophetic necessity, for the Old Testament prophets foretold His suffering and sacrificial death (Isaiah 52-53). It was a theological necessity, for the sins of the world must be atoned for.

So this not telling will be only for a time.

Jesus already alluded to this in Luke 8:16-17

For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open,

Luke 9:22

saying, The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

Jesus Christ capitalizes upon the recognition of His person to go on to teach about His work.

Christ tells the disciples that because he is the Messiah, because he is the Son of Man which is emphasis on his humanity, four things must happen.

He must suffer many things

He will be rejected by the religious leaders

He will be killed

He will rise again from the dead after three days

In each of these statements the Lord uses an infinitive to show that these are results of his mission.

This is like saying to the disciples, *you have seen my mission, you now know who I am, and this is what is going to result.*

It is at this point that Mark records Peter's great objection to this prophetic plan even to the point that Jesus states that Peter is motivated by the Devil himself.

Luke is not directed by the Holy Spirit to include that dialogue in his narrative.

Luke 9:23

And He was saying to them all, If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

William Lame, one of the world's noted scholars on the Gospels, says of this passage that in it.

"Jesus stipulates that those who wish to follow him must be prepared to shift the center of gravity in their lives from a concern for self to a reckless abandon to the will of God.

"A sustaining willingness to say NO to self in order to say YES to God."

The goal or the objective is stated first.

If anyone wishes to come after Me, **let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.**

We have to see this a something that is after salvation.

Peter and the others have already believed in Christ and now the instructions are not regarding salvation but the Christian life

If and some will wish to follow Jesus.

This is a present tense verb phrase, this is the ongoing attitude that we should have, a desire to follow our Lord Jesus Christ.

But the means of doing this will be expressed in aorist tense verbs, indicating the importance of both our ongoing attitude or desire and the moment by moment decisions we make.

The Gospel of Luke 135

Principle

Even when you get out of fellowship, even when you begin to think your plan is better, your overall desire in life should be to have what God wants for you.

The expression of that desire is made in the decisions we make to come and keep on coming back to Jesus Christ.

Those decisions are made in specific points of time under pressure, in the midst of problem, and at the point of testing and temptation.

But in application you might say that you have a desire to have God's highest and best and when you have cause to pause and think about it there is no question, but just like Peter who argued with the Lord regarding the Cross, the right choices are not always there.

So the Lord describes in these statements how to make the right choices.

And in His grace it is not a matter of just do this or do that, if that was the case the New Testament would be real short - one statement.

Follow Jesus.

But he goes beyond that to encourage, to challenge, and to explain.

First, the three positive statements of v 23.

Deny self: The word DENY means to forget one's self, lose sight of one's self and of one's interests.

This verb is an aorist, mid, imperative.

So it is a point in time decision that we make by faith to follow the Word of Christ, and the mid voice tells us it is beneficial to us when we do this. As a command Jesus makes this a condition of the abundant life he has to offer.

If we want what he has for us, we cannot be preoccupied or focused upon self.

Take up your cross daily: The verb here is aorist, act, imperative and looks at specific situation where we have a choice between the saving of self and the Christ Centered Life.

The Cross was an instrument of death and the analogy is to death of self.

The people hearing this did not think of the Cross as we do knowing historically it was the place of our Savior's sacrifice.

They saw it as a morbid reference to a horrible death.

Consider for a moment where this faith in Christ might lead you?

Could it lead you to death?

For many Christians through the ages that has been the case.

There are some who have had to literally pick up the stake upon which they would die and carry it to the place of execution.

Follow me.

Here the verb tense changes to a present tense, the previous right faith decisions having been made, the outcome is now to follow Jesus Christ. The word for FOLLOW is not merely to follow someone in a physical sense.

But to follow them as to travel the same road they traveled. The idea is one of accompanying another, fellowshiping with them as you travel the same road.

Then three negatives in vv 24-26

Saving your life will result in losing it

Gaining the whole world results in losing one's soul

Being ashamed of Christ results in Christ being ashamed of you

Jesus stipulates that those who wish to follow him must be prepared to shift the center of gravity in their lives from a concern for self to a reckless abandon to the will of God.

A sustaining willingness to say NO to self in order to say YES to God.

And what follows in the next four verses gives us the **reason**, the **motive**, the **means**, the **influence**, and the **opportunity** to do just that.

Say NO to self and YES to God.

But this is only for those who have made that decision and continue in the attitude of wanting to follow Jesus Christ.

Those who know they fail, know they sin, know that what they want costs far more than they can ever pay.

And comes only through their increasing dependence upon Jesus Christ.

136 The Gospel of Luke

Those who are willing to echo the words of David when he said: (Psalm 25:4-5)

Make me know Thy ways, O Lord; Teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth and teach me, For Thou art the God of my salvation; For Thee I wait all the day.

Or the words of Paul who declared: (Philippians 3:13-14)

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Luke 9:24

For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

The Paradox of saving the inner life: We begin with a coordinating explanatory conj, γαρ, For you see. This explains the challenge of verse 23. The word WISHES is a repeat of the word WISH in v 34 but here it is subjunctive mood which indicates that some Christians will desire to save their way of life over submission to Christ.

LIFE is not βίος, physical life, but ψυχή, the inner life of the will power, the reason, and the emotions.

SAVE IT is an aorist act infinitive which views a result.

Which looks at a result of an attitude and the choices that are made from that attitude.

LOSE IT is from a Greek word that could be translated *ruin*.

This is the outcome of the life lived in self interest, and self promotion.

The result of the choices made when attempting to save your life.

Principle

The sum total of a life lived for self is not gain but loss.

And this becomes more than a paradox, it becomes a tragedy.

Application

Just think of the people who have set out to live life their own way, constantly sticking up for number one, and what do they have in the end: LOSS

Just think of the times you have tried to plot your own existence, to save your inner self not giving way to all God has for you.

What is the result?

LOSS.

But there is now for you as a Christian an alternative.

Put the interest of your very life, the inner man, into the hands of Jesus Christ

Jesus in these passages is dealing with the factors that influence the ongoing decisions we as Christians make.

EGO ---- EMOTION ---- EVIL

all influence the decisions that bring destruction.

EVIL was dealt with when Jesus said, Get the behind me Satan.

EGO and EMOTIONS are dealt with as we deny self, as we take up the process of accompanying Jesus Christ, as we lose ourselves in Him.

John the Baptist said it best in John 3:30

He must increase, but I must decrease.

Luke 9:25

For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?

This statement is again said in the context of belief.

This is not salvation, although it would be applicable.

But it is for us who have been saved.

Here the Lord steps back from the high motive of Grace in what He has done for us to a more basic motive in life - profit.

Is there anything profitable in material possessions if the inner life is at conflict with the one who has saved us?

NOW IN Mark 8: 37 the statement here in verse 25 is followed by the statement.

For what shall a man give in exchange for his inner life.

The Gospel of Luke 137

This reminds us that we do not have the price to pay to purchase that abundance of life Jesus wants us to have.

Illustration

If you go into a store in America and try to buy something with Mexican pesos, you are not going to get what you want. Pesos are not the coin of the realm.

You may pick something out, something you really like, but you can't have you.

You see, you want something that you don't have the currency to pay for.

And only a great God does for his children what they cannot do for themselves.

Spiritually we may want a healthy and sound soul and an abundant inner life, but we do not have the coin of the realm.

Only Jesus Christ can paid the price and he did, now our lives must be lost in him.

He paid a debt he did not owe for those who owed a debt they could not pay.

Luke 9:26

For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Looks ahead to the place of rewards.

For the church, the bema, and for Israel the banquet a the end of the Tribulation and beginning of the Millennial reign.

Luke 9:27

But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.

And then a promise, to Peter, James, and John.

These three who would ascend with Jesus to the mountain and see Him in His transfigured glory.

The challenge for you today from our passage.

What do you know about Jesus Christ, what do you know about who he is and what he has done?

What you know about Him will create a responsibility that is also a great opportunity to follow Him.

Won't you begin to follow Him today

Commenting on the grace of Jesus Christ in becoming man, Charles Spurgeon said,

"How great a stoop from the height of His throne to a dunghill!

"How wonderful that power which occupies itself in rescuing beggars, all befouled with the filthiness in which they lay.

"For He lifts them out of the dunghill, not disdainingly to search them out from amidst the base things of earth that He may by this means bring to naught the great ones, and pour contempt upon all human glorying.

In our passage we are going to see glory, but not the glory of man, the glory of our Savior Jesus Christ.

In the previous passages the Lord spoke of his coming in the glory of the Father.

After the rejection, the suffering, and the death, there would be resurrection and glory.

He explained that suffering precedes exaltation.

Of course all Peter heard back in Mark 8 was that his friend, Jesus, was going to suffer and die he ignored that Jesus said that he will rise from the dead.

Now in our passage he is going to ignore something else Jesus said regarding His suffering.

Like many of us, Peter had selective hearing and heard only so much and then, what is always worse, acted upon the partial information he heard.

Luke 9:27

But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.

Now Jesus has shifted from the public offer of the kingdom to a more personal presentation of salvation to all mankind.

Those who take this verse out of context really get confused.

Some even go so far as to say there are those who were present when that was said who are wandering the earth today, not having died but having celebrated a couple of thousand birthdays.

But they forget an important principle.

138 The Gospel of Luke

The King in glory is the kingdom. The king is not separate from the kingdom.

Jesus, king of kings and lord of lords, is the kingdom.

The verb HE SAID is λεγω and is present tense indicating he said this repeatedly in the message to the multitude and the disciples.

The pronoun *who* which is τινες limits this promise to just some of those standing there.

And the promise stated: *who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.*

Jesus Christ had declared upon coming to Galilee that the presence of the King meant the presence of the kingdom.

Mark 1:15, And Jesus was saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.

Why is the Kingdom of God at hand?

Because Jesus Christ the King is present.

And when His Resurrected Glory is seen by a few who are present, they will get a glimpse at the glory of the divine, the God-man, Jesus Christ as he will be forever.

Luke 9:28

And some eight days after these sayings, it came about that He took along Peter and John and James, and went up to the mountain to pray.

Three disciples were selected for this special privilege.

Peter, James, and John (James and John being brothers).

Prior to this it was Peter, James, and John who went with Jesus and witness the raising of Jairus's daughter from the dead

Later we will find that Peter, James, and John would again be privately with the Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane on the eve of the crucifixion.

Now why just these three?

One reason is that as seen with Peter, they knew enough of what the Lord was saying to have some real questions about why he had to suffer and die.

If you do not know anything about a given topic you do not even know enough to know what you don't know.

But these three had some doctrine, but not enough, so the Lord was going to let them see that suffering and death are a mere prelude to eternal glory.

The high mountain is probably a portion of Mt. Herman which rises to an attitude of over 9,000 feet.

In v 32 we are told that Peter, James, and John took a nap after arriving to the mountain.

So while they were sleeping, Jesus was praying. Just as they would later do in the garden of Gethsemane.

Luke 9:29

And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing became white and gleaming.

And it was while he was praying that he was transfigured.

The word TRANSFIGURED found in Mark 9 is μεταμορφωω is where we get the word metamorphosis.

So this is called the TRANSFIGURATION.

It means to change into another form, more than just an outward change.

For a brief time the Lord's earthly body was changed into what it would eternally be in resurrection.

In Philippians 3:10 Paul looks back at the resurrection of Christ and states.

That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

The resurrection of Christ and our resurrection is a display of the tremendous power of God.

But right now Jesus is resurrected, seated at the right hand of God.

And since He is there, He has sent the Holy Spirit as our comforter and the Holy Spirit in us is the source of the power by which we live.

So the resurrected power of Jesus is the very power of the Holy Spirit in us.

The Gospel of Luke 139

And His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them.

The glory of Christ's resurrection body at the transfiguration was a preview of the uniform of glory of the winner, the mature believer in eternity.

All believers are destined to have a resurrection body like the resurrection body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:49, And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

But the overcomer, the believer who presses the advance to maturity in Christ by faith and truth will have a uniform of glory.

Revelation 3:5, He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments

And just like with these three disciples, our Lord will always give us a glimpse, often through the Word, of what is in store for us not only in time but in eternity.

All the confusion, all the misunderstanding, all the worry and concern *should* have been laid to rest when Peter, James, and John saw the glorified Christ knew that this is what their friend Jesus would be forever.

Luke 9:30,31

And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Both Matthew and Mark write that Jesus, Elijah and Moses were talking but only Luke gives us the content of the conversation.

Luke 9:31, They were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Moses was Israel's deliverer and lawgiver
Elijah was the defender of God and the prophet of future restoration.

The combined ministries of these two significant Old Testament men would have revealed the suffering, death, and future glorification of Christ.

Moses knew what it was to be a deliverer under pressure.

Elijah knew what it meant to be rejected and to suffer.

Both knew of the future kingdom of the King of kings.

The disciples on the other hand had been confused and rejected even the thought that Jesus must suffer and die.

Luke, stating that they talked with Christ about His death that was about to be accomplished makes this a very exclusive conversation.

No one else understood what Christ would have to face and what was ahead through death for Him.

They then ministered *encouragement* to Christ that could come from no other source.

We must recognize that the God-man, Jesus Christ, was in need of encouragement just like we are.

And we also must see that that encouragement was provided just like it is provided to us.

God wants us to endure towards the goal of our destiny and in that endurance he provides encouragement.

Encouragement comes from three sources.

From the Word of God as it is being taught.

God the Holy Spirit knows your needs at every given moment and God the Holy Spirit leads gifted communicators to provide encouraging teaching.

From the Word that is resident in your Soul.

As you have learned the Word and it is yours, you being it into memory center and encouraged by it.

This is a promised ministry of God the Spirit.

John 14:26, But the Comforter, 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.

From others who encourage you with God's Word, promises, doctrines, and principles because they have been where you must go.

1 Samuel 23:16, And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David - and encouraged him in God.

140 The Gospel of Luke

Jonathan knew his father Saul and knew very well the wrath, anger, and hatred that would be directed to David.

Principle

God our Father provides sources of encouragement to us.

This need that we have is in no way a weakness, it is a strength we have as we press the advance towards God highest and best.

Luke 9:32,33

We next see Peter's response, waking up and seeing all this.

Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him.

And it came about, as these were parting from Him, Peter said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah-- not realizing what he was saying.

The reason Peter spoke up was because he really had nothing to say.

We are even told at the end of verse 33 that Peter really did not know what he was saying.

Then he calls Jesus *MASTER*, but what he has just seen should have told him that Jesus was much more than a teacher or rabbi.

His next statement is, "It is good for us to be here."

The verb in the sentence is present tense, indicating that Peter wanted to stay.

It was *so good*, but only in a comparative way *καλος* (butter here than down there), that he did not want to leave.

So his suggestion is to build three tents, one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah, and they would never leave the mountain top.

Let's analyze what Peter had to say.

From Mark's account of this we find that Peter was exceedingly afraid, which is understandable. But his fear should have lead him to silence, not answering when not asked a question. This was

like nervous banter that was not required, needed, or right.

Peter was right in that it was good to be there but the good should have been the encouragement he received.

As Moses and Elijah encouraged Jesus, this scene should have encouraged the three disciples.

When Peter wanted to stay there he was rejecting reality.

A reality he had been taught, that Jesus must be rejected, suffer, and die before he is raised in glory.

Peter was having a mountain top experience, and he did not want to go back to the lowlands of reality.

But the whole purpose of this journey was to show Peter and the others that reality must be faced but eternal glory is the sure result.

In Peter's desire to stay on the mountain top he parallels many believers today who go for the spectacular and do not face reality.

They want the glory without the problems of life.

They want to hid away on a mountain top and never are willing to bring their relationship with Christ into the arena of reality.

Peter, also in his nervous banter, rejected the supremacy of Christ by suggesting that they make three tents, one for Christ, one for Moses, one for Elijah.

But Jesus Christ is above Elijah and before Moses and we must never put others on His unique level.

When were are told that Peter said these things to Christ a present tense verb is used to indicate that he just kept on talking and talking - so the next verse tells us how he stopped talking.

Luke 9:34,35

And while he was saying this, a cloud formed and began to overshadow them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud.

And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!

The cloud was formed to shield Peter, James, and John from the divine glory of God which no mere man can look upon.

The Gospel of Luke 141

The voice that came out of the cloud was the voice of God the Father.

This is my Son, the beloved, you hear him.

Notice who was present.

The Lord Jesus Christ was present in glory

Two Old Testament saints were there, Moses the Law giver and Elijah the prophet who will return prior to the Kingdom.

Illustrates the full scope of the age of Israel.

But also Moses whose body was never found and Elijah who was caught up or raptured.

So by analogy, the church age believers, those who have died and bodies are removed at the rapture and those who are alive and caught up together with Christ in the heavens.

And the three disciples, Peter, James, and John

This composition illustrates the illustrates the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.

Remember what Christ said.

There are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.

And in that Millennial Kingdom of Christ that will last for a literal 1000 years Christ will be there in glory, the believers who have died in ages past will be there, along with the Church Age believers who died and those alive at the Rapture, the coming of Christ for His church, and there will be men and women who by faith endured through the tribulation and will behold the glory of the Son of God as did these disciples.

While we see that Peter misspoke, we can also see that he learned something very valuable from this journey.

2 Peter 1:16-18, For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased

18 and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

Years later Peter remember this event, and was able to share with others the promise that Jesus will come to established His kingdom and in one form or another, all who have put their faith in Christ, will be there.

Peter asks - *are you ready* - and we need to ask today, *are you ready*?

Only a great God can do for His children what they cannot do for themselves.

Jesus had taken Peter, James, and John to the mountain and there, they saw a prediction, a preview, a promise of the King and His Kingdom.

The other nine disciples had been left behind to wait.

We are going to see this morning that they did not wait.

What the disciples could not do.

Luke 9:37

And it came about on the next day, that when they had come down from the mountain, a great multitude met Him.

Jesus and his three closest disciples leave the glory of the mountain top and return to the lowlands of reality.

And while the mountain top gave these disciples a glimpse of glory, they like us, do not live on mountain tops.

We live in a very real world with real opportunities to trust the Holy Spirit and apply God's word.

Now God's word to the other disciples had been to wait - but instead of waiting they got tried to cast out a demon and failed and they ended up in arguments with the religious leaders as we find in Mark 9:14-16 the parallel passage.

Luke 9:38-40

And behold, a man from the multitude shouted out, saying, Teacher, I beg You to look at my son, for he is my only boy, and behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly screams, and it throws him into a

convulsion with foaming at the mouth, and as it mauls him, it scarcely leaves him.

And I begged Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not.

The controversy that arose among the disciples and the crowd and the religious leaders is now explained.

We see here a father in great distress, hurting for his son who is possessed by a demon.

During the incarnation of Jesus Christ and his earthly ministry, Satan launched an all out attack on the Son of God which is why we read in the Gospels of so much demonic activity even among the children who Jesus loved so much.

In his distress the father brought his Son to Jesus but Jesus was not there, he was on the mountain.

So he asked the disciples to help his son - they tried but failed.

The word used for *could not do it* can be translated WORTHLESS, they were *worthless* when it came to helping this boy and his father.

Luke 9:41

And Jesus answered and said, O unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you, and put up with you? Bring your son here.

To whom did the Lord say this ?

His disciples.

Not the man but the disciples.

So this indictment is not against the man or the crowds or the lawyers, but his own disciples.

Oh unbelieving generation

How long shall I be with you

How long shall I put up with you

The Lord knew he would only be with them for yet a short time and as he looked at them and heard of what they tried to do, apart from him, he wondered how long he could put up with them.

I really think this was said with a tremendous groan and even a shaking of the head of our Savior.

Principle

When Jesus called his disciples unbelieving this was not unbelief regarding salvation, they were saved.

But it was unbelief for function in Christ Centered Life.

Back in Mark 6:7 Jesus sent the twelve out to minister in his name and gave them power over the unclean spirits.

But that was a commission for that specific tour of Galilee.

He sent them out to do what he had been doing and sent them with His mandate.

But now they are trying to do this a part from Christ, while he is away.

They are presuming that they can help this poor man and his son.

They were motivated to do this our all the noble virtues, love, pity, compassion, sympathy.

They really wanted to help the man and the boy.

But they lacked faith dependence upon Christ.

They had compassion but no power, They had love but not the Lord, They had opportunity but not the omnipotence of God, They had sympathy but not the Savior,

They were doing what they did, a right thing out of noble virtue, but doing it without faith dependence upon Christ.

They wanted to help but just like us they forgot that the only true help, the only help that is going to last and really make a difference must centered upon Christ.

There may be someone you really love and want to help and maybe they have a need God wants you to fill, but a part from you first being dependant upon Him there is nothing you can do that will last.

Can you give a thirsty man A drink of cold water?

That is a small thing.

But Jesus said that even that must be done in dependence upon Him.

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.

The Gospel of Luke 143

That time of need may be a time in which you so much want to help another.

How are you going to do it.

With your own human power putting nothing more than a temporary band-aid on a problem.

Or can you depend upon Christ to use you to really help the ones you love.

Luke 9:42

And while he was still approaching, the demon dashed him to the ground, and threw him into a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.

At this point in the story there are four parties present and represented.

The boy.

A picture of what Satan wants to do to mankind.

He hates that which God created and in his vile hatred wants man to suffer and feel the horrible pain he inflicts.

The Disciples.

Standing there helpless, wanting to do something, having even tried.

But worthless when it comes to helping this boy.

The disciples picture the world with its solutions, a cold cup of water, but not Christ.

A temporary solution but not the Savior.

Like the world today with its words of encouragement that are hollow of anything eternal.

Even like many Christians today, wanting to help the ones they love but trying to do so apart from Christ.

The Father.

A man in a desperate situation, having sought help and finding none.

Realizing his lack of faith and yet asking for help with his faith.

This is the one we should seek to imitate.

A man who has a need but not a mere need for himself but for another.

Not a man of great faith and doctrine but a man willing to say, I believe, help me to believe even more.

A man desperate for help and crying out to Christ.

The true glory of God is born in the parched soil of our destitution rather than the fertile ground of ability.

It is when we are unable that God is able.

When we say no way, he says my way.

The glory of God and his majesty shines forth from our weakness and then His strength in us.

And then there are believers who are bold enough, who have the guts to go to the Lord and say that they are not much, but that they depend upon him for help, the Lord will always be there.

The fourth party present is Jesus Christ himself.

He is the solution, he is the one who can give help in a time of need.

Notice the first part of the next verse.

Luke 9:43a

And they were all amazed at the greatness of God

The miracle of casting the demon out of the boy effected the crowd in a positive way, they saw and were amazed at the greatness, the majesty of God.

What the Savior must do.

Jesus takes this opportunity of amazement to further teach on what He must do.

Now the disciple in His absence had tried to do a miracle and failed.

Early of course we noted they had been sent out and part of their commission had been to have power over demons.

But that was then and this is now.

In His absence they tried to claim this power for themselves and failed.

They sought greatness rather than humility.

So now the Lord will again teach them how He must even humble Himself.

Luke 9:43-45

And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. But while everyone was marveling at

all that He was doing, He said to His disciples,

Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.

But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they might not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.

We have an interesting statement here that results from the fact that while Jesus was predicting His death on the Cross, His time had not yet come.

While they heard these words they did not perceive them or we might say understand them.

They would remember them and would soon see them come to pass.

But for now the Holy Spirit did not give them understanding.

And we see like so many even today who do not understand God's words, they were afraid to ask what this all meant.

This inability to perceive should have led them as it should lead us to a dependence upon the Holy Spirit to illuminate the word and interpret the word to us.

Apart from the Holy Spirit's work we cannot understand the great things that God is doing.

What the disciples must do

Luke 9:46

And an argument arose among them as to which of them might be the greatest.

Isn't it amazing that here in the midst of them not being able to help the boy possessed by a demon, they are now arguing among themselves who will be the greatest disciples?

You would think that they would learn humility and dependence but just like so many Christians today, these are lessons not learned the easy way, only the hard way.

Even after Jesus will teach them about humility and child-like faith they will carry on this argument.

All the way up to the Last Supper where early in the evening we find in Luke 22:24 that.

here arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest.

Luke 9:47,48

But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side, and said to them, Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for he who is least among you, this is the one who is great.

The Wheaton College Bulletin once included the statement.

The undisciplined is a headache to himself and a heartache to others and is unprepared to face the stern realities of life.

Discipline in the Christian's life comes from the Holy Spirit and when we give ourselves to the Holy Spirit we see that we will follow Jesus in every way.

Today in our passages we are going see those who follow Jesus and those who oppose Jesus.

Luke 9:49,50

And John answered and said, Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to hinder him because he does not follow along with us.

But Jesus said to him, Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you.

John was the youngest of the twelve disciples and here he is the one who speaks up.

Two issues of involved in this statement.

Someone other than the twelve disciples were casting out demons but doing it in the name of Christ.

Remember that earlier the nine disciples who waited in the lowlands during the transfiguration tried to cast out a demon and could not.

They had not depended first upon the Lord through prayer and apparently, this other man had.

Seeing this, the disciples hindered him because he was not one of the twelve

The Gospel of Luke 145

The word HINDER in the Greek means to *forbid*, or to *restrain*.

So here the disciples have taken it upon themselves to tell someone else what kind of a ministry they may or may not have.

The basis for this arrogance is that they were the ones who were following Christ and this other was not.

The sad part of this is that it was their very closeness to the Lord, the favored position they held that became a cause for arrogance rather than humility.

They were the ones who closely followed Jesus Christ and who were called by Christ to be his closest disciples.

Yet this privilege was perverted to be a position of pride rather than humility.

They were the ones who were right, they were doing what God wanted them to do in following Christ, they were in the perfect will of God but instead of having appreciation they had arrogance.

The parallel to today is the believer who is fulfilling the will of God, who is learning the word and growing in faith and yet rather than have an appreciation of what God is giving to him and what God is accomplishing in his life, he becomes arrogant in his favored spiritual position.

God gives us His grace and we become arrogant and then express that mental attitude sin by attempting to tell others how they should do what they do in the name of Christ.

Rather than arrogance we need appreciation and then to manifest that with.

Patience.

Realizing every believer is not at the same stage of spiritual growth.

Flexibility.

Realizing that while some things are real important other are not, some are non-essentials.

Tolerance.

Even when others are clearly wrong we must remember that we are not the right hand of God's justice, we are not the agents of discipline.

Kindness.

Ephesians 4:32, And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

The final journey begins

Luke 9:51-53

And it came about, when the days were approaching for His ascension, that He resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem; and He sent messengers on ahead of Him. And they went, and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make arrangements for Him.

And they did not receive Him, because He was journeying with His face toward Jerusalem.

Now here we have a direct contrast to the ones who were casting out demons in Jesus' name.

These Samaritans would not even lift a finger to extend hospitality to Jesus and His disciples.

The reason is that they were going to Jerusalem and for hundreds of years the animosity between the Samaritans and the Judean resulted in a refusal to help in any way those traveling through each other's countries.

Goes back to 1 Kings 12:26-33 with Jeroboam's fear that if the people of the Northern Kingdom so much as went to worship in Jerusalem that they would abandon him and his kingdom (classic instance of over-think).

The Samaritans and Jews had been feuding for centuries, but Jesus would not participate in the fight (John 4 and 8:48-49; Luke 10:25-37).

Luke 9:54

And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?

Here we again see John and now his brother James seeking retribution.

John wanted the ones who did miracles in Jesus' name to be hindered, how much more retribution would he desire for those who rejected Jesus and His disciples.

146 The Gospel of Luke

They may have been thinking of Elijah (II Kings 1:9-12) when in the same region, called down fire from heaven on the enemies of God.

We may call John *the apostle of love*, but Jesus called him and his brother *Sons of Thunder* (Mark 3:17).

Luke 9:55,56

But He turned and rebuked them, [and said, You do not know what kind of spirit you are of] for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went on to another village.

This was exactly the instruction Jesus gave to His disciples when He sent them out to minister, if rejected, just shake the dust off your sandals and more on.

Now in these first two episodes we see Jesus further training the Twelve.

In this chapter we have seen Him training them to know Him, to trust Him, to follow Him, to depend upon Him, to have child like faith and now to love others.

FIRST.

To love even those who may not be a part of your select group.

We know from Luke 10:1-2 that Jesus had at least seventy others who followed Him and whom He sent out to minister in His name.

These were not part of the twelve but the twelve must not, as we must not, ever develop an attitude of exclusivity.

SECOND.

We also see that Jesus was teaching the twelve to even love those who reject them.

Oh we may want fire from heaven to come down and consume our enemies but instead Jesus shows us to love them by not seeing vengeance, but instead, putting them into the hands of God.

These verses speak very strongly to us to day.

We have seen that there are those who are opposed to our Savior, we have seen that there are others who we may not even know who truly follow the Lord and now we come to those who want to.

Perhaps like many here today, you want to follow your Lord, your Savior, Jesus Christ, the one who paid a debt for you that He did not owe because you owed a debt you could not pay.

Luke 9:57,58

And as they were going along the road, someone said to Him, I will follow You wherever You go.

And Jesus said to him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

The Issue of Security: What kind of security to desire.

It is said that significance and security are two things in like that mankind desires more than all others.

But in following Jesus Christ all our security and significance is in Him and dependant upon Him.

Look at the next man who comes to Jesus.

Luke 9:59

And He said to another, Follow Me. But he said, Permit me first to go and bury my father.

This is an invitation Jesus only extended to the twelve disciples. This is a great honor, but the man, rather than follow Jesus, has something more important.

Luke 9:60

But He said to him, Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.

In order to understand the Lord's response we have to understand what the man meant when he asked permission to go and bury his father.

First of all, his father was not dead.

If dead according to the customs of the day, the body would have been buried immediately.

So presume that his father was ill and near death and the man desired to care for him but I don't think Jesus would have responded as he did if that was the case.

More likely, the man wanted to wait until his father died so that he would have his inheritance.

The Gospel of Luke 147

Then he would be willing to follow Jesus.

Our dependence is in the Lord not in any inheritance and further more Jesus is the heir of all things and as we follow Him we will one day inherit the Kingdom of God.

Romans 8:32, He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

1 Timothy 6:17, Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

Our DEPENDENCE is on the Lord and our INHERITANCE is in the Lord

Luke 9:61

And another also said, I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.

But Jesus said to him, No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back (plow crooked rows), is fit for the kingdom of God.

Jesus tells the man to not look back.

When Elijah called Elisha to follow him as the next prophet of Israel, Elisha asked if he could go say good bye to his family and Elijah permitted it.

But here we have the Lord saying in sense that that was then and this in now and there is an urgency to following the Lord now.

The urgency was because of the impending Death of Christ on the Cross.

What is our urgency today?

What should make us hope that we will never look back?

Is there any urgency to our mission today - yes!!

Because not one of us can see into the future and see what lies ahead.

But whatever the future holds Jesus is already there.

Now doesn't it just make more sense to put our trust, put out faith, put our dependence on Him, rely on Him for our inheritance and not look back.

Warren Weirsbe said of these passages.

“Three men called Jesus *Lord* but did not do what He told them to do (6:46; Matt. 7:21-27). When he heard of possible hardships, the first man would not deny himself. The second man was concerned about the death of his father: he should have taken up his cross, died to self, and followed the Lord. The third man had his eyes in the wrong direction and could not follow Christ. The conditions for discipleship are given in Luke 9:23”

If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

And these three men failed to meet that condition. Their emphasis was *me first*. As it so much today. No wonder the laborers are so few!

Chapter 10

Now we are going to examine three questions.

1. What would you consider to be the greatest privilege?
2. In what do you find the greatest joy?
3. Where is your security?

Psychology tells us that trying to answer three questions are the driving force in much of much of what we do.

The search for **significance**, the search for **happiness**, and the search for **security**.

As the Lord sends out the seventy disciples to minister in cities (Samaritan and Gentile) that he will come to as He travels from Galilee to Judea, having set His face like flint to Jerusalem and the Cross, he commissions them for service.

The high and important service to the King.

Luke 10:1-16 falls into four divisions.

Verses 1-3 – Jesus’ mandate and the seventy

Verses 4-9 – Jesus’ methods and the seventy

Verses 10-12 – Jesus’ instruction on responding to rejection

Verses 13-16 – Jesus’ rebuke of rejecting cities

Review of Chapter Nine

We noted that Luke 9 is a portion of the Gospel in which we see Jesus training the twelve.

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And did they ever need training. But so do we as disciples of Jesus Christ.

In that chapter as Jesus came down from the Mt of Transfiguration we that even those who want to follow Christ lack in four areas.

Their lack of power – reflected in their inability to cast out the demon

Their lack of unity – reflected in their arguing over who was greatest

Their lack of compassion – reflected in their desire to torch a Samaritan town

Their lack of commitment – as seen in men's reasons for not immediately following Christ

The first words of verse 1

After this ...

show the close link between the sending out of the seventy and the preceding context.

The Lord's instruction and training of His discipleship and now the sending of the seventy to witness for Him.

Jesus training of men was not limited to the Twelve.

Others followed Him and learned from Him.

Now seventy of these men are to be sent out to the cities.

When Jesus sent the twelve out it was because he was leaving Galilee and would give the villages of that region on last chance.

We will see in our passage that the last chance was ignored.

Now He sends out seventy to cities - larger cities, that he will visit over the next few months as he goes through Samaria and the cities east of the Jordan and Judea.

Notice I said *cities* - mentioned no less than six times in the sending of the seventy and yet when He sent the twelve the term city is mentioned only once.

These men would go to metropolitan areas and prepare the way for Christ by preaching the Gospel.

And when we understand that we can understand the figure of speech the Lord uses and the instructions He gave.

Luke 10:1

Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others (other than the twelve), and sent them two and two ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.

They were trained, the Lord commissioned them and sent them, and he sent them out in teams of two.

Principle

Two are more effective than one.

We see the constant principle of team ministry in the New Testament and in general in the Old Testament .

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor.

For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.

Luke 10:2

And He was saying to them, The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

The Lord used three figures of speech, they are harvesters of the crop, they are lambs, they are laborers (v 7).

Previously the Lord has said there were few who would believe, many are called, few are chosen.

But here the indication is that there are more willing to believe than there are those who will take to them the message.

Reason for the difference.

Cities rather than villages and Samaria, east of the Jordan, and Judea rather than Galilee.

We see that he tells them to pray for harvester and since it was said to them, to be willing to go when the Lord sends you - we often pray for others to do something but the Lord may use us to answer our prayers.

Luke 10:3

Go your ways; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.

The Gospel of Luke 149

One thing I have never seen is a lamb with claws and big teeth. They are not offensive aggressive animals. They are totally dependent upon the shepherds even when in the midst of a pack of wolves.

Sheep easily panic and they freeze in the face of danger. One thing that is positive, they are usually too terrified to run.

And we do not need to run but can depend upon the shepherd to protect us.

Normal wolves eat lambs and yet here these lambs are sent to feed the wolves.

And we could extend this out to say that if the lambs did not have the food to feed the wolves (the Gospel) they would get eaten alive.

Luke 10:4

Carry no purse, no bag, no shoes; and greet no one on the way.

In the urban environment into which they are going there is no need to take along the extras.

Also they are to depend upon God to provide in each place they go and He will lead them through His provision or by not providing.

By telling them to *greet no one on the way* indicates that they have a destiny and they are not to be distracted as they press towards the cities in which they are to minister.

They were to reach people *en mass* because the time is short.

Many must hear the message and so there is instructions not to deal with the individuals but to get the message to many in the cities.

Let's say you were a soap salesman and you were on your way to a TV studio to do an infomercial but along the way you stopped to tell five people about your great soap.

Well, five would hear but five million would not.

As we saw last week, there is an urgency in what Jesus and His disciples are to be doing and there is that same urgency for us.

Luke 10:5,6

And whatever house you enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

And if a man of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him; but if not, it will return to you.

They are to bring peace to whatever home they visit.

And if they enter a home where there is not peace, that is not to change them. They will reap from the peace that they sow. Their attitude and action of peace will return to them.

Luke 10:7

And stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house.

They were to use the place they were to stay as a base of operation for mass evangelism.

They were to eat, drink, sleep there but their ministry was in the streets and the market places.

Moving takes time and they were not to take time away from their ministry.

Luke 10:8-11

And whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat what is set before you; and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, The kingdom of God has come near to you.

But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say,

Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.

These verse look at the urgency of the ministry.

Too often we can get caught up in a ministry that is going no where and when that is the case, move on.

Illustration

I once took a course in selling and I will never forget what one top salesman said.

He told the class that his objective was to go out and eliminate the ones who did not want to buy his product. When someone said *NO* he said *GREAT* because that moved him on to those who would say *YES*.

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God the Holy Spirit is preparing the hearts of those who would believe and our job is not to persuade the negative but to seek and find the positive.

Now as we look at Jesus sending the seventy we can begin to answer the first question.

Where do you find significance?

These seventy men were significant in the very ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth.

They were sent to save, commissioned by the king, given a mandate to minister, given taught how to tell others, promised provision, and assured of results.

What a grand privilege!

Yet no more so than the honor and privilege that we have to take the Gospel of Christ as His ambassadors to a lost and dying world.

And yet we will see that even that is not the great honor and privilege we have.

There is a greater significance that we have and yet we so often ignore it.

Luke 10:12,13

I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

Here is a hint to what is to come.

Chorazin and Bethsaida are very Jewish villages and Tyre and Sidon are very Gentile cities.

Jesus tells them that if He had done what He did in these Jewish cities in these Gentile cities they would have repented long ago - *WHY?*

Because the Jews were distracted looking for a king after their own making and rejected their Messiah who came as a lamb and not a lion.

Luke 10:14,15

But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment, than for you.

And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades!

The subject of my Master's Thesis.

Capernaum, the resting place of Nahum, had more opportunity than any city in which Jesus ministered.

More disciples were from there, He spent more time there than any place else during His public ministry, more miracles, more parables, more messages - yet in the end, for the most part they rejected and lost the honor they could have had.

This helps us add to the answer to our first question.

Where is your significance, your honor?

Is it in merely receiving what God has for you or is it in something more, is it in knowing God and His Son in a personal way?

Luke 10:16

And then further comfort to the seventy and to us.

The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me.

So not be shocked by rejection, if anyone rejects the Gospel you give remember that you are the messenger.

The true rejection is not of the messenger but the message and the message is of a Savior Jesus Christ and the Creator, God the Father.

They rejected Him didn't they?

Now the Seventy return.

Luke 10:17

And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.

Now we begin to answer the second question.

In what do you find your greatest Joy? What makes you happy?

As the seventy returned they expressed great Joy in the power they had delegated to them by the Lord - *even demons are subject us, in Your name.*

Remember that it was the *in Your name* part that the disciples who were failing at casting the demon out of the boy in Luke 9 had forgotten.

There is great joy in seeing and experiencing what we have in Christ.

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We have great power, great confidence.

Who of us has not had great happiness in seeing a prayer answered?

In seeing God use us?

In seeing God's plan perfectly unfold around us?

I hope you have that but our Joy does not end there - to make it end there like many Christians do today is to have the focus on what God gives to us rather than what he has done for us.

Jesus does not reject the joy that they have but will encourage it and yet take it further.

Luke 10:18

And He said to them, I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.

This does not mean at that moment but rather that the authority given to Him and now through Him given to others will defeat Satan - Jesus in His humanity is seeing the power of God over Satan.

Luke 10:19

Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall injure you.

Let's not take this as a sanction to test God by going out and playing with snakes and scorpions.

That is as wrong as what Satan wanted Jesus to do in testing God in the temptations of Matthew 4 when he beckoned Him to jump off the highest pinnacle of the Temple because, after all, God said that angels would hold up the Messiah keeping Him from harm.

What this verse tells me is that there is a destiny that God has for me and for you and as we follow Him, walking by faith in the Holy Spirit, we will be kept from harm in this the fallen devils world.

That should make you feel pretty secure which is the answer to the third question.

In what do you find your security?

In being so skilled as to not step on a serpent or scorpion or in trusting God for your safety, your security, your destiny?

Isaiah understood this and in the depths of his depression said (Isaiah 38:14)

**Like a swallow, like a crane, so I
[whisper in fear]; I moan like a dove; My**

eyes look wistfully to the heights; O Lord, I am oppressed, be my security.

Not power, not circumstances, not what you have or do not have, not the economy or world peace - the Lord will be my security.

But now a statement which answers all three questions.

Luke 10:20

Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.

What should be our greatest source of Joy, what should make us more happy than anything else?

That we are saved - our names are written in the Lambs book of life forever.

Initially, the disciples were caught up in their relationship with the world, that in Christ's name they had power over even over the spirit world. Jesus told them that they should be rejoicing in their relationship with God.

Their names are written down in heaven.

The Lord has sent out the seventy disciples to minister in the cities (Samaritan and Gentile) that he will come to as He travels from Galilee to Judea, having set His face like flint to Jerusalem and the Cross, he commissions them for service.

The high and important service to the King.

The statement in verse 2, *The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few*, is explained The only way that many can be harvested by the gospel is for many to be sent out, covering a great multitude of people. The city is the focus of the disciples' efforts because reaching many is the goal of their mission.

The emphasis on reaching the cities with the gospel also helps us understand our Lord's instructions not to greet anyone on the road.

The emphasis of our Lord on the cities also explains why the disciples were not to move around from house to house

The command of the Lord which prohibited the disciples from taking any provisions with them also makes sense in the light of the goal of reaching the cities.

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Luke 10:21,22

At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and intelligent and didst reveal them to babes. Yes, Father, for thus it was well-pleasing in Thy sight.

All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

The Lord Jesus had abundant joy through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord Jesus had great joy in the salvation of men.

The Lord Jesus had great joy in the sovereignty of the Father, which resulted in His revealing His salvation

The Lord Jesus further rejoiced because it was the Father's *good pleasure* to accomplish salvation through the Son.

Luke 10:23

And turning to the disciples, He said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see,

The word see is βλέπω which looks at more than just seeing, but to see in the light or to see clearly.

So these are they who not merely see the Savior, many had done that in these three and one-half years, but they see and they understand and they go from that and believe.

They are said to be blessed or in a blessed state, blessing in their salvation and personal (a very real personal) relationship with Jesus and as a result they see clearly.

Luke 10:24

for I say to you, that many prophets and kings wished to see the things which you see, and did not see them, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them.

The Lord then goes back to the saints of the Old Testament, prophets and kings, important people.

But they just saw in shadows what these disciples were seeing face to face.

One cannot read the Psalm and not realize that these saints of old longed for a time when they would see the prophecies of God fulfilled.

When they would see the one whom God would send to be the salvation of mankind.

Psalm 14:7, Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD restores His captive people, Jacob will rejoice, Israel will be glad.

But while that was good for these disciples to be in the presence of Christ on earth, and that was greater than the prophecy of Christ, we have something even better.

1 Peter 1:5-10, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (salvation #3, glorification)

6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7 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;

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,

9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation (here salvation #2) of your souls.

10 As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry,

The prophets knew enough to know that a generation was coming, an age in which the believe would receive a maximum outpouring of the Grace of God and we are that generation.

And this brings it together, we rejoice with joy inexpressible in that we can believe, by faith, in Jesus Christ.

That joy is linked to what we have in the unique spiritual life of the Christian, something the Old Testament Saints long for, the disciples did not

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ask for, something Jesus has and that which we have, the permanent indwelling of God the Holy Spirit.

Remember what Jesus said in Luke 10:21 *At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit. And we too, today find our Joy in the one God has sent, the Holy Spirit who indwells you.*

Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, Galatians 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace.

In four verse we find that our Joy is linked to our faith in the Holy Spirit.

Acts 15:52, And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Romans 14:17, for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 1:6, You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

Romans 15:13, Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In what do you find honor or significance, in what do you find joy, in what do you find security?

Our names are written down in heaven, and Jesus is now there to secure for us a place, and the Holy Spirit indwells us.

Our Love our Joy our Peace - our significance, our happiness, our security.

We have all that God has for us, let us rejoice in the God of our salvation.

Luke 10:25

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

The Jewish Lawyers were those who worked for the religious leaders.

Their job was to give interpretations of the Mosaic Law.

From their position alone we can see that their approach to their relationship with God was one

of Law rather than Love, one of gain rather than grace, and one of merit rather than mercy.

Warren Wiersbe says of this passage.

"Like some theologians and Bible students today, Jewish rabbis enjoyed debating the fine points of doctrine; and this lawyer (a student of the Old Testament law) wanted to hear what Jesus had to say. We get the impression that the man was not seeking truth, but was only trying to involve Jesus in a debate that he hoped he would win. The lawyer proved to be evasive when it came to facing truth honestly and obeying it."

Since this man is a lawyer Jesus takes him back to the Old Testament Law and we find that the man does know the Law.

Luke 10:26

And He said to him, What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?

And he answered and said, (Deuteronomy 6:5) you shall love the lord your god with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and (Leviticus 19:18) your neighbor as yourself.

This is rather remarkable. Out of all the hundreds of Old Testament Laws, this man cuts through the details and states that which is most important.

You may recall from other studies of the Gospels that Jesus will tell another lawyer, when He is interrogated at the Temple prior to His death, that these two commandments are the most important of all the Law and that the entire Law turns or is fulfilled in these two commands.

Love God and then Love others and you will live in life and in eternal life.

The word for LIFE found here in the Greek New Testament which is ζοο and in the Hebrew of Leviticus 19:5 which is *cha-yah* both mean more than just to live and breath or have biological life.

These words look at a quality of life, a meaningful life, a life that is full of all the good things God would have for us.

And this relates to the original question the man asked.

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Not merely how can I have or enter eternal life but how can I inherit or have the inheritance of eternal life.

He wants more than just to be saved, he wants all that God has for him both now and in eternity - which is commendable.

Luke 10:28

And He said to him, You have answered correctly; (Leviticus 18:5) do this, and you will live.

And Jesus tells him just how correct he is at this point. He quotes also from Leviticus 18 and tells the man that if he loves God and loves his neighbor he will have that exception, supernatural quality of life forever.

And it would be great if the story ended there, but it does not.

Luke 10:29

But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, And who is my neighbor

That is a very disappointing statement. This man, because of his *law* background, sees a need for justification or vindication or commendation of self.

Romans 3:20, because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight;

Galatians 2:16, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.

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

And that is exactly what we see here - this man who can quote the words of love for God and for others, because he wants to get himself into the picture, because he was not satisfied to be justified by God and grace wanted to justify himself turns love into law.

What the man should have asked is *how can I do this?*

He so accurately quotes the Old Testament passages that cut through all the Law and emphasizes the Love of God and then wipes it all out by getting involved in the legal issue of who is and who is not one's neighbor.

It is this type of thinking, however, that is a stumbling block, a distraction from grace, even to the Christian today.

There is an accurate understanding of the Word

There is an accurate understanding of what God desires of us

But there is distraction in the application of this
The distraction comes as in trying to understand the minor points we miss the major issues

The major issue is that God loves us and we are to love God and then reflect His love for us to others - not who are the others!

We end up arguing over words

1 Corinthians 2:4-5, 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.

1 Corinthians 4:20, For the kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power.

Not only is it important it is to see that salvation is by faith, and not by keeping the law; but also to recognize that once a person has been saved, he or she can depend on the Spirit to help fill their hearts with love.

Jesus in his grace answers the question with a parable.

Luke 10:30

Jesus replied and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went off leaving him half dead.

The road from Jerusalem to Jericho descends about 3,000 feet in about 17 miles.

It is a road that is full of steep grades and switchbacks and was an ideal place for robbers to prey upon unsuspecting victims.

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The fact that the man is traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho would indicate that he was a Jew.

We find that robbers attack him, strip him of his clothing, beat him and leave him to die.

Luke 10:31

And by chance a certain priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

One would think a priest would be very good at loving God and loving others but here the priest, who no doubt knew as much about the Law and the commands to Love as did the lawyer who was listening to this story, made a point to get avoid the helpless man.

Luke 10:32

And likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

Levites, who assisted the priest, were more itinerant in their ministries. They too would have well know the command of the Law to love God and love others and would be expected to help fellow travelers in need.

But this Levite also made a point to avoid the helpless man.

2 Timothy 3:2, For men will be lovers of self

1 John 3:18, Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

Luke 10:33

But a certain Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion,

Now in contrast to the priest of Israel, the Levite of God, we have a man from the country of Samaria.

The Samaritans were scorned by the Jews because of their mixed Jewish and Gentile ancestry. And Jesus specifically uses a Samaritan in the story because while a Jew may consider helping another Jew, no Jew would ever think of helping a Samaritan and yet here, in the irony of the parable, a Samaritan will stop and give aid and comfort to this helpless Jews.

Luke 10:34,35

and came to him, and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

And on the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return, I will repay you.

Notice what the man did to help.

Came to him where others avoided him

Bandaged up his wounds, got down in the dirt and dust with him and cleaned the wounds, wiping away the blood, getting into the wound to help the poor man

Poured on the wounds oil and wine to help heal and clean.

These were valuable commodities and yet the Samaritan used them to help the man

Put him on his own donkey, he had to walk but knew the man could not. Took him to an inn, took care of him through the night. Paid for the lodging. And then promised to pay for whatever else is needed.

Now at any point he could have stopped helping and would have done far more than the priest and the Levite were willing to do.

But instead he went the extra distance in his love.

Here you have the lawyer asking who is my neighbor, and would have argued that a Samaritan could ever be considered a neighbor of a Jew and yet hearing a parable about a Samaritan helping a Jew - unbelievable!

And a perfect illustration of the love going beyond the mere words, beyond the impersonal, to the personal extending of one's self in the labors of love.

Remember what Paul said in I Corinthians 13:1-3

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove

mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

The only profit that can ever come from love is when it is given away.

Instead of asking *who is our neighbor*, we should ask *who can I be a neighbor to?*

The point is simply that our neighbor is anybody who needs us, anybody whom we can help.

Jesus then asks the telling question.

Luke 10:36,37

Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers hands?

And he said, The one who showed mercy toward him. And Jesus said to him, Go and do the same.

There is no doubt that the lawyer understood the point of the parable and the issue of mercy.

But the understanding, the knowing, the knowledge does not mean there is application.

At the Last Supper Jesus gave his disciples and us a new commandment.

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.

By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

Love without labor is lost.

A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another, just as I have loved you - and they will know you are Christians by your love.

We have a short paragraph to examine this morning and yet it reveals a truth that is something that is so vital to our church we must listen with utmost care.

We are going to look at service, our Christian service, when, where, and how?

Luke 10:38

Now as they were traveling along, He entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home.

This is Luke's first mention of the Martha and Mary so he does not indicate the closeness that Jesus had with this family.

He tells us that Jesus is traveling and arrives at Bethany and the home of Mary and Martha, sisters of Lazarus.

John 11:5, Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

This family was close to Jesus and Jesus was close to them.

So extra biblical sources tell us that Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were childhood friends of Jesus.

Martha is mentioned at v 38 as the one who extended the invitation because she was the older of the two sisters.

Luke 10:39

And she had a sister called Mary, who moreover was listening to the Lord's word, seated at His feet.

Both sisters welcomed Jesus to their home, but in addition to the welcome, Mary listen to the Lord sitting at his feet.

Profile of two women

Mary wanted to listen to the Lord Jesus Christ, her friend. Martha wanted to feed the Lord so she headed for the kitchen.

Mary wanted to be fed by the Lord so she sat at his feet. Mary's first thought was to be with the Lord.

Principle

You are where you are because that is where the Lord is.

Mary's priority was the Word of the Lord, and listening must precede any service.

Luke 10:40

But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, Lord, do You not care that my

sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.

PROFILE OF MARTHA.

Martha desired to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

She emphasized service in her life, production, Christian service and ministry

But Martha is distracted by her service

The distraction is not by sin or evil but by service.

Here is Jesus in her home but she is miserable because of her distraction.

Principle

You can be with your Lord, in the presence of the Savior, and be miserable under distraction.

Martha is very busy, very involved, doing much, but totally distracted in her Spiritual Life.

The word translated *distraction* means to be drawn away.

And she was *drawn away* by that which would seem very legitimate, service for the Lord.

While she was serving and serving for the Lord, she was not with the Lord and that would have been the better part.

God's plan for the Christian is the grow and to serve Christian service is always a result of our relationship with the Lord and our Spiritual Growth, never, never the means of Spiritual Growth.

Now here is were we see the inversion of learning and applying which is applying without learning about grace go from distraction to arrogance.

You cannot hear what others are saying when you are doing all the talking. Martha gets preoccupied with service and ends up being rude.

The word means to *suddenly break in* and be in a state of agitation, being upset, being rude.

Here is a friend of Jesus Christ's who wants to serve Christ and yet ends up critical of what Jesus Christ is doing or not doing.

One thing I know, when our service is a result of our growth and guided by the Word and empowered by the Holy Spirit, our attitude will be one of joy and not complaining.

I know that because I know how the Holy Spirit works His work in us.

She says to the God of the universe who has come from heaven to earth to save mankind that he does not even care She complains that she has to do all the work herself

She wants Him to tell another believer what to do Yet what she is doing is not necessary.

She has taken ownership of a project that is not a part of God's plan She is busy in the kitchen, preparing food for the one who took a few loaves and fishes and fed 5,000

Principle

When we serve apart from our personal relationship with Christ and the Holy Spirit, we can find ourselves doing the unnecessary, complaining about it, and wanting God or the pastor or someone to tell others what to do.

Now I imagine that the angels in heaven stopped cold in their tacks as they heard a lower creature, a human being, criticizing the Lord or lords, the King of all kings, the Son of God, Jesus.

They no doubt braced themselves for all the wrath of God to pour forth and yet, instead, they were to learn a lesson of grace.

Luke 10:41

But the Lord answered and said to her, Martha, Martha, You are worried and bothered about so many things;

There are a lot of things in life to worry about, there are even many things in our Christian service to worry about, if we were to let ourselves worry about them.

But there is nothing that should ever bother us to the point of distraction because we know that God is in control.

I remember when I taught on adversity and stress and we learned that while adversity in life is inevitable, stress is optional, I expanded this verse to read - *You are in the mist of so much adversity but you have turned so many things into stress within your soul.*

Not to recognize the worries of this world is to live in denial but to turn them into that which bothers you, that which bothers you to the point of taking inappropriate action, to turn the adversities of life into stress in the soul is also denial, denial that God is in control.

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And where do we seem to see this most often?
In our Christian Service right here in the local church.

Luke 10:42

but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Martha could not relax in her service to the Lord, she was worried and bothered about so many things.

But Mary had the right priority, sitting at the feet of Christ and learning what he had to say.

He came in and sat down and Mary pulled up a chair and sat right at his feet.

Welcome Lord, what do you know - *everything*.

Principle

Food would only last for a while BUT what Mary had with her friend, her Savior, Jesus Christ, would have to say would last forever.

Principle

When it comes to the eternal scheme of all things really only one thing is important because only one thing lasts forever and that is our relationship with our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now Martha has a decision to make. Either run off crying and pouting or get straightened out.

And we find from the gospel of John that she is responsive to the Lord, she takes the criticism of Christ, and she becomes a devoted follower.

What part have you chosen?

Does your service, you ministry come from you love for the Lord and His love and grace towards you?

Or have you chosen a part that will lead to arrogance, criticism, hurt feelings on your part and on the part of others?

Mary chose the best part, to sit at the feet of her Lord, and from that would come wonderful service.

It was Mary of Bethany that anointed Jesus with costly ointment just prior to His death.

She served Him, she served others, because she had first sat at the feet of the Lord of Glory.

David Livingstone once wisely remarked.

"Jesus Christ is the greatest master I have ever known.

"If there is anyone greater, I do not know him.

"Jesus Christ is the only master supremely worth serving.

"He is the only ideal that never loses its inspiration. He is the only friend whose friendship meets every demand.

"He is the only Savior who can save the uttermost.

"We go forth first knowing Him, in His name, in His power, and in His Spirit to serve Him."

Chapter 11

C.S. Lewis said that he prayed not so that he would change God but that God would change him.

Luke 11:1

And it came about that while He was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.

The request is not to be told what words to say but how to pray.

The disciples wanted to know the mechanics of effective prayer, what the pattern should be.

So we should not think this is prayer that has any magical words to it but rather a prayer that shows us how to approach the Father in prayer.

The Model Prayer.

Luke presents five parts of prayer

Luke 11:2-4

And He said to them, When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.

Examples or patterns for our prayers

Father, hallowed be Thy name.

In the Old Testament the God of Heaven was always seen as the all-powerful creator so here

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recognition of God is made, He is in Heaven, He is omnipotent, He is creator.

Hallowed be Thy name.

This is an imperative verb that is commonly translated *sanctify, or make holy*. We make holy the name of God in our faith and our humble submission to Him.

Thy Name.

To the Old Testament Jews the name of God was set apart as Holy, it would not be mentioned out loud. Or it would be replaced by a more simple title like Adonai.

To make the name of God holy or to sanctify it was to pay tremendous respect and honor to God.

Most Old Testament Jews would be aghast at how easily society today throws around the sacred name of God.

Thy kingdom come.

Notice, it is the Kingdom that is anticipated.

The application in this prayer looks to the coming of the kingdom according to God's perfect time and perfect will.

Our application can be to any prayer of request, we pray the desires of our heart, never contrary to the revealed will of God in the Word of God, and yet put the matter by faith in His hands - Matthew in his record of this prayer adds *Thy will be done*.

Give us each day our daily bread:

This is better rendered, *Give us this day our bread for the coming day*.

In our society we value independence yet here is a prayer of dependence.

God has given us what we have for this day and we now depend upon Him for the next day.

We may also apply what the Lord said in Matthew 4:4

Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

The Word of God is bread or manna from God.

God wills that we have His Word, not just for the needs of the moment but for the unknown needs of tomorrow.

So we can pray that He will give us today what we will need for tomorrow and He knows our needs for the coming day.

Principle: We can depend upon Him for today and tomorrow

And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

This, along with the statement of Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

This has led some to think that forgiveness is withheld or given based upon our performance of graciousness to others.

But we must not think of this as a condition of God's grace but rather a stumbling block we place in our own path as we approach the grace of God.

The final request: *And lead us not into temptation.*

This is very similar to what the Lord will tell the disciples to pray when they are in the garden on the night of His arrest.

Mark 14:38, Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

In times of strong spirit we must anticipate times of weak flesh and pray to the Father that as he leads us His leading will lead us away from those things that would be temptation for us.

God never tempts us, but God does lead us if we allow Him to and this is a prayer that asks Him to lead us in paths of righteousness.

Now let's put these five patterns of prayer together.

Recognition of the POWER and the POSITION of God.

Father, hallowed be thy name.

Recognition of the PLAN of God.

Thy kingdom come.

Recognition of the PROVISION of God.

Give us today our daily bread.

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Recognition of the PROBLEM we put in our own PATH to grace.

as we forgive others

Recognition of the PROTECTION of God on His children.

Lead us not into temptation

JESUS IS GOING TO TAKE ONE OF THESE and amplify it, the PROVISIONS of GOD

The parable of persistence

Luke 11:5-8

And He said to them, Suppose one of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him; and from inside he shall answer and say, Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything. I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

In this parable, as in all parables, one central idea is being communicated.

We are not looking at our friendship with God, we are not looking at God's attitude to us.

The one point the Lord is trying to get across is persistence in prayer.

Prayer has three parts that result in a fourth part.

Prayer Preparation

Prayer Persistence

Prayer Pursuit

And the Provisions of God

Now why should we persist in our prayers?

Remember the statement of C.S. Lewis? *He prayed not so that he would change God but that God would change him.*

From eternity past God has known our prayers.

But we persist in prayer so to put a fine point on our prayers.

Have you ever been praying about something or for someone and as you pray, the more often you pray, you find that your prayers change and come more and more into line with what God wants rather than what you want.

Psalm 37:4, Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart.

How can God promise this? Because as we delight ourselves in Him and part of that delight is to communicate with Him, our desires change and become His desires for us

And we have a promise of this in the next verse -

Promise of persistence

Luke 11:9

And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened.

Asking, seeking, knocking, finding.

In this passage the Lord gives us three instructions and then three promises regarding the mandates.

Ask and it shall be given - for everyone who asketh receiveth.

Guidelines for asking, Part of Prayer Preparation.

Ask in Christ's name, John 14:14

Ask in faith, James 1:6

Ask according to the will of God, I John 5:14

Ask and keep His commandments, I John 3:22

Ask for the good (Divine Good) things, Matthew 7:11

God already knows what we should ask for, Matthew 6:8

We can ask amiss, contrary to the Word, James 1:6

The Promise is that when we ask according to the revealed guidelines, we will receive.

Seek and you shall find - and the one seeking finds.

This is part of Prayer Pursuit.

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The word SEEK is often translated DESIRE and this desire to see our prayers answered is part of prayer pursuit.

We are to seek first the kingdom of God, Mat 6:33

The Christ Centered Life. Seek that which brings Christ to the forefront

Seek by faith, Romans 9:32

Seek the things that are above, Colossians 3:1

Seek the things that belong to Christ, Phil 2:21

When you have a desire that desire becomes a priority in your life.

We are to seek that which God provides in grace and in His answers to our prayer.

Seeking [desiring] then means to diligently look for the ways your prayers can be answered and the way your prayers are answered.

The responsibility of prayer pursuit establishes some principles for us in our prayer life.

Prayer pursuit falls into two procedures.

Pursue the prayer itself. If you pray for wisdom then expose yourself to that which wisdom will come from, Bible class. If you are praying for a good grade in a class then study, pursue that which will make the prayer a reality. If you are praying for growth in your church, then go out and invite people to church. Evangelize and witness to the unbeliever. If you are praying for financial stability or increase, then make a budget and stick to it.

Look for a better job, or get more training or prepare for another field of work.

Principle

Too often we pray and then drop it. We do not explore the ways we can pursue our prayers.

Second area of pursuit is to persevere in the answers to prayers. We may pray for that better job with more pay and then reject an opportunity for training or education that may lead to a better job.

Some have called this part of prayer pursuit the *assembling of the answers to prayer*. God will often answer prayers by giving us the parts to assemble.

Principle

We often pray for the end result and fail to see how God provides the means to get to that end result.

The third instruction is to knock and it shall be open to you OR to the one knocking it shall be opened. This is part of our Prayer Persistence.

Knocking is the persistence that comes when you keep on pursuing prayer.

I am sure all of us have stood at a door knocking to be let in, knowing someone was home but the TV or stereo blaring and no one hearing us.

What do we do?

We keep on knocking.

This is not knocking to be heard in prayer.

God hears our prayers.

This is the persistence in our prayers.

Too often we pray for a change of circumstances rather than a change in character to meet and deal with the circumstances.

As we pray about the matter our prayers fall more in line with how God will answer our prayers.

We may often pray again and again about the same thing but do we pray the same prayer?

I hope not. Our prayers should change and conform more and more to the will of God.

How many prayers have ascended to the Father for a change in character to meet the circumstances.

Prayers for wisdom, patience, help and comfort in a time of need and God answers the prayer.

And God provides many things that can be assembled to answer those prayers but if we are thinking in only one way, thinking that only one thing given by God can meet our needs, we may never see the answers He gives.

Too often we lack this persistence in our prayers.

That lack of persistence and consistency was the problem in II Timothy.

2 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.

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There perhaps is no greater tragedy that befalls a believer than to ask of God and have God answer and then have that believer reject the answer of God.

And what will be there when the door is opened?

What will you find?

The provisions of God to meet your every need, desire, circumstance.

You see, that is what God wants to give you.

Then the Lord illustrates prayer and the answer to prayer

Parallel Principle of Provision

Luke 11:11-13

Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he?

Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he?

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

The very best these believers could ask for was the Holy Spirit. God wanted to send them His very best so He was willing to send Himself.

It was God's desire for these disciples to be indwelt by God the Holy Spirit

It is God desire for us to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)

And then we have a promise for our prayers.

1 John 5:14, And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

When we turn to God with nothing else, no works, no merit, only our humble faith, all the good things that He desires us to have will be ours - pray that you receive all that God wants you to have.

Teddy Roosevelt said: *If you have some enemies, you are to be congratulated, for no man ever accomplished much without arousing jealousies and creating enemies*

THE MIRACLE.

Luke 11:14

And He was casting out a demon, and it was dumb; and it came about that when the demon had gone out, the dumb man spoke; and the multitudes marveled.

We have noted already in our study that there was an increase in what we might call direct demonic attack during the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But we have also noted the power of God given to the humanity of Christ over Satan and his demons.

Here we have a demon possessing a man and the man could not speak.

One the demon was removed the man spoke, the people who knew the man *marveled*.

The word translated *marvel* means to be surprised and to be brought to a point of wonder.

The point of *wonder* was the intention, a point at which they would consider who is this Jesus?

But as the people are thinking, the religious leaders (so identified in Matthew and Mark's account, jump in and tell the people what to think.

The accusations

Prior to this the religious leaders have attacked the work of Christ, the message of Christ, the followers of Christ, and now they attack the power of Christ.

Luke 11:15

But some of them said, He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.

This is a strong accusation. Jesus did what He did out of the power of the Holy Spirit and here, these religious leaders are attributing the power of God to Satan.

Beelzebub heathen false god believed to be the prince of all evil spirits.

Break down of the word actually means the god of dung, referring to all moral impurity.

The Philistines saw this deity as the lord of flies.

Since Satan is the ruler of all the fallen angels and demons, this is a synonym for Satan himself.

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Luke 11:16

And others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven.

This last demand is almost humorous, what did they just see?

When a man who could not speak now speaks I think that it is pretty good sign.

In I Corinthians 1:22 Paul stated *For indeed Jews ask for signs.*

Not only did they think that if they saw a sign they would believe (but seeing is not believing) they wanted a sign of their own definition.

Luke 11:17

But He knew their thoughts, and said to them, Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls.

He first gives a logical make-sense principle.

That which is divided against itself cannot stand and it will fall.

Strength is in unity, whether it be in a family, a nation, a church, or in a kingdom.

To divide and conquer is one way Satan works against us because it is a fact, that which is divided and against itself cannot stand.

Luke 11:18

And if Satan also is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebub.

Satan know that a kingdom divided will fall so he is not going to cast out himself or his demons.

He wants planet earth, if he loses all else, that is one thing he wants.

Luke 11:19

And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Consequently they shall be your judges.

Casting out demons was not unknown to the Jews of Jesus' day.

Their Sons, a term used for students, followers.

Even those who were the students of the religious leaders had been known to cast out demons.

So Jesus appeals to contemporary Jewish practices, by whom do your followers cast out demons?

Is there any reason not to think that Jesus has that same power from God?

Luke 11:20

But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Matthew 12: 28, But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

This is the only time in the Scripture the world finger is used to describe the power of God, the Spirit of God.

It is a word picture that sees the action of the hand or fingers being directed by the individual. So it is it is a picture of the Holy Spirit, directed by the Father, empowering the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice that this is the power Jesus used, the power of the Holy Spirit. He did not cast out demons in his own power.

And it is His presence and the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit that announces the God's Kingdom has come to man.

The first parable

Luke 11:21,22

When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own homestead, his possessions are undisturbed;

but when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers (binding him) him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied, and distributes his plunder.

The strong man's house is this world, Satan's world.

Ephesians 2:2 Satan is the prince of the power of the air and in John 16:11 he is called the prince of this world.

Jesus was able, by the power of the Spirit, to bind Satan and plunder his property, those who put faith in Him.

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Jesus came to establish the Kingdom and He worked by the power of the Holy Spirit not by the power of the prince of this world.

Luke 11:23

He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.

Here Jesus eliminates all the gray, all the subjectivity, and makes this a very simple issue.

you are either with me or against me.

Now this at first seems to contradict what Jesus said in Luke 9:50 *Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you.*

The difference is of whom this is said.

In Luke 9 the disciples were critical of those who cast out demons but did not follow Jesus as closely as they did.

Jesus gave them a reply that would bring them to relax regarding others.

If one is not for against you (the disciples) he is just as good as for you.

But here in Luke 11 we have those who are attacking Christ, claiming that he is doing His works by the power of Satan.

In Luke 9 the object was the disciples and the disciples could be right or wrong, in fellowship or out at any time.

But here in Luke 11 we have the Lord Jesus Christ as the object of loyalty, the perfect Son of God.

Let's put this in practical terms.

If someone is indifferent to you that is no big deal, they are not against you.

But if someone is indifferent to the Lord Jesus Christ, they are against Him.

If someone is neutral to this church, so what, they are not an enemy.

But if someone is neutral to the Lord Jesus Christ who gave Himself for them, they are enemies of Christ and His Cross.

These religious leaders to whom this is addressed have gone so far as to accuse the Lord Jesus Christ of being in league with Satan and his demons.

They are not only not for the Lord, they are against Him.

The second parable

Luke 11:24-26

When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, I will return to my house from which I came.

And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order.

Then it goes and takes along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.

Notice the elements of this analogy.

1. The unclean spirits are expelled, just as Jesus had expelled the demon out of the man brought to Him in verse 14.

2. When Jesus was on earth He had power over the demons, they were not a problem. They were bound, Matthew 12:29.

3. *The house* refers to religious Israel, with no demonic interference, it is cleaned up, swept out, put in order.

This is analogous to the morality of the Pharisees, all that they did looked good, but it was empty.

4. So the demons wander around awhile, and then come back, but now, it brings with it seven more spirits more evil than the first.

5. Result: Israel was worse off now due to their rejection of the Son of God.

In Matthew 12:45 in the parallel account of this parable Jesus makes it very clear that He is talking about them.

That is the way it will also be with this evil generation.

This analogy can be applied today - if you are not progressing, being filled up with the truth of God and the power of the Spirit, you will go backwards.

There is no holding of one's own in the Christian life, you are either advancing or regressing.

There is no being in neutral, or treading water.

Remember what Jesus said at v 23

He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

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In the three paragraphs from Luke 11:27 to verse 36 we have a progressive outline.

We begin with a warning against distraction and a definition of who is and is not blessed of God.

Then we see in contrast to the ones who are blessed, those who should have faith and do not.

And then we conclude with the means by which we can continue in loyalty and in relationship to the Lord.

So we go from an encouragement to loyal love for the Lord, to what does not bring about this loyalty, then to what does bring about loyal love for the Lord.

The potential of distraction

Luke 11:27

And it came about while He said these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice, and said to Him, Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts at which You nursed.

We have an instrumental preposition WHILE which would indicate that what follows is an interruption of the Lord's teaching.

Notice that this woman raised her voice over the Lord's voice as He is teaching

She says what we may consider to be a very nice thing. She blesses Jesus' mother Mary.

She blesses her womb (not loom) and her breast that feed the infant Jesus.

Bengel, in his commentary on this passage, says that this woman *speaks well, but womanly* (Bengel). Her beatitude (*μακαρια*) reminds us of what Mary said in her own prophecy in Luke 1:48 *For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed.*

But when Mary said that it was a question filled with wonder.

When this woman says it, while the Lord is teaching, it is really a distraction.

But what is more important than what the woman said and her interruption, is how the Lord responds

Luke 11:28

But He said, On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God, and observe it.

First of all as much as He loved His mother, He had to disagree. And He had to correct the problem of her assigning blessing to anyone but Him.

The one who is truly bless, He says, is the one who hears the word - as those who were there and were silently listening to the teaching.

And then he added that the divine blessing extends to those who observe the Word.

The word observes means to guard, to keep, and to treasure up the Word.

Jesus points out that family relationships are second to spiritual relationships.

The humblest of believer who hears and keeps the Word is more blessed than the mother of the Lord.

The whole nation took pride in the fact that they descended from Abraham.

But what was more important was for the nation to hear and keep the Word.

And that transitions to the next paragraph.

Israel, so impressed with their relationship to Abraham, just as this woman was so impressed with Jesus relationship to Mary, was rejecting the Son of God while boasting of a physical relationship.

What loyal love is not

Luke 11:29

And as the crowds were increasing, He began to say, This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah.

A sign was a confirming miracle, which showed that the spoken message was true. The crowds were not willing to believe Jesus' words without external confirmation.

The word generation ties this to what He said in the prior verse.

They are a generation, descended from Abraham, but they are wicked seeking a sign.

Luke 11:30

For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so shall the Son of Man be to this generation.

The sign of Jonah is that as Jonah was in the place of death for three days, so will the Son of God be in the place of death for three days and will rise again to live forever.

Jonah came back from the dead, so would Jesus.

Jonah walked into Nineveh and preached the Gospel, so has Jesus walked into Israel and preached the Gospel.

But that is where the similarities end.

Jesus gives them two examples of faith, hearing the word and believing the Word.

And both these examples are of Gentiles.

Luke 11:31,32

The Queen of the South (Queen of Sheba) shall rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

They are seeing signs and wonders when the true blessing is in hearing and believing.

Jesus is telling them what we have previously observed and that is that seeing is not believing, but believing is seeing.

Something greater than Solomon, greater than Jonah is here with them right now.

But we must not think this is a problem only of the past.

Where do we place value?

Today we have those who want to find value in a physical relationship with man rather than a spiritual relationship with God.

Israel was proud of their relationship to Abraham.

They saw that as a spiritual value but it is of no value if that generation is evil.

Today Christians are seeking spiritual significance in the wrong place.

Today we have Christians who try to find spiritual significance in physical relationships, relationship to this church or that church, to this denomination, to parents, to others.

True spiritual significance is found in our relationship to the Lord and His Word.

Today Christians seek things other than the Word.

They want signs, wonders, anything that they think will cause them to see and thus believe.

But something greater is here, the Word of God, the mind of Christ.

Signs come and go, they can be false, they can deceive.

But the Word of the Lord is the light that has come into the world.

The light is the true value of the spiritual life.

In this parable we see what the Lord has done and what we are to do to continue in the light.

We should recall that John said in John 1.

John 1:9-12, There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

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

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

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 bear in mind that Jesus is the light and He is the one who dispenses light - so.

Luke 11:33

No one, after lighting a lamp, puts it away in a cellar, nor under a peck-measure, but on the lampstand, in order that those who enter may see the light.

The Lord begins with a very logical statement.

This is something no one would do. You light a lamp to give off light. If you put it in the basement you do not get any light in the rest of the house. If

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you put it under a basket you might catch the basket on fire.

Either way, this is not what you do with a lamp. It is contrary to its purpose.

What do you do with a lamp? Put it on the lampstand so that others can see it.

Principle

First, the Lord did not come to hide Himself away.

He came as light into darkness and this has been made evident in His miracles, parable, and teaching.

The problem is that the Jews are not seeing the light.

Not because it is not there but because they are having eye problems as we will see in the next verse.

Jesus as the light of the world came to dispel darkness and that is what light does

Secondly, we have the light of Christ.

We must not hide it away or put it under a basket.

We are to be lights in the world of darkness.

Philippians 2:14-16, Do all things without grumbling or disputing; that you may 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, holding fast the word of life.

Luke 11:34

The lamp of your body is your eye; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad (evil), your body also is full of darkness.

We have eye problems, our eyes are not always clear, for some the eye is evil.

The figure of the eye and its ethical meaning seem to be mixed up, moral attributes ascribed to the physical eye, which gives light to the body. This confusion may be due to the fact that the eye, besides being the organ of vision, is the seat of expression, revealing inward dispositions. We find in the Bible the *evil eye*, which may be diseased but is used for a man's stinginess in the Septuagint.

The passage may be elliptical with something to be supplied. If our eyes are healthy we see clearly and with a single focus (without astigmatism). If the eyes are diseased (bad, evil), they may even be cross-eyed or cock-eyed. We see double and confuse our vision. We keep one eye on the values of this earth, signs, physical relationships etc., and roll the other proudly up to heaven. Seeing double is double-mindedness.

The word clear would be better translated single or simple. The idea is one of single sighted or single mindedness.

Again, this looks at priorities, setting the Lord and His Word as a priority in life. And that is a decision that every believer must make, what is really important in your life?

So with that we have the next verse.

Luke 11:35

Then watch out that the light in you may not be darkness.

Now here is the admonition, this is what we are to do - watch out!

This looks at making a conscience decision to that the single mindedness of your eye not be darkened.

Darkness comes about by distraction, dissatisfaction, disillusion, disinterest.

Avoidance of darkness comes as we are receptive to Jesus' teaching and as we allow the Holy Spirit to illuminate the Word to our souls.

So this clarity or single sightedness does not begin with the eye.

It begins with the entire person.

Luke 11:36

If therefore your whole body is full of light, with no dark part in it, it shall be wholly illumined, as when the lamp illumines you with its rays.

The *if* is a Greek first class conditional, indicating that this is a true statement.

The body full of light is the body full of truth from God's Word. No dark part in it.

The entire self given over to God to influence with His Word. And if that is the case we shall be fully illumined just as a land illuminates a dark room.

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Now here is the application for us:

Are we allowing ourselves to be distracted?

Are we guarding the single sightedness of our eye?

Are we giving our entire selves to the Lord?

Are we allowing the Holy Spirit to illuminate even the dark places in our souls?

Are we setting the Lord and His Word as a priority in our lives?

Each of these results from a personal decision you, as a believer must make for yourself.

The episode in Mark 11:37-41 sets the stage for the woes or words of condemnation the Lord will direct to the religious leaders, the Pharisees and the Scribes.

Notice that in verse 37 Jesus is invited to lunch and yet by v 54 the religious leaders are plotting against him, determined to kill him - the moral of this story is be careful who invites you to lunch.

Luke 11:37,38

Now when He had spoken, a Pharisee asked Him to have lunch with him; and He went in, and reclined at the table. And when the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal.

This or a similar incident is recorded in each of the Gospels. The Pharisees were real big on form and very weak on substance.

The one word translated ceremonially washed is baptism. Baptism was a concept known to the Jews and was used for ceremonial purposes, It means in its simple form to wash or to dip.

This ceremonial washing of the hands was not part of the Old Testament law but was a tradition

Matthew 15:2-3, Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.

And He answered and said to them, And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?

Mark 7:3, For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elder.

The Jews dipped their hands in water before a meal.

This was not washing for the purpose of hygiene, but a mere dipping of the hands often between courses.

The problem here, as we will see, is not in having a tradition, the problem was in making a legalism out of the tradition.

David Watson (1933-1984) stated.

“Christian work is constantly crippled by clinging to blessings and traditions of the past. God is not the God of yesterday. He is the God of today. Heaven forbid that we should go on playing religious games in one corner when the cloud and fire of God’s presence have moved to another.”

Charles R. Swindoll:

“There’s a little Pharisee in all of us. Harmful though it is, we find a lot of security in our iron bars and solid walls. - Tragically, this ball-and-chain mentality keeps us from giving ourselves in fresh ways to God and in innovative ways to others.”

Luke 11:39

But the Lord said to him, Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but inside of you, you are full of robbery and wickedness.

The Lord cuts to the heart of the matter which is the difference between the what is on the outside that others see and what is on the inside that God sees.

What is the real man or woman and what is the facade.

Since they are at a table He uses an analogy that uses the cups and the dishes.

The outside is clean but the inside is vile.

Now around here every now and then I leave a coffee cup someplace on a Sunday and then, maybe do not get back to it until Tuesday.

This is a remarkable example of our Lord’s way of drawing the most striking illustrations of great truths from the most familiar objects and incidents of life.

The outside of the cup may look just fine, but inside, there is a brownish green scum that has made camp in the bottom of the cup.

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We can clean up real well on the outside, but while that may be acceptable to man, it is only God who can clean us up on the inside.

You are full of robbery and wickedness.

The word robbery would be better translated plunder or that which is desired to fulfill greed.

Wickedness refers to the expression of evil, evil that effects more than just self but ends up hurting others.

So what these Pharisees do on the outside looks good but inside they are greedy, vile, wicked, evil.

Luke 11:40

So the Lord calls them what they are.

You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also?

You fools - now there are a few words in the Greek language that are translated fool.

Some fools were fools because of ignorance, others because they could not help it due to diminished capacity.

Still others are fools because God took their great plans and made them foolishness.

The word here and the word found in Galatians 3:1 share a similar concept.

Both words look at the fool who thinks he can accomplish that which only God can do and even being more foolish, that they can do it by some sort of human effort.

Principle

The washing of the hands was a harmless tradition but it became spiritually harmful when it was done to impress God and others.

What man does on the outside does not change the soul of man

Anything the non-believer can do is not a part of the spiritual life

The non-believer can fulfill tradition, perform a ceremony or ritual, can be obedient, can follow instructions, can pray a prayer, can cite a passage, can admit fault or sin.

These things are no different than dipping the hands.

Thinking this is the spiritual life makes the believer a fool

The only thing you as a believer can do that the non-believer cannot do it to put your faith in God and His grace plan of salvation and his grace plan for the spiritual life.

Faith is an inward decision of the soul that says you are trusting God, giving yourself to Him God's righteous ones, believers, live by faith.

Anything else is legalism.

Only from approaching God with faith can see God change us into the people He saved us to be.

Erwin W. Lutzer (1941-)

"Believers who are motivated by legalism are always anxious to know what is expected of them. They want to do only what is necessary to make themselves look respectable. They crave specific rules so they can know precisely how to behave. They plod along hoping that someday their efforts will pay off. According to the New Testament such people are legalists; they are using the law to establish their righteousness."

Now legalism was the one thing that caused the Lord Jesus to attack the religious leaders.

He did not attack the sinners for their sins, He loved them, forgave them, and saved them.

He did not attack those who were apathetic, instead He was patient waiting for their conviction by the Holy Spirit.

But he gave no ground to legalism because of all the ridiculous and stupid things we can do, legalism is the greatest affront to God.

When we start to think that we can do something in the plan of God, anything other than trust Him and let the Holy Spirit bring us to righteousness we are saying to God we can help, we can lend our hand.

We can clean up the outside, we can do this or that, we can effect the change God alone can do when our faith meets His power.

So how do we do that?

Look at the next verse.

Luke 11:41

But give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you.

The Pharisees were giving their hands, so to speak, to the ceremony.

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Jesus tells them and us to give that which is within, in the soul as their charity or gift to God.

When you try to clean the outer man to make the inner man clean you fail.

Yet this is exactly what the Pharisees were doing with their ceremonies.

The only way to be clean is to give the inner man to God and that is faith decision that only you can make.

Now what follows in the remainder of Luke chapter 11 is a result of the hypocrisy and legalism of the Pharisees.

In vv 42 through 44 he makes three statements of condemnation against the Pharisees.

Then the scribes object that saying that He is being too harsh, that He is insulting them when He condemns the Pharisees.

So He directs three statements against them.

Wiersbe says that these pronouncements of condemnation were certainly spoken in anguish and not in anger.

Luke 11:42-44

But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God;

Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the front seats in the synagogues, and the respectful greetings in the market places.

Woe to you! For you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over them are unaware of it.

Two expressions of their legalism - and then one conclusion.

They majored in the minors.

They paid tithes of the spices in their spice rack and yet ignored the true issues of faith such as how God's justice is satisfied and how much God loves them and they are then to love others.

They like to show off.

They wanted others to see how spiritual they were, how right they were, how much they knew, so they sat on the platform (ever watch TV preachers and see all the people on the platform?).

They want respect that is not due them

They are totally ineffective in their service and ministry.

They are like tombs that no one knows are there. People walk over them and do not even know it.

Luke 11:45

And one of the lawyers said to Him in reply, Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too.

So the Lord directs three woes against them.

Luke 11:46-52

Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers.

Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them.

So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs.

For this reason also the wisdom of God said, I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.

Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered.

Four applications:

Legalism puts rules above God. God is a God of people, not rules.

Legalism puts rules above human needs.

Legalism kills joy.

It makes people feel guilty rather than loved

It produces self-hatred rather than humility

It stresses performance over relationship; and
It points out how far short we fall rather than how
far we've come because of what Christ did for us.

Legalism is attractive, but destructive.

As there were three woes spoken against the
Pharisees, we now have three woes spoken
against the scribes.

But within this we have four verses of further
explanation.

Luke 11:53,54

**And when He left there, the scribes and
the Pharisees began to be very hostile
and to question Him closely on many
subjects,
plotting against Him, to catch Him in
something He might say.**

Now all of us will at one time or another come
under criticism and rebuke, even from God
because He loves us.

That truth is as old as families - even in Hebrews
12 where the writer is talking about divine
discipline the statement is made that (vv 7-8)

**It is for discipline that you endure; God
deals with you as with sons; for what son
is there whom his father does not
discipline?**

**But if you are without discipline, of
which all have become partakers, then
you are illegitimate children and not
sons.**

Because God loves us He corrects us - and that
correction is seen as part of the teaching and
learning of the Word.

**Proverbs 15:31,32, He whose ear listens
to the life-giving reproof Will dwell
among the wise - he who listens to
reproof acquires understanding.**

**Proverbs 5:12-14, And you say, How I
have hated instruction! And my heart
spurned reproof! And I have not listened
to the voice of my teachers, Nor inclined
my ear to my instructors! I was almost in
utter ruin In the midst of the assembly
and congregation.**

Chapter 12

Marianne Holmes was Churchill's secretary from
1950 to 1945. On the first night of the bombing of
London Churchill refused to go to the bomb
shelter preferring instead to work through the
night.

Miss Holmes was asked if she was afraid and she
said no, later adding that it was impossible to be
afraid in the presence of Winston Churchill.

We are going to see Jesus teaching the disciples
and other believers who are beginning to fear
what might happen to them as the religious
leaders plot against their Savior and Friend, Jesus.

But there is never any need for fear and worry
when you are with Him.

Luke 12:1

**Under these circumstances, after so many
thousands of the multitude had gathered
together that they were stepping on one
another.**

We read at the end of chapter eleven that the
Jewish leadership was now plotting against Jesus.

And here we see that the multitudes are crowding
around Him.

So with some, they want to destroy Him and with
others they want to enthrone Him as their
revolutionary King.

But He is not deterred in His mission by either of
these forces that are working against Him.

He is single minded in His mission and that is to
please God, not man.

He uses the circumstances to warn His disciples
and the others who are listening to Him.

He addresses: His disciples, Friends, the believer
who makes a public stand for Christ, the
unbeliever who rejects the Holy Spirit, and the
ones who will be persecuted for their faith in Him.

Within this message we find five themes.

1. The sin of hypocrisy
 2. The true security in life
 3. The rewards of loyalty
 4. The unforgivable sin
 5. The help of the Holy Spirit
-

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First of all, something to beware, the sin of hypocrisy.

He began saying to His disciples first of all, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

Leaven or what we might call yeast, is used in the Scriptures for that which is very small but ends up infecting the whole of something.

Like yeast does with a loaf of dough.

In the New Testament, leaven is a symbol of any evil influence which, if allowed to remain, can corrupt the body of believers both personally and collectively

Here the Lord defines exactly what this leaven is.. hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy is the Greek word which originally meant just a verbal reply but during the great classical era of Greek drama it came to mean the visible presentation of one emotion while the dialogue and voice expressed another emotion.

I am sure all of you are familiar with the Greek drama masks that have become a symbol even today of the thespian arts.

Well the hypocrite of Greek Drama was one who hid behind the sad mask and laughed or hid behind the happy mask and cried tears of sorrow.

This was sometimes done when the actor grabbed the wrong mask and when this occurred they crowd would start to chant - hypocrite, hypocrite, hypocrite.

So as the term left the stage and came into life it referred to anyone who put up one front while really being something else.

Luke 12:2,3

But notice what the Lord says of hypocrisy.

But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.

Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

The hypocrite is never genuine, he is always play-acting. Playing a role that is not really him.

Hypocrisy is the result of insecurity. Thinking that you must be something else in order to be accepted or liked or loved. But hypocrisy is always, eventually uncovered.

We have certainly seen this happen in some of the highest offices in our land haven't we?

The truth is told, shouted from the housetops.

Sin does find you out and the sin of hypocrisy will be uncovered.

Principle

God would rather have a blunt, honest sinner come to Him as he is rather than someone who puts on an act of goodness.

Luke 12:4

And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

The hypocrite is one who is motivated by fear, by insecurity, by what he sees as his own insignificance. So he invents a persona. He becomes something he is not because of others, what they may or may not think.

But we do not have to fear others.

The disciples did not have to fear these religious hypocrites and we, the friends of Jesus, do not have to fear mankind.

We do not have to try to be something we are not.

AFTER ALL - what can man do?

Kill the body.

Luke 12:5

But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!

Who should man fear? God, the one who has the authority to cast a soul into hell.

On the grave stone of John Knox, the great Scottish reformer, we can find even today the words.

Here lies one who feared God so much that he never feared the face of man.

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Principle

Man's authority over man is limited to physical life. A man could destroy your life but not your soul.

And since you are a friend of the Son of God - remember the address of this section.

We need not fear God.

We belong to Him.

He has saved us.

And in the next verses we see that we are valuable to Him.

Luke 12:6,7

**Are not five sparrows sold for two cents?
And yet not one of them is forgotten
before God.**

**Indeed, the very hairs of your head are
all numbered. Do not fear; you are of
more value than many sparrows.**

Now in Matthew 10:29 we read

**Are not two sparrows sold for a cent?
And yet not one of them will fall to the
ground apart from your Father.**

But the word for cent there should be $\frac{1}{4}$ of a penny. The coin referred to is the *assarion*, a Roman copper coin worth about $\frac{1}{16}$ of a denarius (a day's wage),

Here in Luke 12:7 we have five sparrows sold for $\frac{1}{2}$ of a penny.

So sparrows are of such little value that if you are willing to pay a $\frac{1}{2}$ penny the seller then in one more.

In other words, sparrows are not worth much.

Yet you as a friend, a believer, belong to God, you are His and He cares for you.

The care God has for you is the most detailed of all - even to the point of numbering the hairs on your head.

It has been computed that a blonde person has 145,000 hairs on their head, a dark haired person, 120,000 and a red head, 90,000.

The Jews believed that each hair had its own guardian angel.

But the point is that God cares for us with a care beyond anything we could ever imagine.

The third theme of this passage is the rewards of loyalty

Luke 12:8,9

**And I say to you, everyone who
confesses Me before men, the Son of
Man shall confess him also before the
angels of God;
but he who denies Me before men shall
be denied before the angels of God.**

Notice the pronoun of address, **YOU**, as in the previous section, the **friends**, the **believers**.

This is addressed to believers who had the opportunity to confess Jesus before men, and if they do, Jesus will confess them before the angels of God.

The issue is deny and confess which is not salvation, salvation is believe or not believe.

These verses deal with our loyalty to our Lord as compared to His loyalty to us demonstrated at the Cross.

These verses are looking at the rewards that are to be given or not given to the believer at either the Bema seat for the Church or the Banquet for Israel.

This confess or lack of confession is the acknowledgment that the Lord will give or not give to believers who have taken a loyal stand for Christ in this lifetime.

This is not looking at Salvation but rather at rewards.

Why would a believer deny Christ?

Out of shame.

Thinking that by denying His Savior he will not be ashamed in the presence of man.

Again, this looks at fear, fearing the face of man.

Now the next verse turns to the unbeliever.

So the Fourth Theme is the sin against the Holy Spirit.

Luke 12:10

**And everyone who will speak a word
against the Son of Man, it shall be
forgiven him; but he who blasphemes
against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be
forgiven him.**

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While he is still talking to believers, the Lord now goes back to the religious leaders who are also referred to in the next verse - *And when they bring you before the synagogues*

To speak against the Son of Man is sin, but all sins will be forgiven at the Cross.

And when a man who perhaps did speak against the Lord Jesus, as did some in His own family, believe in Christ, they appropriate that forgiveness.

And when you, as a believer, out of fellowship, blaspheme the Lord Jesus, as terrible as that is, when you admit you sin and return in humble repentance to Him, you appropriate the forgiveness that is yours from the Cross.

But in both situations it is the Holy Spirit who convicts of sins.

Now for the Jews of Jesus day, they taught a two fold function of the work of the Holy Spirit.

First, the Holy Spirit taught the truth to men

Secondly, the Holy Spirit allowed man to recognize God's truth.

So if a man blaspheme the Holy Spirit, which is tantamount to rejecting Him, there is no teaching, no conviction of sin, no recognition of the need for a Savior, hence, no forgiveness.

This is similar to saying that if a man rejects the conviction of the Holy Spirit, by rejecting the Holy Spirit Himself, it is impossible for that man to repent.

Hebrews 6:6, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame.

Barclay puts it this way.

"Man can lose the faculty of recognizing God.

"By repeatedly refusing God's word, by repeatedly taking one's own way, by repeatedly shutting the eyes to God and closing ears to hear Him, man can come to a stage when he does not recognize God when He sees Him.

"To that man evil become good and good become evil. And that is what had happened to the scribes and Pharisees.

"They had so blinded and deafened themselves to God that when He came to them they called Him a devil.

"This demonstrated their rejection and blaspheme of the Holy Spirit by whom they refused to taught, refused to changed."

Why is this an unforgivable sin? Because if a persons rejects the Holy Spirit they will not even be aware of their sin.

God has not shut him out, but he has shut himself out to God.

Application

All this means that the one man who can never commit the unforgivable sin is the man who fears he has, for once a man has committed it, he is so dead to God that the is conscious of no sin at all.

Now in contrast to Jesus' enemies, who blasphemed the Holy Spirit, Jesus' followers would be helped by the Holy Spirit

But if not rejecting the Holy Spirit, He is there to help the believer.

Luke 12:11,12

And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not become anxious about how or what you should speak in your defense, or what you should say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.

Rather than hypocrisy, rather then denying Christ, rather than rejecting the Holy Spirit, rather than doing any of these things to gain security, or importance, or significance.

Trust the Holy Spirit to take away the worry, the concern, the cares of this world and even the fear of persecution.

Remember, these disciples were aware of the religious leaders and their antagonism towards Jesus their leader and friend.

But Jesus had already told them not to fear them and even if they did drag you into the synagogues, accusing you of crimes against God, do not fear, the Holy Spirit is there.

Now in these verses we are hearing the words of our Lord challenge us to consider where are we casting our care?

While there are certainly evil men with evil motives all around us, God is greater.

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While so think they have to put us a false front to be accepted, God is accepting of us where we are. While others may shrink away from their Savior, we can take a stand for Him in the world knowing that in His world, in heaven, He will take a stand for us.

Some people love money to the destruction of their souls, and some love it so much that it destroys the souls of others around them.

Now we are going to see the Lord teaching on money and what is really important in life.

And He is going to tell us that what is really important in life is not in this life at all.

Here in the midst of these great lesson of divine wisdom and truth that Jesus is teaching His disciples and friends, we have a man approach Him and ask the Lord to resolve a family and financial dispute.

Luke 12:13

And someone in the crowd said to Him, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.

It was common place in Judea for family disputes to be resolved by a Rabbi.

Here, the dispute is financial.

We can assume a father has died and now the two sons are having a conflict over the cash.

What is interesting to see is the context.

Jesus is teaching these people the Word of His Father and yet here is this man who is preoccupied and distracted by money.

Perhaps one of the greatest and quickest distractions to the spiritual life is worry and arguments over money.

The amazing thing is, is that money can be a distraction when you do not have it, and when you have a lot.

Luke 12:14

Jesus wants to bring the attention back to the Word.

But He said to him, Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbiter over you?

In contrast to the *Friends* He had been addressing, He refers to this man in a very impersonal way - *Man*.

Jesus did not come to judge.

John 3:17-18, For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.

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.

So while Jesus will not be the judge and arbitrator of this man's problem, He will use the situation to teaching about money.

He gives a parable and then gives some pithy analogies.

He speaks to those who have money and those who do not. Much like He might speak to us today.

Luke 12:15

And He said to them, Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.

The word *oraw* means to perceive, to intensely look into, to look after.

So what the Lord is telling us is that this is something we must take special care at special times to guard against.

This is strengthened by the statement *be on your guard against*, so we have a doubly strong statement here for a very strong problem - greed.

This same word is found in the warning against reversionism in Ephesians 4:19

And they (the believer falling into reversionism), having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

So he first gives a parable to those who have money.

Luke 12:16-19

And He told them a parable, saying, The land of a certain rich man was very productive.

And he began reasoning to himself, saying, What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?

And he said, This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.

And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.

(Luke actually quotes a Hellenistic motto).

Now at this point there are two things we can observe.

First, of all the parables of the Bible, this one contains more I's, me's, mine's, and other words about self than any other parable.

So the man in this parable is totally self-centered, self absorbed.

Secondly, we see this man totally absorbed with this life.

While he is concerned with his future the only reason for that concern is to have security in the present time.

He wants his retirement set so he can be at ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

Now notice this interesting attitude.

He want security in the future so he can be at ease and have, at least what he may consider, happiness right now.

Now what is the problem with this?

His view of the future did not go far enough.

His future view ended in this life whereas our future view must include the fact that we are going to live forever.

And the real issue of security is not what you will have in your golden years, but what you will have in eternity - heaven or hell?

And if heaven, rewards and rule, or not having all that Jesus died for you to have.

Here is the point.

We do find security and joy nasty here and now when we know that tomorrow, the great by and by, is taken care of, and for you as a Christian your future is forever secure.

Now the next verse shows us the folly of not looking into eternity.

Luke 12:20

But God said to him, You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?

So he ends up dying the day the barns are finished and his retirement program is fully vested.

So all he stored up ends up being left behind - there are no luggage rack on the hearse.

There is a Spanish proverb that says *there are no pockets in the shroud*.

All the man's plans were made based on this life.

There is a story of a older man talking to a young man.

The young man is telling the old man of his plans.

I will go to college, then what?

I will get a great job,

then what?

I will make my fortune, then what?

I will vest my retirement, then what?

I will retire with wealth, then what?

Well, I guess I live to an old age and die - then what?

There is always the *then what?*

Luke 12:21

Principle

So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

This is an either/or situation.

If a man is self centered, self absorbed, laying up treasures for himself cannot at the same time be rich towards God.

In Matthew 6:24 the Lord taught that man cannot serve two masters.

Now, while his disciples were not poverty stricken, they did not have the access to wealth that the man in the parable had.

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So the Lord now imparts some wisdom to them.

Luke 12:22

And He said to His disciples, For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on.

We saw last week that our synonym for *anxious* would be *worry*.

Four things not to worry about: your life, what to eat, your health, what to wear.

These are areas of worry, the things that we worry about and the things that to a greater or lesser degree, we can do nothing about.

You can be very healthy in your habits and still have medical problems.

Luke 12:23

For life is more than food, and the body than clothing.

Paul advances this principle in Romans 14:17

for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

So the Lord makes some very applicable analogies.

Luke 12:24

Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; and they have no storeroom nor barn; and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds!

Very similar to what He said earlier in verse 7 when he used the analogy of the value of a sparrow - *You are of more value than many sparrows*.

He changes the bird to the raven, a word used only here in the NT,

because he wanted to use a bird that had an appetite and was known for devouring much food.

Luke 12:25

And which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life's span?

People certainly try don't they.

Eternal youth, eternal life.

I was recently told that the main motivation and funding behind all the genetic research is to live at least longer if not forever.

But God is in control and sovereign over life and death

Luke 12:26-28

If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why are you anxious about other matters?

Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these.

But if God so arrays the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you, O men of little faith!

What is the solution to our worry in these areas of life in which we can do so little?

Faith.

Oh men of little faith!

Luke 12:29

And do not seek what you shall eat, and what you shall drink, and do not keep worrying.

The word *worry* here is different than the word for *anxious* used in this passage. The word *worry* here means to be *kept in suspense*.

Are we in suspense about tomorrow?

Certainly we are but we can do nothing about tomorrow except make our plans and let God order our steps.

We need not worry about tomorrow because God is already there.

Luke 12:30

For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things.

The nations refer to the Gentiles.

Jesus is speaking to Jews about the literal kingdom He as the King has come to offer.

Luke 12:31

He challenges them to seek that kingdom.

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But seek for His kingdom, and these things shall be added to you.

I love the way the Lord takes all the things we worry about, strive for, work for, fight for, just have to have and reduces them all to *things*.

There is a comedian who has a routine where he talks about all our possessions and reduces them down to stuff and the only reason we have house is we have to have some place to put our stuff.

We work for stuff, we guard our stuff, we want new stuff, and we always want more stuff.

And when we get too much stuff, we need bigger houses so we can keep our stuff.

But Jesus sets our sights eternal, seek first His kingdom, and the stuff God wants you to have, the stuff you need will be added to you - by Him!

So you might ask if by this am I saying abandon you striving for things to a desire to grow in faith, seek the kingdom, and have greater fellowship with God?

You might say that is kind of a scary proposal.

And Jesus knew that so he adds.

Luke 12:32

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.

Little flock.

Such words of endearment.

Little lambs who need to know they have a great shepherd.

This is the only reference to believers as little lambs but John in his letter used the expression little children and the Lord calls believers lambs in John 21 as he instructs Peter to tend to His sheep.

Luke 12:33

Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves purses which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, nor moth destroys.

Luke will return to the subject of selling possessions and giving in chapter 16 and 19 but here we have a contrast to hoarding up that which may never be used.

Sell and give which is what the local church did in Jerusalem in the early chapter of Acts as they endured such suffering and persecution.

Instead of setting your sights on the riches of this world, make a purse that will never wear out, store up unfailing treasures in heaven.

They were anxious and worried about clothing and material possessions but moths destroy clothing and material things can be stolen.

But in heaven, everything is secure - even you.

Luke 12:34

And so then the principle.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Your heart is set on what you love.

Love money, the things of this world and you will be controlled by the details of life.

They will overwhelm and at times they will destroy.

But set your heart on heaven and you will have what God wants for you, now, and forever.

Luke 12:35

Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps alight.

This statement brings up a number of question, two of which are important to us.

First, what does it mean to be ready?

And, second, be ready for what?

Now we must remember that Luke is recording what the Lord said to His disciples, who were Jewish, who were looking forward to the Lord coming as King of His kingdom and fulfilling all the prophecies of old that spoke of that glorious time on earth.

Even up until Acts 1:6 we read that *they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"*

So these disciples would not have known about the rapture, the coming of the Lord as the bridegroom for His church, His bride.

They would be thinking of the Second Advent when the Lord would return as the Lion of the tribe of Judah to destroy the forces of the antichrist

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and win the battle of Armageddon and establish His 1000 kingdom.

So why should we pay any attention to this if the interpretation is not to us?

Because the application is - we to should be ready and anticipating the Lord's return not at the Second Advent, but at the rapture.

So we can apply what is said about the Second Advent to the Rapture of the Church

Now the verse: *Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps alight.*

To be dressed in readiness meant to fasten up the long outer garment, always done before travel and work.

The idea here is that the believer is to ready for a journey

The lamps are to be lit.

The lighted lamps illustrate the believer's of faith.

This testimony must be kept alive throughout the course of the believer's life. The testimony, like a lamp, should not die out. In order for the lamps to keep burning, there had to be a constant and sufficient supply of oil. Throughout the Bible, oil typifies the Spirit of God (Ps. 45:7; Zech. 4:2-6; Luke 4:18). Thus, the Christian testimony is sustained by faith dependence on the Holy Spirit.

This verse then is an encouragement to maintain our testimony to the end.

For both the believing Jew in his dispensation and for us, Christians in our dispensation, a special position of rulership is reserved for those who endure to the end.

Matthew 10:22, Matthew 24:13, and Mark 13:13 all state this special deliverance that is divinely given to the one who endures.

2 Timothy 2:12, If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

Revelation 2:26, And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations

To encourage such endurance the Lord gives a parable

FIRST PARABLE.

Luke 12:36

And be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks.

In the parable the master is returning from a wedding feast whereas in the tribulation the Lord returns at His second advent and has some from the wedding of the Lamb.

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.

In the culture of Israel the marriage was one event and the marriage supper was another.

Similar to our marriage ceremony and then the wedding reception.

Luke 12:37,38

Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them.

Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

The watches of the night, from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm, 9:00 pm to midnight, and then midnight to 3:00 am

The emphasis is on the unexpectedness of his return and there is an unexpectedness about the return of the Lord for His church.

How many people have put some date on when the Rapture is going to return, from 1914 to the present to the end of this year.

Yet even the Lord in his humanity said *it was not for Him to know* but only the Father.

An analogy

Luke 12:39

And be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into.

About seven times in the New Testament the Lord describes both his coming for His church or the Second Advent as a thief coming to an unsuspecting hours.

The parallel is not one of stealing or doing something illegal or wrong but is an analogy to the suddenness and unexpectedness of a thief.

A thief is not prone to make an appointment with you to come and rob your home.

It is because of that, that I think one time the Lord will not return is at the stroke of midnight on December 31, 1999.

Application

The Lord goes back now to His original statement of encouragement to be ready.

Luke 12:40,41

You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect. And Peter said, Lord, are You addressing this parable to us, or to everyone else as well?

Whenever anyone starts talking about future things and the Lord returning for His people there is always someone, even 2000 years ago, who wants to know if all believers get to go.

But the issue is not going to be with the Lord.

That is set the moment a person puts faith in Jesus Christ for eternal life.

The issue is rewards and honors

It is just like there is an issue between entering the kingdom and inheriting the kingdom.

All believers enter the kingdom but not all receive the rewards, the inheritance God so much wants them to have

Second parable (The Answer to Peter's Question).

Luke 12:42

And the Lord said, Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time?

The issue is faithfulness and being give rule over others (Revelation 2:26)

Luke 12:43,44

Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

But what about the ones who are not faithful to the end?

Luke 12:45-47

But if that slave says in his heart, My master will be a long time in coming, and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

And that slave who knew his masters will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes,

Now here we have a description of a slave that did not ready himself for his master's return.

I want you to note three things about this parable.

He is a slave and he has a master, *my master* v 45

This is not a description of an unbeliever but a believer.

An unbeliever has no concern as to when the Lord will return.

He should, but he does not.

He ignores the word and will of his master that he would return at any time, he is abusive towards others, and he is abusive towards self.

So he sins to the master, others, self,

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The master return unexpectedly and does three things.

He cuts him into pieces

This is one word in the Greek text, and it means to cut or divide into two pieces.

This is not literal because to cut into pieces would render one dead and if dead how can one give him many lashes?

It means to divide the false nature of the slave who anticipated cleaning up his act before his master returned from the true nature of sin.

It can also be used idiomatically for a verbal cutting into two pieces.

The Word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the soul and the spirit, the joints and the marrow (Hebrews 4:12)

Assigns him a place with the unbelievers
Carefully notice the wording, not *as* an unbeliever but *with* the unbeliever. "Gives him many lashes."

This is divine discipline - chastisement.

Luke 12:48

but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. 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.

Now many people try to make this the leaders of apostate Israel but nothing in the text would suggest that interpretation.

If we are to go along with most interpretations and make this the unbeliever we would then have to see levels of punishment in hell which is not found anywhere else in the Scriptures, Hell is, well, it is hell and worse than we can even imagine.

And if the unbeliever the last verse, v 48, really makes no sense at all

But what do we know about this time of the Lord's return at the Second Advent and the believers who are alive then?

They are invited to a banquet, the wedding feast of the Lamb.

Matthew 8:11-12

Matthew 22:2-14

Matthew 24:48-51

So this is the believing Jew of the Old Testament or of the Tribulation who did not or does not endure to the end.

For those who are there in resurrected bodies, there will be loss of reward and rule.

For those who are alive at the end of the Tribulation, they will go into the kingdom but there will be the lashes of divine discipline.

Principle

Would you even try to apply that to the unbeliever?

It cannot be done.

But to the believer, of any dispensation, it is a true principle - and people, today, in our land and in our churches our freedom has given us much - and I believe much is required.

Are you willing to take the responsibility of the privilege and freedom you have?

And grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ?

And such is the nature of sin and the refusal to repent as we will see in the following verses.

In this last paragraph of Luke chapter twelve and the first paragraph of Luke thirteen we have two contrasting principles.

First, the principle of division within relationships and secondly the principle of reconciliation within the most important relationship we have.

Purpose and Desire.

Luke 12:49,50

**I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled!
But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!**

The Lord Jesus, in His human desire, looks ahead to His Second Coming when He will come to defeat the enemies of His saints and establish His Kingdom on earth.

And event we examined last week as the Lord told His disciples to be ready.

He desire is that, that time be now.

It would mean the Cross was complete, the Tribulation on earth would end, and His glorious kingdom would be established.

But just as you and I might look ahead to some great event in our lives, the Lord knows that the glory will not come until His task on earth is complete.

But He is motivated by the eventual outcome.

Hebrews 12:2, 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.

So at verse 50 He adds that before the glory of the complete victory comes upon the earth, he has a baptism he must undergo.

The word baptism is used here in the true sense of an identification.

He must be identified with our sins to be the one who will take away our sins.

That is often referred to as the Baptism of the Cup in which the Father poured out upon Jesus at the Cross the sins of the human race.

This frees us to turn from our sins because the debt of sins, the penalty of sins has been paid.

Imagine it as walking away from a debt, it has been paid.

The word desire is interestingly translated, it is *συνεχῆ* and is also translated *to be completely devoted* to something.

And Jesus was completely devoted to the going to the Cross.

So while He looks ahead to His Second Coming, He is devoted to the purpose for which He has now come to earth and in v 51 He examines one result of that purpose.

Luke 12:51-53

**Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division;
for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two, and two against three.
They will be divided, father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against mother;**

mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.

The Lord is telling them that as wonderful as human relationship may be, even family relationships, the most important relationship, the one that will last forever is the relationship of the child of God to the Heavenly Father and His Son, the Savior, Jesus Christ.

And as sad as it is, I have seen family relationships dissolve when one puts faith in Christ and others oppose that believer.

Luke 12:54

**And He was also saying to the multitudes, When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, A shower is coming, and so it turns out.
And when you see a south wind blowing, you say, It will be a hot day, and it turns out that way.
You hypocrites! You know how to analyze the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why do you not analyze this present time?**

The present time was the dispensation of Christ on earth, a time in which Israel should have welcomed the Messiah, believed on the King, and rejoiced in anticipation of the establishment of the Kingdom.

But they could not see it - because what the Lord said and did, did not fit their idea of a deliverer.

Luke 12:57

And why do you not even on your own initiative judge what is right?

Parable of Reconciliation

Luke 12:58

For while you are going with your opponent to appear before the magistrate, on your way there make an effort to settle with him, in order that he may not drag you before the judge, and the judge turn you over to the constable, and the constable throw you into prison.

What the Lord pictures here in this simple parable is the human race and the Lord Himself going before the Judge, His Father.

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Along the way to that Advent mankind needs to settle the matter with the Lord and that is done when we as the offending sinner humble ourselves before the Lord and accept His payment for our sins.

If we do that, there is no need to fear going before the righteous judge.

If mankind will not, however, he will stand before the Father, next to the Lord and try to plead his case apart from the work of Christ on the Cross - and the outcome is that he will be convicted of sins and separated from God forever.

Luke 12:59

I say to you, you shall not get out of there until you have paid the very last cent.

Since the payment of sin is death, spiritual death, the debt is never paid and the sentence is forever.

But it does not need to be that way.

Luke 13 continues the principle.

Some now bring an incident to the Lord to question Him and He answers and then gives another historical incident for them to consider.

The Jews believed that calamities in life and even a tragic death came because of one's sins.

But what Jesus has just touched upon would indicate otherwise.

Chapter 13

Luke 13:1

Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

This is the same occasion so we see that what He has just taught prompts the report and the question.

He spoke of debt and these present want to know if these who perished were greater sinner because of the way they died.

The historical incident happened about 20 years earlier when Judas of Galilee led a revolt against Rome for the money taken from Temple taxes to build the aqueduct leading into Jerusalem.

At a protest at the Temple Pilate has armed soldiers dressed in civilian clothing go through the crowd and kill by the blade a number of the protestors.

Then mingles their blood with the sacrifices as a warning to the Jews.

Now wouldn't such a tragedy be a result of their sins?

Jesus tells them NO!

Luke 13:2

And He answered and said to them, Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered this fate?

God does not punish sins in this manner because all have sinned and come short of God's glory.

Whether you sin a little or a lot, in God's estimation (now man's is different) but in God's perfect justice you are a guilty sinner.

Galatians 3:10, For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.

Luke 13:3

I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

So the fate for the mild sinner and the wild sinner is the same, they will perish unless they repent.

To further illustrate the point, Jesus brings in a more current example

Luke 13:4

Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem?

A tower along the walls of Jerusalem was being built near the pool of Siloam and it fell killing eighteen of the workmen.

Jesus asks if they thought these men who died so tragically were *worse culprits*, the word means a debtor or one who is under obligation.

By the use of this word the Lord relates their false view of sin and suffering and death to the parable He gave at the end of chapter 12.

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Of course as it was in the first case, the answer is *no* and Jesus repeats the issue of sin and repentance.

Luke 13:5

I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

While this reads the same in English there is a difference in the Greek text.

In verse 3 the verb repent was a continual present tense action while here is an aorist, subjunctive or future point in time action.

So verses 3 and 5 bring together both the need for a continual attitude of repentance and the need for those points in time when man must repent.

The first would illustrate the attitude of the believer while the second would illustrate the need for the unbeliever to repent.

A Parable to Illustrate the need for Salvation Repentance

Luke 13:6

And He began telling this parable: A certain man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it, and did not find any.

The certain man is God the Father who established the vineyard which is Israel

Luke 13:7

And he said to the vineyard-keeper, Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?

The vineyard-keeper is the Lord Jesus and the Certain Man has looked for the repentance of Israel through His Son for three years

Luke 13:8

And he answered and said to him, Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer;

The Lord request of the Father one more year to bring Israel to faith in Him, the bear fruit

Luke 13:9

and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.

If there is no fruit then, then it may be cut down.

Luke 11:31-32, The Queen of the South shall rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

Luke 11:49b-51, God said,

I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, in order that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.

While the next year in the parable of the fig tree is figurative, the generation of the Luke 11 is literal.

These words were spoken about 30 AD, a generation is 40 years in the Hebrew culture.

Add 40 years to 30 AD and you have 70 AD.

The year Titus the Roman marched his legions into Jerusalem and totally destroyed it.

What would have prevented this?

Their repentance at salvation and their continual attitude of repentance in the Christ Centered Life - now what is repentance?

Repentance is an integral part of the Gospel to Israel.

They were to repent for the Kingdom of God was at hand.

Israel's repentance is always viewed as a return to the Covenants

The message of repent and believe urges the Jew to return to the Covenant by placing faith in the

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Messiah (found in the Mat, Mark (once) and, Luke and the Acts where Jews are the hearers of the message).

In the Gospel of John, a salvation tract (John 20:31 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) to the Gentiles and does not once mention repentance.

The Gentile was told to believe (Acts 16:31) so the common element excluding the Covenants which are for Israel and not us is to believe in Jesus Christ for eternal life.

Repentance describes the internal resolve (decision) to turn from one's sins (because Christ prayed for them at the Cross) and turn to God (who is the loving Father wanting fellowship with you).

So it is an internal turning to an external.

The prodigal son, admitted his sin in the pig pen, return to his father who embraced him without a word spoken by the son.

The second confession was while in the father's arms (fellowship restored) and was a means to remove the son's guilty.

The continual attitude of repentance for the believer is essential for enjoying your eternal life, for enjoying God's grace, for enjoying intimacy with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Because repentance is a decision as well as a continual attitude, the denial, ignoring, rationalizing of sins blocks our return to fellowship.

We do not see the need for the decision to be made until we admit, recognize, confess those sins.

Because repentance is a decision, it cannot be divorced from faith in the Son who paid the price for sins, from faith in the Father who wants intimate fellowship with you, and faith in the Holy Spirit who wants to fill you with the fullness of God.

Faith and repentance involve the total immaterial being of the believer.

Mind or Intellect

The understanding of a principle or proposition, Christ dies for all my sins

Emotion

The conviction and affirmation of the principle and the sense of one's own inability to add anything of works to God's work

Volition

The personal trusting in, reliance upon, the assurance and confidence in what God has done for us through Christ

The Talmud contains a story of a famous rabbi who was walking with some of his students when one of them asked, *Rabbi, when should a man repent?*

The rabbi calmly replied, *You should be sure you repent on the last day of your life.*

But, protested several of his student, we can never be sure which day will be the last day of our life.

The rabbi smiled and said, *The answer to that dilemma is very simple. Repent now.*

A business man was selling a warehouse. The building had been empty for months and needed repairs. Vandals had damaged the doors, smashed the windows, and strewn trash all over the place.

As he showed a prospective buyer the property, he took pains to say that he would replace the broken windows, bring in a crew to correct any structural damage, and clean out the garbage.

The buyer said, *Forget about the repairs. If I buy this place, I'm going to build something completely different. I don't want the building; I want the site.*

I think that is what God says about us.

He does not want what we have built upon the site of our lives, He wants the site.

Compared with the renovation God has in mind, our efforts to improve are as trivial as sweeping a warehouse slated for the wrecking ball. Grace sets us free from our old building, our old life.

God makes all things new.

All He wants is the site and the our faith permission, our trust in Him to build.

All we have to do is give Him the *property* and He will do the *building*.

But many today do not see that, they want to make a law that says warehouses must be swept,

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kept clean, broken windows repaired, and doors fixed.

And when they can meet the demands of their rules, they can then stand back and boast of the fine warehouse they have - and all the time God is there with the wrecking ball.

Luke 13:10

And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.

Luke is recording many examples of our Lord's ministry in from Luke 9:51 to Luke chapter 19.

The various messages and miracles, encounters and oppositions that the Lord faces are set into a tapestry by Luke, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to present and validate the Lord and His work.

Over the past few paragraphs we have seen the Lord offering Himself and His Kingdom to Israel and we have seen over and over their rejection.

The Lord wants so much for the people He came to save to repent and believe in Him but they have convinced themselves that their Messiah will free them from Roman bondage and since the Lord certainly is not about this task they have rejected Him.

They want their Messiah to fulfill His second coming but they ignore the prophecies which tell us of how the Lord must first defeat the unseen enemies of His people before defeating, yet in the future even for us, the seen enemies of His people.

Again we see that inaccurate expectation based upon man's understanding of the way things should be results in the rejection of what God wants man to have.

Here Luke includes a miracle but of the many miracles Jesus did during this time, although less than in Galilee, this one is recorded at this time to show what the Lord has to offer.

Without denying the historicity of the event, here is obvious symbolic value in this miracle especially at this point in the narrative. It was Jesus' mission among the people of the nation to loose them from crippling influences and bring them to freedom and uprightness in Him. Here was a graphic example of Jesus' touch, bringing the woman to that position of uprightness.

Luke 13:11

And behold, there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all.

It was the Sabbath, Saturday, and Jesus was in the synagogue, and there was also a woman present who for eighteen years had been crippled with what we might compare to some form of arthritic condition.

We are told, however, that the cause of this is a spirit, referring here to a demon possessing the woman.

The advent of this crippling condition would have coincided with Jesus, and a young boy, going the Temple in Jerusalem and His discussions with the learned priests and rabbis.

That was the first presentation of Himself to the nation and with that, Satan began to attack.

This woman is just one example of how Satan moved against the Jews during the incarnation of Jesus Christ and His ministry to the nation.

In Romans 8:15 we find a spirit that is described as a spirit of bondage and the entire human race is crippled by the bondage of Satan and his demons.

In her great distress and difficulty of movement she came to the synagogue to worship God.

Like Abraham, who will be mentioned in this passage, she had the faith to believe that God was able to do the impossible.

One grammatical note, the phrase *could not straighten up at all* can also be translated to *not be able to lift one up*.

Symbolically this shows us the utter helplessness of man to lift oneself up to God.

Luke 13:12,13

And when Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, Woman, you are freed from your sickness.

And He laid His hands upon her; and immediately she was made erect again, and began glorifying God.

There is drama in this verse, Jesus called her to Him.

So as others looked on they saw the woman, crippled, hard for her to move, bent over, get up,

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take the awkward steps to go to the one who beckoned her.

We see five things happening in verses 12 and 13. He calls her and she come to Him.

In the same way He calls all mankind to come to Him and the response is to take the steps of faith to bring us into His presence.

He announces her freedom.

The Lord would die on the Cross to set men free and this announcement is the central theme of the Bible.

You have been set free from the slave market of sin.

He laid His hands upon her.

Salvation is personal, God's love is personal, His grace is personal.

He touched her as He touches our souls now when He saves and as He delivers us.

She immediately was healed.

Nothing was expected on her part.

She did not add to this in any way, she was immediately healed.

There was a young man who came before the Church for membership.

The board wanted to know for certain that the boy was a Christian so they asked him how were you saved?

He said *God did His part and I did my part.*

Understanding free grace salvation as they did they were not accepting of the answer so they asked what he meant.

He said, *God did the saving, and I did the sinning, and Jesus died for my sins.*

Nothing needs to be done on our part but coming to Jesus

She immediately began to glorify God.

The proper response, the only response.

This is $\delta\omicron\xi\alpha\zeta\omega$ which means to praise, to honor, to glorify God as a response to His greatness and great work.

We do not worship and glorify God as a work or as a means to get something, we do so as a response to His greatness and grace.

Luke 13:14

And the synagogue official, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, began saying to the multitude in response, There are six days in which work should be done; therefore come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day.

While her response was to praise God, here is another response. The leader of the synagogue was not a preacher as much as an administrator. His job was to find and invite rabbis to teach and preach.

The leader of this synagogue, chairman of the board so to speak, was not asked a question or even addresses but is so disturbed by what just happened that he speaks not merely to Christ but to the entire congregation.

This is not just a statement but an imperative of command - like *thou shall not heal on the Sabbath.*

We can see human nature at work in this man.

He speaks up when not spoke to, he commands others in an attempt to control, and he cannot handle grace so he makes a law. Part of this may have been due to jealousy, because no one at the synagogue had been able to help this woman including him.

And here we see a sad commentary to us even today - do we praise the works of God among His people or do we get upset when we see others used by Him in His great deeds?

I will give him credit for one thing over most people today.

He at least believed that God's work could be done on six days but not on the Sabbath.

Today, we have degenerated in our thinking to believe that God's work can only be done on one day of the week, and that is Sunday.

But we can certainly see how he took the JOY and the PRAISE out of the wonderful thing that just happened and embarrassed this poor woman.

The Lord responds with an analogy and a statement of truth.

Luke 13:15

But the Lord answered him and said, You hypocrites, does not each of you on

the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall, and lead him away to water him?

The rabbis, in an attempt to define the Old Testament Law had written many more laws. And since so much of the law dealt with the Sabbath and with the proper care of animals, they had laws about what could and could not be done with beasts of burden on the Sabbath.

And that law said a man could untie his animals and take them into the stall on the Sabbath and could also lead them to water.

So the Lord uses their law show the validity of what he just did.

He set free one who was bound.

One who for eighteen years had come to the synagogue and found no help, but continued to come, in faith, to worship the God of her fathers.

Luke 13:16

And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?

And here is the argument of His case.

This woman, as opposed to a ox or donkey, a human being, who is much more card for by God than these farm animals, who is a daughter of Abraham (a part of God's chosen race and heir of the promise of the Messiah), whom Satan has bound - should she not be set free on the Sabbath or any other day for that matter?

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.

Luke 13:17

And as He said this, all His opponents were being humiliated; and the entire multitude was rejoicing over all the glorious things being done by Him.

So we saw two responses to the miracle and now we see two responses to the teaching.

First, his opponents were being humiliated.

The word used here means to move from disappointment, to shame, to disgrace, to anger.

Jesus showed them grace and one thing I have found as a fact, if people are not oriented away from self and to grace they will get very upset when grace hits them in the face.

Secondly, the people were rejoicing.

And that is what we should do when we see the love and grace of God displayed.

Jesus will conclude this with two brief parables that teach that the kingdom is not to be ruled by scribal legalism but by the law of love and mercy.

Luke 13:18

Therefore He was saying, What is the kingdom of God like, and to what shall I compare it?

Now, two brief parables describing the Kingdom of God.

Luke 13:19

It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and threw into his own garden; and it grew and became a tree; and THE BIRDS OF THE AIR NESTED IN ITS BRANCHES.

And again He said, To what shall I compare the kingdom of God?

It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened.

In both these parables we see that which man considers small and insignificant to have a great effect.

The kingdom of God is not to be ruled by scribal legalism but by the law of love, mercy, and grace

And that love, mercy, and grace tells us that Jesus did it all.

Illustration

A man came forward in a Gospel meeting, and asked, *What can I do to be saved?*

Knowing the man as one of great accomplishments, the evangelist told him, *You're too late!* The man was visibly distressed and said, *Look, I really want to be saved; I'd do anything or go anywhere to obtain it.*

Looking at his watch the evangelist said, *sorry, you're too late for that, our salvation was completed many hundreds of years ago at the Cross.*

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It's finished work! All you have to do is simply receive Christ.

The gift He offers will become yours through His merits.

Realizing his great debt was paid, the man found peace by looking to the Savior and resting his all upon the grace of God.

Grace is God's Riches - at Christ's Expense

Today we are going to see the problems pride can cause, for those who strive to be first, they will end up last.

Last week we studied Luke 13:10-17.

We saw Jesus in a synagogue on the Sabbath day, Saturday, where He healed a woman who had been crippled for eighteen years.

You will recall that the leader of the synagogue took exception to this and told Jesus that people should not be healed by God on the Sabbath.

This religious leader expressed many of the things we see even today about religion.

Jealousy, inability, ineffectiveness, and the tendency to make laws when freedom is not understood.

God wants you to have tremendous freedom through grace, God's Riches at Christ's Expense.

And yet we fear freedom, and others try to put one foot in spiritual freedom and one foot in the Law, and that leads to a constant conflict in the life of the Christian.

Religion loves its laws because religion knows it can control and dictate through the Law.

This miracle and this Sabbath day controversy occurred within the larger context of Luke showing us how Jesus presented Himself to His people as their King, offering His kingdom and how they rejected Him and the Kingdom and went for rules and laws and regulations and religion.

Christianity is not a religion, it is a relationship with God through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Religion is man working to get to God whereas Christianity is God's work in coming to man.

To clarify His teaching on the danger of making these petty laws such as not healing on a certain

day and rejecting and restricting freedom, Jesus gives two parables.

The Kingdom of God can refer to the literal 1000 year kingdom of Christ which is yet future for even us and will be examined as part of our Revelation study on Tuesday nights.

In Matthew 6:10 Jesus taught His disciples to pray

**Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.**

And while that looked ahead to the literal kingdom there is the principles that God's kingdom functions on earth among believers.

Not the literal kingdom but God's kingdom of grace.

And that is the Kingdom that we are a part of right now.

Colossians 1:13-14, For God 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.

Romans 14:17 Paul stated.

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

So these parables describe how God's kingdom is to function on earth at any time among the saints.

Many take the seed and the leaven to be analogous to faith but where these parables are placed, immediately after if not a part of the controversy over healing on the Sabbath, I would have to see these figures as a negative.

Small things that grow to be big and in the case of the application, big problems.

Leaven is always pictured in the Bible as a negative thing, a little leaven, leaven the whole loaf and in the last chapter (Luke 12:1) the Lord warned the people to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy which He also called those who were siding with the synagogue leader.

And in at least half the parables that talk about birds the bird is seen as that which opposes the Lord and is used in some cases for Satan and his demons.

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So here, small things, like seeds and leaven, are symbolic of the small laws that man loves to embrace.

Someone may say what is the big deal, we do not heal on the Sabbath, one day a week - but a little of that now which saps the greatness of grace, will have a much greater effect if allowed to grow.

Luke 13:22

And He was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching, and proceeding on His way to Jerusalem.

Luke again reminds his readers and us that Jesus has a goal, a destiny and that is to go to Jerusalem.

He is traveling south and going through one village to another teaching.

These would be villages that the seventy disciples that He sent out in Luke 10 had visited and witnessed in proclaiming that Christ, the Messiah has come.

We see that Jesus was not only fulfilling His **geographical objective** of going to Jerusalem but also His **ministry objective** of teaching.

Luke 13:23

And someone said to Him, Lord, are there just a few who are being saved? And He said to them,

This is a good question. The disciples had seen so much of what Jesus had been teaching come into conflict with the religion of their day.

Some would assume that very few had it right, that very few go it so to speak.

The only question we may have with this verse is *which salvation is being referred to?*

To the Jewish mind salvation was to enter the Kingdom promised by the prophets, salvation was the initial requirement to enter.

So we would have to see this as salvation one but with understood impact upon salvation two and salvation three.

Where we see the writings to the Church making some pretty hard fast distinctions of these three salvations or deliverances to the Jewish mind they were all combined into one.

Salvation of the soul, deliverance in the life, and rewards in eternity.

So Jesus' answer will really touch upon all three aspects of salvation.

Luke 13:24

Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

The analogy of salvation is to entering a narrow door of a house. We are to strive to enter in.

The word is from the vocabulary of the athlete and means to train, and from it we have our English word agony.

But it means to train or to fight.

Now think about this - Remember the statement *no pain no gain?*

When run to train for a race or any event, you do that which is contrary to the human tendency to avoid pain and inconvenience and things that are not pleasurable.

This striving, in the context, is to strive to not do that which is so normally done by religion and that is to work, to establish and follow petty laws and rules, to promote self, to work to be approved to God.

That is what the world naturally does.

We need to strive against that and do that which is not natural and that is to accept freely the gift of salvation.

Notice the second part.

For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

Now the word seek means to make effort, to demand, to attempt to qualify self.

Many will do this but their vain efforts will not allow them to enter and, notice the last part, *they will not be able.*

Active voice, expressing the total inability of man to save himself.

The door is narrow because there is only one name given under heaven by which man must be saved and that name is Jesus Christ.

Salvation is a free gift of God, it is by our faith meeting God's grace at the Cross.

There is not other way, regardless of how much man may seek, work, even demand, salvation is be faith alone in Christ alone.

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Now a parable to further explain this.

Luke 13:25

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.

A vivid picture is painted by this parable! The master of the house, that is the Lord of the Kingdom, is at the present represented as being in a sitting posture, as if calmly looking on to see who will strive while entrance is available. But when this period has passed, the Master of the house himself rises and shuts the door, after which there will be no admittance.

So really two things are at issue, striving against the natural tendency to work works to enter God's house and timing - . that there is a time to be saved and a time when it will be too late.

Luke 13:26

Jesus almost takes this out of the realm of the parabolic by addressing his listeners within the parable.

Then you will begin to say, We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets;

They will try to qualify themselves because they were in the Lord's presence, He was in their villages, they ate and drank with Him - but they never put faith in Him.

Luke 13:27

and He will say, I tell you, I do not know where you are from; depart from me, all you evildoers.

Two interesting choice of words, it is not *I do not know you* but *I do not know where you are from*.

This looks at generation, family, place of birth, family of birth.

I do now know where you are from as far as your birth - because you are not born again.

So being invited into the Kingdom of God which would be salvation #3 will only be possible if the person is saved, that is salvation #1.

Faith in Christ for eternal life.

The unsaved is called an evildoer and is commanded to depart from the master of the house.

Notice

Why are they evildoers? Because of great acts of sin and evil?

No, because they did not believe in Christ when they had the chance to do so.

Now at this point I believe the Lord splits the application to both the unsaved AND the believer who while saved by faith tried to live the Christian life by works.

The reason I think this is because of the analogy that is used in vv 28-29.

Look at Matthew 8:10b to 12.

Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.

And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven;

but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

You may recall that in our study of Matthew we found a recurring presentation of the reward banquet for believers of the age of the Gentiles and the Age of Israel that will occur at the end of the Tribulation and is also the wedding feast of the divine bridegroom to His bride (the church).

There, the one cast into outer darkness is the believer who is excluded from rewards.

He is cast out into darkness for the time of the reward banquets much like the unfaithful servants of Persia would be tied up in the garden of the king for the night of the royal banquet but let lose at the break of dawn (when tears will be wiped away).

But the plight of the unbeliever is the same, they are seen as wanting to get into the banquet also.

After all they are descendants of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and they have been working hard to qualify to enter but they did not put faith in Christ.

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Luke 13:28

There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out.

Notice the pronouns, but yourselves being cast out - you, Israel, Jews who think that because of your family, where you are from, that you should enter the kingdom and the banquet - but you are not born again, by faith in Christ and by the Spirit of God.

So the unbeliever is cast out and there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth but when the morning comes and the believer who has been cast out because of his works not for salvation but for living the Christian life and for rewards is restored, the unbeliever will continue in that separation.

Notice an earlier verse.

Luke 12:46-47

We took some time to show that this was addressed to the believer who tried to live by works rather than by faith.

And for the time of the giving of rewards the believer of Luke 12 and the unbeliever of Luke 13 are in the same place or, better to say, excluded from the same place and that is the wedding feast of the Lamb.

But who will be there?

Luke 13:29

And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God.

God will regatta believing Israel from the four corners of the earth.

Matthew 13: 27, And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth, to the farthest end of heaven.

But not just Israel, but those of all nations who have put faith in Christ during the tribulation.

Some who have died for their faith and others who are hiding from the antichrist, God will send out angles to gather them from all the earth.

Luke 13:30

So now a principle.

And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last.

These remarks were revolutionary to Jesus' hearers. Most of them assumed that because they were physically related to Abraham they would naturally enter into the promised kingdom. However, His next words were even more revolutionary – in fact devastating – to those who assumed that *only* the Jewish nation would be involved in the kingdom. Jesus explained that Gentiles would be added to the kingdom in place of Jewish people.

In their arrogance the Jewish people considered themselves to be first in every way, but they would be last, that is, they would be left out of the kingdom. In contrast, some Gentiles, considered last, would be in the kingdom and would really be first in importance.

What really makes us first?

The trappings of this world?

The acclaim of men?

Or the grace of God?

We can become so busy bragging about our achievements and our greatness that we forget to recognize God as the source of all our abilities.

We then suffer from spiritual delusions of grandeur.

Luke 13:31

Just at that time some Pharisees came up, saying to Him, Go away and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You.

I do not think that the Pharisees were trying to do Jesus a favor.

I think they wanted Him to leave and they figured this would be a good ploy.

I don't even think Herod did want to kill Jesus at this point.

Later when He was arrested and appeared before Herod in Luke 23

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Luke 23:8

Pilate had sent Jesus to Herod and - *Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him.*

So this is just some scheme to frighten Jesus.

We can suppose that He was in Perea which was under the jurisdiction of Herod and that the Pharisees wanted Him to leave Perea and journey on to Judea where they had some jurisdiction.

Jesus does take what they say as being a message from Herod.

He was not given any precognition or special insight in this matter.

Luke 13:32

And He said to them, Go and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal.

Here the Lord calls Herod Antipas by his nickname, the Fox.

And basically gives him the message (that he will not get) and gives the Pharisees the message that they will get, that He has a ministry to do and will not be distracted from it by fear.

The Pharisees: *If this man does not fear Herod then He certainly would not fear us*

Luke 13:33

Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.

Here we can see that He is seeing through at least part of their ploy.

This is total, absolute sarcasm.

He has His plan is not to be deterred.

And he will end up in Jerusalem, after all, that is where prophets end up getting killed is it not?

But he goes from the satire and sarcasm to compassion and tenderness.

Luke 13:34

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather

your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!

The verbs KILL and STONES are present participles.

As we saw last week in the previous and final woe, these religious leaders were trying to say they would never do these things that their ancestors did, yet the present participles nails them as those who would do this right now.

SENT TO HER is also so participle but is a perfect passive.

This indicates that God has done this (the passive voice) and that it began in the past and continues to the present.

So the response of the religious leaders is to outright kill (without due legal process) or stone to death (indicating some mockery of the legal process) the ones who God has sent.

In response to this evil action the Lord, in verses 32 pronounces them guilty.

In verse 33 tells them they, as unbeliever, are going to hell.

In verse 34 predicts that they will do what their ancestors have done.

And in verse 35 puts upon them the blood or guilt of all the righteous men of the Old Testament from Able to Zechariah (II Chronicles 24:21).

But as fitting as all that was in response to their evil, murderous actions, that was not the Lord's desire.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem - How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!

This passage shows us how little we really know of the Lord's earthly ministry.

We have the four Gospels but if we were to link together all the spoken words of our Savior they could be read aloud in less than three and one-half hours.

Three and one-half hours for three and one-half years of active ministry.

How often I wanted - .

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There may have been many times Jesus came to Jerusalem with His offer of Love, only to be repeatedly rejected.

William Barclay says of this passage, "*Nothing hurts so much as to go to someone and offer love and have that offer spurned.*"

"It is life's bitterest tragedy to give one's heart to someone only to have it broken.

"That is what happened to Jesus in Jerusalem; and still He comes to men and still they reject Him."

The Lord's desire was not to condemn but to love, not to scatter but to gather, not to destroy but to protect and cherish.

But notice now the last words of this verse - *and you would not have it!*

For all the desire, for all the love, for all the compassion that the Lord Jesus had both from His deity and His humanity, the result rested upon the will, the freewill of man.

What the Lord wanted to do was to gather them, as a hen does her chicks, under her wings.

This analogy is often used in the Scriptures.

We first find it in the book of Ruth when Boaz learns who she is he says to her in Ruth 2:12

May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge.

But it is in the Psalms were we see what is there for us when we allow the Lord to express His love and compassion to us as a hen gathers her chicks.

What would Jerusalem miss out on by their rejection.

Psalm 17:8 - Safety is found under God's wings

Psalm 36:7 - Refuge is found under His wings

Psalm 57:1 - Grace is found under His wings

Psalm 61:4 - -Eternal Life is found under His wings

Psalm 63:7 - Joy is found under His wings.

Psalm 91:7 - And His faithfulness is found under His wings

And if we add Ruth 2:12 we have seven; reward is found under His wings

THIS IS WHAT JERUSALEM WILL MISS OUT ON, instead they will have the next verse.

Luke 13:35

Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord

The Lord does not even use a future tense, this is present, right now this is happening.

This is a prophetic statement that was first made in Jeremiah 22 regarding the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans.

Jeremiah 22: 5, But if you will not obey these words, I swear by Myself, declares the LORD, that this house will become a desolation.

History, for Jerusalem, is repeating itself.

Chapter 14

In this passage we are going to see the full breath of the Lord's public ministry.

We begin with a miracle, His challenge to the religious crowd, then a parable, followed by some very practical teaching, and then another parable.

He speaks of the relationships, compassion, good manners, and the future.

The miracle that leads to the parables

Luke 14:1

And it came about when He went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath to eat bread, that they were watching Him closely.

Now Jesus has been invited to a dinner party at the home of a Pharisee.

This was not an unusual occurrence, we saw earlier in Capernaum that Jesus was invited to the home of Simon the Pharisee and it was at that party that Mary of Bethany came and anointed His feet for the first of two times.

Table fellowship was a common thing for the Jews of Jesus' day as it is today among Christians.

Luke 14:2

And there, in front of Him was a certain man suffering from dropsy.

I think we can assume that this man was not a guest at the dinner party but came to Jesus in

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hopes of being healed. His condition is described as dropsy which is a retaining of fluids in the body caused by a type of cancer or possibly liver or kidney problems.

The other possibility is that this man was a *plant* and we can only imagine that these religious would do such a thing in order to trap Jesus.

Luke 14:3

And Jesus answered and spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?

This dinner is taking place on the Sabbath, the food would have been prepared the previous day to be eaten following the Synagogue service.

Previously we saw Jesus heal a woman in the synagogue on the Sabbath and the leader of the synagogue denounce what Jesus did and pass a law against it.

Here Jesus cuts them off at the pass so to speak by asking the leaders if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath.

In the Gospels this word for lawful was used about 30 times and is always used in relationship to Roman or Jewish Law but in the epistles Paul uses it very broadly.

1 Corinthians 6:12, All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.

1 Corinthians 10:23, All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.

So what was a legal issue in the Gospels becomes a grace issue in the epistles.

Indeed, we are not under law but we do what we do, or do not what we may tend to do because of our concern for our own relationship to God and to others - love thy neighbor and fulfill the whole Law.

Luke 14:4

But they kept silent. And He took hold of him, and healed him, and sent him away.

Here these rulers of the Jews are silenced by a pretty simple questions.

So in that silence Jesus heals the man and sends Him away.

Notice, there is not mention of the man's faith, this was a sovereign act of God done in the face of religious legalism.

As the man leave the Lord uses this miracle and the silence of the people to teach a lesson of Grace.

Luke 14:5

And He said to them, Which one of you shall have a son or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?

He pushes them into a corner where they have to decide if it will be grace or law. He uses both a son and an ox, because compassion is not limited just to other people.

I assure you anyone who is cruel to animals will be cruel to people but I do know of some who have compassion to animals and not people.

But some of the best people I know have been faithful pets - is there some application there?

I once heard of a man's prayer that went something like this.

Lord, make me into the man my dog thinks I am.

Luke 14:6

And they could make no reply to this.

We thought their previous silence was amazing, how about this.

In their refusal to abandon their petty legalisms, they would not even say they would pull their own son out of a pit on the Sabbath.

There is a tremendous principle here that speaks to where we are as a society.

I recently heard that the lack of morals in our nation was partly due to the fact that most of our leaders grew up as children in the '50 and early '60 when there was a façade of morality and a very low social consciousness, as seen in the racial prejudice of many of the people at that day.

When morality for the sake of morality and being motivated by morality alone which is an adherence to a standard, one could be moral and still hate others.

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When social consciousness is the motive, morality is not developed or expressed in a society.

So we can be like we are today, very compassionate to others in mass but immoral at the point of hurting the individuals.

But when you begin with LOVE, spiritual love spilled out in your hearts by the Holy Spirit, there is both a social consciousness and a morality in which the well being of others is put first.

I think we will examine that more in time to come from the situation and the silence of the Pharisees the Lord gives a parable.

THE FIRST PARABLE.

Luke 14:7,8

And He began speaking a parable to the invited guests when He noticed how they had been picking out the places of honor at the table; saying to them,

When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him,

Jesus takes them from the dinner party to a wedding feast which looks ahead to the wedding feast that has been mentioned in Jesus' teaching to the religious leaders in Luke 12.

The guest, as they came in, scrambled for the seats at the head table. They were trying to put themselves first as we saw Jesus warn against in the previous chapter.

But now He gives them some practical advice that has eternal implications

Luke 14:9,10

and he who invited you both shall come and say to you, Give place to this man, and then in disgrace you proceed to occupy the last place.

But when you are invited, go and recline at the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, Friend, move up higher; then you will have honor in the sight of all who are at the table with you.

The Advice.

Take the lower seat and then wait for the host to call you up, if he should chose to do so.

But the eternal implication is found in the next verse

Luke 14:11

For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted.

We have already studied the principle of promotion and we found that unless the Lord promotes you, you are not really promoted.

While this is certainly true of the Christian life, it is even more true of eternity.

For the believing Jews who had heard these words of our Savior they should have understood that all the self advancement and self righteousness and self promotion of their religious leaders meant nothing.

It was only done to advance self and what they did and what they thought of themselves paled in light of what the eternal host, God himself thought of them when He would invite them to the wedding feast of His Son.

Jim Elliot, the martyred messenger of the gospel to the Aucas, once called Christians nothing more than a bunch of nobodies trying to exalt Somebody.

Too often we have forgotten that the one we exalt is the Lord Jesus.

Too many believers today are into exalting themselves much like the Pharisees and the ones who would scramble for the best seats at a dinner party.

Take the lower seats in life, if God wants you exalted, He will exalt you and who does He raise up?

Not the hustler, not the one promoting self, but the one who is humble is the one the Father will lift up to a place of honor.

Luke 14:12

And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives

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or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and repayment come to you.

These words of the Lord go right to heart of why we do what we do.

And our attitude to those who may not ever be able to return a favor done to them.

So this teaching really goes to the very core of what GRACE is all about

Luke 14:13,14

But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.

While the :Lord is talking about a dinner party, a reception, again looking ahead to the wedding reception of His Son, we can apply this almost anything we ever do for others.

When we do for others is it to get something back?

Do we discriminate between those who can benefit us and those who cannot?

Do we keep a list of those we owe and those who owe us an invitation?

True grace can never seek recompense If we seek to be rewarded by man we will not be rewarded by God. Blessing can only come from God and not from man.

Jesus Christ did what He did for those who could never pay Him back

Grace does not seek the reward but seeks to reflect the character of Christ through the power of the Word, the Spirit, and by Faith

Luke 14:15

And when one of those who were reclining at the table with Him heard this, he said to Him, Blessed is everyone who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!

We see that at least one of the guest got the point and knew the Lord was speaking about the Wedding Feast God would host for His Son.

And the guest saw that there was a great blessing in being invited to enjoy table fellowship with God in His kingdom.

But we can only assume that this man may have been one who was trying to promote himself because Jesus gives a second parable to teach how those who are invited will not come and the party will be open to those who many would not expect - so guess who is coming to dinner?

THE SECOND PARABLE.

Luke 14:16-24

But He said to him, A certain man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many;

and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, Come; for everything is ready now.

But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.

And another one said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.

And another one said, I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.

And the slave came back and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.

And the slave said, Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.

And the master said to the slave, Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.

This is Luke's abbreviated rendering of the Parable of Matthew 22:2-13

Now this all refers to Israel and rewards given to those believers at their banquet.

But what about us at the Bema - there is no banquet but if there was would we be surprised at who was there?

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If there is humility in your heart, that is if you know that all you are in Christ is because of His grace the only thing you will be surprised at is where the Father invites you to sit.

And that will be a good surprise.

At a dinner party one night Lady Churchill was seated across the table from Sir Winston, who kept making his hand walk up and down -- two fingers bent at the knuckles.

The fingers appeared to be walking toward Lady Churchill.

Finally, her dinner partner asked, *Why is Sir Winston looking at you so wistfully, and whatever is he doing with those knuckles on the table?*

That's simple, she replied. We had a mild quarrel before we left home, and he is indicating it's his fault and he's on his knees to me in abject apology.

That great British statement was at a dinner part and he was there willing to humble himself in the presence of the one he loved.

In the preceding context the Lord has been speaking to the religious leaders and people who think God is going to set aside special places for them at Israel's reward banquet because of who they are and what they have accomplished.

Jesus taught that the many who try to be first are going to end up last.

Back at the end of chapter 13 he addressed the issue of those who think they are saved just because Jesus was in there town or preached in their streets.

Remember, he called them the doers of evil, that is the evil of unbelief.

In chapter 14, however, he addressed the believers who thought they deserved God's favor and rewards because of their works.

So now at the end of chapter 14, having dealt with salvation and with eternal rewards, He turns to the present - what does it take for the believer to be a disciple?

This portion of this chapter is addressed to believers and considers the cost of discipleship.

So while salvation is a decision of faith, becoming a disciple is a process of faith in which there are many decisions.

Luke 14:25

Now great multitudes were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them,

Jesus and the twelve are continuing on their journey to Jerusalem for the Passover. Many others from Galilee, Judea and Perea are also going to Jerusalem.

Many have chosen to walk with Jesus and as they did He would turn and teach them.

Here, as a multitude (a big crowd) is following Him, he turns and say to them some very disturbing things.

Luke 14:26

If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.

God wants everybody who will come; but when it comes to discipleship, He wants only those who will pay the price. Jesus was not impressed by the great crowds that followed Him because He knew their hearts. He was on His way to a cross outside Jerusalem, and the crowds were not ready for that. It is easy to be in the crowd but not so easy to carry the cross.

In v 26 we begin with a conditional clause, *IF anyone comes to me.*

The *if* is 1 class conditional conjunction that presumes that there are those who have chosen to come to Christ.

The small word *to* is $\pi\rho\omicron\varsigma$ which means face to face with, not just following along side.

So these are those who have believed who now desire to come face to face with Christ and be His disciple.

So here is a prerequisite.

Hate own father, mother, wife, children., brothers, sisters, and self.

I want us to bear in mind a few things as we consider this verse.

First, Jesus is speaking to Jews who may have a different view of what is called hate here than we would.

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Secondly, we need to consider the word itself, does it only mean hate?

And then we need to consider the context.

The Jewish family was very strong and this was by God's design for His Old Testament people.

We have the twelve tribes, clans, families.

When a family member did something that was contrary to family wishes or traditions, he was said to be hating his family.

Even today in Jewish homes, if a child does not follow the family wishes you can almost here the Jewish mother saying, *you are tearing out my heart, you must hate your parents*, on and on, right?

So in the culture the hate would be an accused attitude that would be presumed by one of these listed if the individual did not do as they wished.

Now there are a number of Greek words that could be used here but the one that Jesus uses is what we might call the most mild.

It is the word *μισέω* and it can mean to hate but also to be hostile against, to have an aversion to, and to despise; disregard, be indifferent to.

In the Septuagint Genesis 29:31 and in Deuteronomy 21:15 it means to love less than something else.

Gen 29:31, Now the LORD saw that Leah was unloved.

Deuteronomy 21:15, If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other unloved -

So the word used there means to love less and here we would take that understanding of what Jesus is saying.

Principle

If we as believers are to be disciples of Christ we need to love Him more than anyone else, even self.

If even our closest family members were to try and influence us away from serving Christ, we need to stand disregard their influence.

Even if our family members accuse us of hating them for our devotion to Christ we must not be deterred in our love for the Savior.

The final statement of v 26 is - *he cannot be My disciple*

We have a verb and then an infinitive.

The verb is cannot and is the word for power or ability.

Because family is first rather than the Lord the believer is unable to become a disciple.

The word be is the infinitive which sees this as a result, a result of other relationships that the believer deems as being more important than his or her relationship to the Lord.

Luke 14:27

Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

Now we have another statement that teaches who and who cannot be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Remember, many are following Him to Jerusalem.

They are going for Passover, He is going to the Cross.

The Romans were the ones who invented the horrible death by crucifixion.

When the Roman authorities crucified a criminal, the victim was forced to carry his cross part of the way to the crucifixion site. Carrying his cross through the heart of the city was supposed to be an admission that the Roman Empire was correct in the sentence of death imposed on him, an admission that Rome was right and he was wrong.

So when Jesus enjoined His followers to carry their crosses and follow Him, He was referring to a public display before others that Jesus was right and that the disciples were following Him even to their deaths. This is exactly what the religious leaders refused to do.

A criminal taking his cross to the place of death, was shamed, was mocked, scorned, and yet also he was saying that the authorities had the right to his life -

Jesus' Cross on our backs says He has a right to our life.

So to be a disciple we must be willing to demonstrate that our life is not ours, that we are under authority, the authority of Jesus Christ our master.

Now what about the disciple, what is he?

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And how are we to be disciples?

Now in verses 28 through 32 the Lord gives two parables that deal with the cost of discipleship.

Parables are given to reveal and to conceal and as we see in the last verse of this chapter it will take the one who has ears (and we all do) to hear (to carefully listen and to get the meaning under the surface of the parable).

The Builder

Luke 14:28-30

For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it?

Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish.

I have seen people who started to build a house and did not have the means to finish it.

Soon the lumber that has been set begins to weather and rot, the foundation may stay, but all else blows away.

Warren Wiersbe sees the builder and the king as the Lord who is building His church and doing battle in the world and only selects those disciples who are willing to give all to Him to finish the task and win the battle.

But in the context I have to see the builder and the king as the believer.

He is saved but he just does not finish the job of the Christian life nor does he win the battles, but rather surrenders to the world.

The builder lays the foundation, laid by faith in Jesus Christ, the foundation is salvation.

But then the believer starts to build, but something halts construction.

He did not consider the cost.

He is brought to the point of decision, to go on building with the faith he has or go back and trust himself.

The one who does not count the cost is the one who fails to look beyond salvation to becoming

the person God saved him to be, a disciple of Jesus Christ.

The King

Luke 14:31,32

Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand?

Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace.

The king starts out for victory but ends up suing for terms of peace.

Now this is good, you are the king, you set out in the Christian life to have the victory - how is that victory going to come?

1 John 5:4, For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world-- our faith.

Gideon when to battle with 300 against thousands, and armed with faith, he had the victory.

Over and over again we see in the Scriptures how faith wins the battle even when humanly outnumbered.

The two parables drive home a common point in two different ways.

For the builder he can build the tower or not build, he must sit down and reckon the cost and see if he can afford to build.

In this parable the Lord tells the believer to sit down and consider if he can afford to follow Christ.

For the king, he is being invaded by the army of the enemy. He has no choice.

In this parable the Lord asks can you afford not to follow me.

Luke 14:33

So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

The verb give up is middle voice and that is neat, it means that if the Lord does call upon us to ever

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give anything or everything it will be for our benefit, that is what the middle voice tells us!

Corrie ten Boom, that saintly lady who endured such brutality from the Nazis in Ravensbruck during World War II, once said that she had learned to hold everything loosely in her hand.

She said she discovered, in her years of walking with Him, that when she grasped things tightly, it would hurt when the Lord would have to pry her fingers loose.

Disciples hold all *things* loosely.

Luke 14:34

Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned?

It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out.

Jesus had already called disciples the salt of the earth.

But what happens when salt loses its savor?

But more so, how does salt lose its taste? We have had bags of salt around our house for a long time and it is still good.

But the impure salt of the ancient world could lose its taste especially if set upon the ground.

A mound of salt on the ground would actually leach out its taste into the ground.

The only way salt could be preserved is if it was set not upon the ground, but upon a rock.

Believers, the salt of the earth, can lose his or her effectiveness if focused on the world.

We need to be set upon Christ, the rock of our salvation.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

I heard story about a man sitting before a fireplace lost in thought. The drapes had been closed and the room was dark except for the flickering light of the dying fire.

Finally the flames themselves disappeared, leaving nothing but a heap of gray ashes topped with glowing embers.

One burning coal stood out brilliantly from all the rest because it was white hot.

The man's gaze was transfixed upon it. Suddenly that brilliant white-hot coal turned completely black.

The man was startled. What had caused the instant change?

As he looked around, he noticed that the drapes had parted slightly and a shaft of brilliant sunlight had shot into the study and landed directly on the burning coal.

The greater light had made the lesser light look black by comparison.

That is what Christ demands of us.

Our love and devotion for Him must be so complete that the deepest love we have for our dearest loved one fades in comparison.

Do you love the Lord Jesus like that? If you don't - or aren't willing to -- you cannot be His disciple.

Chapter 15

We have seen in the past chapters of Luke's Gospel the Lord dealing with the Pharisees, the Scribes and others whose religion prevented them from seeing His love and God's grace.

We have noted that He is on His way to Jerusalem, to the Cross.

He has taught the people enroute and now turns to the one particular group of people who were considered the outcast of society, the tax-collectors and the sinners.

Now, back to these outcasts, the tax-collectors and sinners were rejected in every way by Jewish society.

Religion is often intolerant, and religion is often more in the business of rejecting than accepting especial if one's life style, one's position or job or family or bank account does not measure up.

But God is in the business of persistently seeking to accept the one who is lost and there is not a stronger message in the world than acceptance.

In the first two parables of the three parables of Luke 15 we see the persistence of the Grace of God is calling the lost sinner to come home.

Luke 15:1,2

Now all the tax-gatherers and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him.

And both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, This man receives sinners and eats with them.

The tax-collectors worked for the Roman Government that occupied the land of Israel.

They were Jews who were for the most part wealthy and would not be tempted to steal from the Romans but they did work on a commission so the more they collected the more they legally earned.

Since Israel was an occupied Roman territory the Jewish citizens and the religious leaders hated the Romans and hated anyone who they saw as a collaborator with them.

The tax-collectors certainly fit this description and were so rejected by religious Israel that they could only befriend others who were also rejected such as criminals and prostitutes.

The word in v 1 for *sinners* was a word often used to describe the *prostitute*.

These rejected ones were seen as non-law keepers and called the *people of the Land* which would be our equivalent of *worldly* people.

Now Jesus as we noted in the last paragraph of Luke 14 was teaching the multitudes of people who were on their way to Jerusalem for the Passover.

But now tax-collectors and sinners have drawn near to Him to listen to the words of love and grace.

Now consider what is drawing them to him. Certainly not the same line they have heard from the Pharisees nor the message that did nothing but condemn them. Certainly not the Lord's rejection of them.

You do not want to be near those who reject you.

Certainly not the constant judgment of them that came from the lips of the teachers of the Law.

When Paul wrote the the Romans there were many Jews in Rome who had never learned how much God loves and seeks even the most wayward of sinners.

They were still up to their old tricks of condemning and judging.

Romans 2:1-4, Therefore you are without excuse, every man of you who passes

judgment, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things (judging is sin)

2 And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

3 And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same (that is the sin of judging) that you will escape the judgment of God?

4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

What drew them near to the Savior was His kindness, the expression of His love and grace.

Here was a man who they believed had not come to condemn them.

Why had He come, they may not have known but they knew they had to hear what He was saying.

Well, of course the Pharisees and the scribes (teachers of the Law) had to be critical.

So they *began to grumble, saying, This man receives sinners and eats with them.*

We do not read anything in the passage about eating nor about the Lord actively receiving anyone so while this is true it goes beyond what is actually happening.

Typical of religion, they add their own fuel to the fire of their indignation.

Now here we see grace.

Jesus is patience and will teach not only them but also the ones who are broken, hurting, and rejected that God is seeking them.

The parable of the lost sheep

Luke 15:3

And He told them this parable, saying, What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it?

Jesus is in a rural area east of Jericho and perhaps even east of the Jordan.

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These rural people understood the responsibilities of shepherds and the care the shepherds gave their sheep. Here in the parable one sheep out of a hundred is lost from the flock.

Have you ever seen a hundred sheep, have you ever just seen 99?

Not much difference.

I do not think I would know if one were missing but a shepherd knows.

In the Old Testament in Psalm 119 and in Jeremiah 50 believers admit to being lost sheep.

In Isaiah 53:6 we read

**All of us like sheep have gone astray,
Each of us has turned to his own way**

Peter uses the sheep gone astray analogy in I Peter 2:25

For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

Now in the circumstances that gave rise to the parable we can see that the Pharisees and scribes did not care for the tax-collector sheep and the sinning sheep.

They were lost and as far as religious Israel was concerned, let them stay lost.

But God is the great shepherd and whether at salvation or at spiritual restoration, He will seek the lost sheep.

He leaves the 99, which is a picture of Jesus leaving heaven to come to earth.

The shepherd of the parable would have left the 99 in the hands of the other shepherd he worked with so he is not being negligent in his duties.

Luke 15:5

And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

He rejoices because he has found the sheep and found it alive.

The shepherds of ancient Israel worked for land owners or for their families.

They had to keep track of each sheep and if one did stray and was killed by the wolves he had to bring back its fleece to show that it had died.

The shepherd would not give up on his task of finding the lost sheep so he rejoices in being able to bring him back.

Luke 15:6

And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!

Others are called to rejoice also over the sheep that has been found. And then Jesus draws the parable to a spiritual conclusion.

Luke 15:7

I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Now here is where Jesus gets a dig into these religious hypocrites.

He speaks of great Joy in heaven when one sinner is found and repents.

And then he speaks of the righteous persons who need no repentance.

The identity of the righteous persons

Matthew 9:11-13, And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, Why is your Teacher eating with the tax-gatherers and sinners?

12 But when He heard this, He said, It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.

13 But go and learn what this means, I desire compassion, and not sacrifice (Hosea 6:6) , for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

The righteous ones are the ones who think they are righteous and this think they have no need of grace, no need of salvation or restoration, and no need to be found.

Principle

It is when we think that we have no need for repentance that we really need repentance

The parable of the lost coin

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Luke 15:8

Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?

In this rural area the floors of most houses were dirt.

They had to be kept free from weeds so it is understand how a coin, even a large silver coin, could be lost within a home.

The coin is the Greek *drachma* which was equal to a days wage so the coin itself is of value.

The headdress of the Jewish wife was made of ten silver coins held together individually by a silver cord to a silver chain.

We can see how she might find at the end of the day that one is missing and yet, not having left the house that day, knows it is in the house.

This would have been a social faux pas, to lose such a valuable item, like losing a wedding ring.

So we can understand the great rejoicing when it was found.

Luke 15:9

And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!

So again there is rejoicing and again the Lord makes the spiritual application

Luke 15:10

In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Notice the wording, it is the one who has lost something that has the great joy even in the presence of the angles of God.

So it is the Lord who has the Joy in finding the lost.

Whereas the religious leaders would never know that joy.

Because they reject with disdain that which is lost.

And they are so far from God that they do not even know they are lost.

Now these two parables look at how the Lord seeks us when we are lost, when we are away from Him.

While this is put into the language of the dispensation of Israel it is a principle that goes beyond dispensations to apply to every believer of every age.

And that principle is that God seeks those who belong to Him and rejoices when we return to the wonderful fellowship we can have with Him.

These two parables show us how God seeks us and that is of initial importance in spiritual recovery, because there are none who seek God, not one.

Not as an unbeliever and not as a believer out of fellowship.

It is God the Holy Spirit who pursues us.

We are sought and it is only by His convicting or His teaching, or His reminding that we will come to realize we are not where God wants us to be.

A Quaker family lived in Pennsylvania. Against the father's wishes, the son Jonathan ran off and enlisted in the cause of the North during the Civil War. Time passed and no word from Jonathan. Then word came, a battle had taken place not far from their home, at Gettysburg, and many young men lay dead and dying

The father made his way by horse-drawn buggy until he came to the scene of action. He inquired until he found the commander and asked about his son. The commander replied that many had fallen wounded. Some had been cared for, but others were still left out in the trenches. He gave permission to the father to go and try to find his son. He told him where the action had taken place.

It was now about dark, so the father lit a lantern, and the light fell across wounded young men, some calling for help, many too seriously wounded to cry for assistance.

The task seem impossible. How could he find his son among all those wounded and dying? As he stumbled over body after body he began calling loudly,

Jonathan Smythe, thy father seeketh after thee.

Then he would walk a little ways and call again,

Jonathan Smythe, thy father seeketh after thee.

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He kept diligently at his search. Then he heard a very faint, barely audible reply,

Father, over here.

I knew you would come.

The father knelt down and took him in his arms, comforting him with his presence. He dressed the wound, carried him to the buggy, took him to a place of refuge

and nursed him back to health.

Luke 15:11

And He said, A certain man had two sons;

The parable of the prodigal son is really the parable of two lost sons.

One who went away from home and was lost and the other who stayed home and was lost.

Like any biblical teaching on the believer's spiritual recovery, the principles can be equally applied to a sinner being saved and a believer being restored to fellowship.

The reason is that the paradigm is the same, faith in the one whom God sent.

Faith in coming to the Father who has provided everything that allows for forgiveness.

I think the paradigm is clearly seen in one passage that I heard when I was saved, 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.

But notice the context from v 19

Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent.

The interpretation of these verses is repentance or the spiritual recovery of the Christian but they can be applied to the process of salvation, receiving Christ by faith alone.

Luke 15:12

and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me. And he divided his wealth between them.

The younger son desires independence but with the help of the Father.

He requests his share of the inheritance.

Inheritance then as now could be given while a parent was yet alive.

So the actual request is not out of line but the intent is.

Similar to the believer who wants all that God has to offer, all the mercy and grace, all the freedom and yet the question is, what will the child of God do with all the good things God desires to give him?

Notice that with the request the Father gave to both the son who asked and the one who did not.

The older brother received his part of the estate also.

Now look down to v 31, the older son will call foul when his younger brother returns but we see that the Father did give him the portion falling to him.

I wonder how often we are not aware of all that we have, of all that our heavenly Father has given to us?

We see the greatness of God's grace in the mercy He gives to the sinner who has come home but we too have that grace even now.

Do we know that?

Luke 15:13

And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living.

The word *went* is from *αποδεμω* and is a aorist tense.

The force of this verb is to go without looking back, to burn bridges behind you we would say.

The intent of the part of the younger son is not to return.

It is significant that the father did not go after his son, but waited at home for the boy to come back.

In the previous two parables we read of sheep gone astray like some believers get out of fellowship through their own stupidity.

And, like the coins, some are carnal as a result of the carelessness of others.

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But the son was lost because of his own willfulness, and the father had to wait until that will was broken and submissive.

We are not given any details of how the inheritance was lost only, as the English states, that it was squandered with loose living.

The word squandered is a word also used for scattering grain so the money was scattered and the word loose or riotous is really much too strong in this case.

It is only found here in the New Testament and is the negative of to save, so it means to not save but to spend and spend and spend until all is gone.

Implicit in the word is not any sinful connotation.

Just unwise spending until there is nothing left.

I think this is important because it shows us the fix we can get in when we are away from the grace and mighty control of our loving heavenly Father.

Remember the context.

Jesus is speaking to those who have criticized Him for associating with these tax-collectors and sinners.

These sinners who, in their judgment (and that is what it is, a judgment of others) wasted what they had as Israelites.

But Jesus is going to show that there is always a way back.

Luke 15:14

Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be in need.

Here we see the problem the son caused compounded with a problem that God caused.

Broke, out of funds, and then things get worse, a famine.

It is important to see that the famine was in that country, and did not affect the country he was from, his home.

So regardless of the problem he could remove himself from it.

1 Corinthians 10:13, No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation

will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.

Now being broke was self-induced misery and the famine was divine discipline but he still did not get it.

Luke 15:15

And he went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

This would have certainly given rise to repulsion on the part of the Jews listening to this.

To end up so destitute that you would attach yourself to a Gentile and then going from worse to worse, end up feeding his pigs.

But then we read an interesting statement.

Luke 15:16

And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him.

I don't know about you, but if I was hungry, real hungry, and looking out at a herd of pigs, I would be dreaming of pork chops.

But not our prodigal son, he was longing to eat the pods or hulls of the plants that in the Near East are the food for animals and not humans.

Somewhere, in his soul, even after all had been wasted and he was in such a destitute condition, there was a standard and that standard was that he was a Jew and Jews did not eat pork or even long after eating pork.

We can imagine that he may have expressed his desire to eat the pig food to a co-worker and the response may have been, *man forget the pods, I want the pork!*

And maybe that did it, in the midst of his misery he finally woke up.

Luke 15:17

But when he came to his senses, he said, How many of my fathers hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!

Simply, he remembered where he had been and he knew where he was and his desire was to be back home, in the fellowship of his father.

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Luke 15:18,19

A change in attitude.

I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.

Now right here we see volumes spoken regarding spiritual recovery.

While in his independence the son had no interest in returning to his father.

In the same way when we are out of fellowship we have no interest and returning to fellowship.

He caused the problem of being broke but circumstances compounded the problem with the famine.

In the same way when out of fellowship we can create a lot of our own problems but if we do not wake up to our carnality, God will send even more problems.

The problem of the famine caused the son to sink even lower.

In the same way, divine discipline may put us lower so we can wake up to our carnal independent way of life.

In the midst of his misery he remembered who he was, a Jew.

And in the midst of the carnal misery we find ourselves in we must remember that we are Christians and the Father loves us.

The son recognized his error as we must recognize and admit our sins.

This is the first response to what God the Holy Spirit may do in dealing with us when we are carnal.

To confess sins that have been denied and ignored.

The son was willing to admit his sin against heaven and against his father and go home and be a hired hand.

In the same way we return to our Heavenly Father with openness and humility.

And then he got up and went to his father, as we must make the decision to leave our sin behind and go to the Father.

And that is what spiritual recovery is, not the admission of wrong doing.

He could have said yes, I am wrong, I have sinned, but I can't go home now.

He could have done all the confessing in the world and stayed in the pig pen - but he did not, he got up and went not just home, but to his father.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.: "Law reflects but in no sense determines the moral worth of a society. The values of a reasonably just society will reflect themselves in a reasonably just law. The better the society, the less law there will be."

In Heaven there will be no law.

In the millennium, the lion will lie down with the lamb. The values of an unjust society will reflect themselves in an unjust law. The worse the society, the more law there will be. In Hell there will be nothing but law, and due process will be meticulously observed.

Today as we conclude the parable of the prodigal son we will see the older brother who while never leaving home, has certainly left the grace of his father and tried to earn that which is freely given in grace, by law.

We have seen the prodigal son take his inheritance, go into a far country, waste it and he ended up broke.

That was a picture of a believer getting out of fellowship and wasting the wonderful assets he has available to him in His relationship with the Lord.

That was self-induced misery but he still did not wake up to his carnal or out of fellowship state.

A famine occurred in the land which forced the young man to go to work for a local pig farmer.

That is a picture of God the Holy Spirit adding divine discipline to the carnal believers situation to show him he is out of fellowship.

Finally the son woke up to his carnality and admitted his sins.

But that admission or confession only put him in the position to now by faith first believer he was forgiven and then by faith to head home.

That is a picture of faith repentance or spiritual recovery by faith.

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And it is his faith that pleases his father - we resume the story as the prodigal son arrives at the gate of his fathers home.

Luke 15:20

We see that a change in actions has followed his change in attitude.

And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him.

Compassion, embraced, kissed - *welcome home son.*

It was Robert Louis Stevenson who said that home was the place you could always return to.

The prodigal son knew that, do we?

If we do by the way, we know it by faith.

We believe that God wants to show compassion on us, to hold us, to love us.

The absence of faith would have us do one of two things.

Either not return to fellowship fearing the wrath of God or

To think that we have to work our way back into the good graces of God

Both would eliminate faith alone and shift to a system of fear or a system of works.

Both of those human systems would have kept the son out of fellowship with the father as either of those systems keeps us out of fellowship.

Notice, The father ran to him.

This is how our Heavenly Father treats us when we begin the journey of returning to Him.

He meets us where we are and brings us to Him.

The embrace, the kiss, all spoke of fellowship restored at that moment, instantly.

Because it did not depend upon any work of the son, only His trust in the one who would forgive him and restore him.

Luke 15:21

And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.

Now this is a second confession of his sin.

A confession that occurs when he is back into the arms of his father who already has hugged him and loved him?

Question, Was this confession necessary for restoration?

The actions of the father would certainly cast doubt upon that.

So what was this confession for?

It was for the prodigal son and to remove his guilt, it was for what we would call expiation.

God forgave us when He poured out our sins on His son at the Cross.

When we are out of fellowship we fail to believe in that forgiveness and we fail to accept that forgiveness (*Father, forgive them for they know not what they do*).

When we admit the sins we have been denying we are admitting we are out of fellowship, carnal.

That clears the way for us to turn to God in faith, repentance.

But what about our guilt that may continue even after we are back in the arms of the Father?

How do we eliminate the guilt?

By this type of admission of sins.

Notice how the father reacted - *you did what?, you lost how much?, why you good for nothing bum!!*

No! Because the father forgave him just like our heavenly Father forgives us.

Will we receive that forgiveness?

Do you know that even in the arms of your heavenly Father you do not have to fear anything.

You never have to fear finding out how much of a spiritual fake you really are?

How much you have really sinned?

How vile and evil your sinful thoughts may have been?

You are forgiven and any guilt you may have ends right there in the arms of your Father.

Luke 15:22,23

But the father said to his slaves, Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet;

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and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry;

The best robe. Clothed in the best that God has for us, His absolute righteousness

The ring on his hand. The signet ring pictures our access to God's unlimited riches

Sandals on his feet. Ministry, the opportunity to go and minister for Him

Fatted calf and the banquet. A picture of fellowship restored.

After the Sunday school teacher told the story of the Prodigal Son to the class, she asked, *Was anyone sorry when the Prodigal Son returned?* One boy answered, *Yes, the calf.*

Now the calf was killed - which is a picture of the basis for our fellowship restored, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Leviticus 9:2, Take for yourself a calf, a bull, for a sin offering - without defect, and offer [it] before the LORD.

So we have righteousness, riches, ministry and fellowship restored

Luke 15:24

for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found. And they began to be merry.

The death that the father spoke of was the temporal death we are in when we, through our own independent will chose to live apart from the God who saved us.

The manifestation of this independence may be sin, human good, evil, indifference, apathy.

But the way home is always the same, by faith in the one who forgave us at the Cross and loves us even when we do not love Him.

The welcome home party the father gives the son is similar to the joy we read of in the first two parables,

the lost sheep and the lost coin.

There was great joy when that which was lost returns.

You may not hear it but when you by faith return to the Father, accepting the forgiveness that has been there all along, there is joy in heaven.

Now the scene shifts to the older brother.

Again lets remember who is listening to this parable, the Pharisees and scribes who are critical of Jesus' association with the tax-collectors and sinners.

They are critical of the grace extended to these lowlifes (in their opinion) just as we will see that the older brother is critical of the grace extended to his younger brother.

Luke 15:25

Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing.

He is naturally curious as to what is going on.

Luke 15:26,27

And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things might be.

And he said to him, Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.

Good news?

It should have been but here as so often we see that the attitude within will determine the joy you will or will not have when you see the grace of God.

Luke 15:28

But he became angry, and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began entreating him.

He was at the farm but refused to fellowship with the father and to share in the joy.

Just as in the first two parables the father goes out to him, just as the father ran to meet the younger son upon his return.

God seeks us, do you know that, do you realize how much God loves you that He seeks any opportunity to embrace you in His loving and forgiving and gracious arms?

He was *entreating him* which is *παρακαλεω* and means to come along side and encourage.

God does not drag us into His party, but He does encourage us to come and enjoy His love and grace.

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Luke 15:29

But he answered and said to his father, Look! For so many years I have been serving you, and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a kid, that I might be merry with my friends;

Did you catch that - Father, look at all I have done for you.

Look at the years I have worked and worked and even obeyed every command you gave.

And yet the father never gave a banquet for him and his friends.

Why?

The same way today many many believers will never enjoy the blessing of God, His unmerited favor, because like the older brother they want to work and obey and that is not going to work.

So often the commentaries pass over the older brother with the statement that his attitude was all wrong but it is really much much more than that.

He is on a completely wrong path as a son of the the father.

Just like many believers are not merely suffering from a wrong attitude, they are on a completely wrong path in their idea of how to have a relationship with God.

Once we step away from the grace-faith pattern a false system of grace will be established.

Luke 15:30

but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him.

Notice how he throws in the harlots?

Yet nothing was said of harlots, for all the text tells us the younger brother was celibate while wasting his money.

But self-righteousness will always paint the picture of others behavior in the worse light.

They judge and if they facts do not seem bad enough, they will embellish the facts to fit their own judgment.

Luke 15:31

And he said to him, My child, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours.

My child - a child of the father to whom all is given in grace and yet all is lost in works.

Luke 15:32

But we had to be merry and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.

The younger brother, our prodigal was inside having a great time.

He knew he had not deserved nor earned any of the mercy and grace his father was showering upon him.

He had done nothing, accomplished no work, performed no deed.

All he did was wake up to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, admit his sin and by faith, come home.

In our parable of the prodigal, Jesus has pictured for us the father waiting patiently for his son to come home.

In the parable of the ninety and nine sheep he pictures the shepherd leaving the ninety-nine in search for the one lost sheep. With the lost coin, again, all is left to find the one.

J. W. Stevenson in his book, *God, In My Disbelief* tells how old minister, had gone south to London to seek for his son who had dishonored himself and left the family home in anger. He had no address to guide him.

Only after many days of asking was he able to find the street where reportedly his son could be found.

The father stood at the end of the street and he knew it was beyond him to go from door to door of its length.

But a street musician came by just then and the old man stopped him.

He asked if he knew how to play an old tune, one that had been a favorite in the home when the children were young?

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Would he walk with him along the street as he played? And he told him why.

So they went slowly, the street musician and the old man with his hat in his hand so that his face could be seen, taking this last slender chance to find the son who had last said he had no use for him; seeking him who had rejected the love in his father's heart.

A door opened and there was the son, rushing into the arms of his father.

Have we forgotten the love of our heavenly Father?

If we listen we will hear the Holy Spirit reminding us of the song of love and grace that is ours to enjoy in the fellowship of our God and Father

Chapter 16

Jesus talked a great deal about money. Sixteen of the thirty-eight parables were concerned with how to handle money and possessions. In the Gospels, an amazing one out of 10 verses (288 in all) deal directly with the subject of money. The Bible offers 500 verses on prayer, about 500 verses on faith, but more than 2,000 verses on money and possessions.

Luke 16:1

Now He was also saying to the disciples, There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and this steward was reported to him as squandering his possessions.

Previous parables in chapter 15 were spoken to the Pharisees and scribes, now this parable is to the Lord's disciples.

The rich man had a steward or financial manager who was reported to him as not being a very good manager of his money.

Often a person in this position would be a slave but this steward is freeman and can be fired from his position.

We must not make the mistake of thinking that the master here in this parable refers to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord is just using a situation that was common in ancient Israel to teach a point.

The squandering is the same word used of the prodigal son in the last chapter.

There the son wasted his inheritance and here the steward was reported as wasting his boss' money.

Luke 16:2

And he called him and said to him, What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.

Two things in this verse, first he is to give an account and then he is to be fired.

NOW AT THIS POINT WE HAVE to understand the situation in light of Jewish law.

The Old Testament law forbids a Jew from loaning money at interest.

Deuteronomy 23:19, You shall not charge interest to your countrymen: interest on money, food, or anything that may be loaned at interest.

But shrewd businessmen, and remember the master was rich, got around this by making joint investments with other Jews.

So a Jew with money would loan money to another Jew and then write a bond which indicated that the lender would receive the principle back and then part of the profit.

This profit was the interest but was not seen as that.

Also, the rabbis interpreted the Old Testament Law to be a prohibition against taking advantage of any fellow countryman that was down and out.

And since everyone had a little oil (olive oil) and a little wheat, the repayment of interest in those commodities supposedly was a way around the law.

So most rich men were happy to loan money at interest (or a share or a specified amount of the profit even if the profit was not realized) to other Jews.

Now to further safeguard themselves against breaking the Law, wealthy men hired stewards who made all these deals for them and had the authority to sign the notes or bonds.

That was the job of this steward and the accounting that he was to give regarded this practice and these bonds

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Luke 16:3

And the steward said to himself, What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg.

The steward has a problem.

Weakness and shame - his options are very limited.

Anyone could get a job digging and anyone could beg but he does not see any future in these professions.

Luke 16:4

I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the stewardship, they will receive me into their homes.

The *I know what I shall do* is like saying *I've got it!*

So he now has a plan.

And the plan has an intended result and that is that after he is fired he will be received into the homes of others, presumably in some capacity as a financial advisor.

Luke 16:5-7

And he summoned each one of his masters debtors, and he began saying to the first, How much do you owe my master?

And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said to him, Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.

Then he said to another, And how much do you owe? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. He said to him, Take your bill, and write eighty.

What he is doing is he is going to the ones who owe his master money and basically cutting off or canceling the interest.

And we see this in the different reductions.

When a lender loaned money for an olive grove and the production of olive oil the standard rate was 100% interest.

Borrow that which would be worth 50 measures of oil and pay back 100.

This was due to first the increased profit that could be made in olive oil production and also the fact that olive oil could be watered down.

With wheat the profit was not as great and you can't very well water down wheat so there the interest was commonly 25% of the amount borrowed.

Now neither of these would ever be called NASHAK or the Hebrew for interest.

After all, that was a violation of Old Testament Law.

Here the note is called in the Greek text *GRAM* or a written bill or bond.

Luke 16:8

So now the master is stuck.

And his master praised the unrighteous steward because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light

So what is the master going to do?

He cannot complain about that which was being illegally done in the first place.

Certainly could not take the steward to the synagogue court.

He did have written promissory notes that the debtors would pay back the amount he originally loaned so he really has nothing to say.

Except to praise the *unrighteous steward because he acted shrewdly*.

Notice: He does not praise him for being honest but for being shrewd or wise.

The teaching of the parable.

Now the Lord makes the point, the unbeliever when it comes to his future and the use of material things such as money, is more shrewd or wise than most believers.

Wiersbe writes of this: *Jesus did not commend the steward for cheating his master, but for making good use of his opportunity. The people of this world are much better at seeing opportunities and profiting from them than are the children of God*

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Luke 16:9

And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

The application the Lord makes from the parable is that his disciples are to be wise in their use of material goods and monetary gain.

The words *mammon of unrighteousness* seems to be something very bad but it really is not bad in as much as it is common or in contrast to that which is the mammon of God.

The word *mammon* is a Chaldean word that simply means *riches*.

Money and material things can be put to a very evil use but in and of themselves they are not evil.

Money and material things are details of life and as a child of God you can be ruled by them or you can rule them.

William Barclay said of money.

“Money in itself is neither good nor bad; it is simply dangerous in that the love of it may become bad.

“With money a man can do much good; and with money he can do much evil.

“With money a man can selfishly serve his own desires; and with money he can generously answer to the cry of his neighbor's need.

“With money a man can buy his way to the forbidden things and facilitate the path of wrongdoing; and with money he can make it easier for someone else to live as God meant him to live.

“Money brings power, and power is always a double-edged sword, for it is powerful to good and powerful to evil.”

The steward used money and financial shrewdness to find a way into the praise of others and to have a place to go once he was fired.

Will we use the material things we have in the same wise, in our case honest, manner?

We can use the wealth we have to widen our sphere of impact among others and to make a way for the Gospel to be presented.

So the first thing we learn from the parable is.

We should use wealth wisely and help lead others to believe the gospel of the grace of the God that is in Jesus Christ.

Principle

First: If one is faithful in his use of money, then he can be trusted with greater things.

Luke 16:10-12

He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.

If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you?

And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?

Second. A believer cannot serve both God and money. As masters the two are mutually exclusive. Love for money will drive one away from God

Luke 16:13

No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Either money will be your master or you will be its slave.

Now I want to go back to a phrase at the end of v 9

Make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

The steward in his human survival thinking did what he did with the money that was entrusted to him to cover himself and have a place to go when he was fired.

Our motives are very different.

We use the money and material things that are entrusted to us to provide a way to present to others the Gospel that will give them an eternal place to go.

Imagine with me if you will, you arrive in heaven and there is a person who you helped by way of

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what you had - and in helping them you told them about your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

They are in heaven, in the presence of Jesus because you used what was entrusted to you by way of material things to provide a pathway for their salvation.

Martin Luther astutely observed,

"There are three conversions necessary: the conversion of the heart, mind and the purse.

"Of these three, it may well be that we moderns find the conversion of the purse the most difficult."

We are going to back with the Pharisees today in our lesson and we are going to see their abuse of two things, money and marriage.

Luke 16:14

Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things, and they were scoffing at Him.

While Jesus had been speaking to His disciples about serving God as opposed to serving mammon or riches, the Pharisees were listening in and they now begin to scoff at Him.

We see Luke's editorial comment, the Pharisees were lovers of money.

The word love is the Greek word φιλαρ-γυρος:and was a word that specifically means to love or have a love rapport with money.

In the only other place the word is found, Paul used this to describe men in the last days in 2 Timothy 2:2

For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,

The Pharisees had the idea that God blessed with prosperity and then using reverse logic from a false premise concluded that if a man was rich he was blessed by God and doing all things right in God's sight.

This is not that uncommon of a line of reason, although false reason.

Can God bless with prosperity?

Yes, but he can also bless with adversity.

But many Christians today live such a shallow spiritual life that the only thing they can perceive as blessing is money in the bank.

Calvinism, while never declaring this doctrine, is very fond of that doctrine.

Since they believe in predetermination of all thing and reject free will on man's part it is only a short leap to thinking God will bless with wealth and that validates that they are really Christians.

So the next verse is as relevant today as it was when Jesus spoke it to these Pharisees.

Luke 16:15

And He said to them, You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.

If a religious man thinks God is approving of his works by giving him prosperity then this should prove to others how spiritual he really is - makes sense?

But it is wrong sense?

The word *justify* means to *show to be righteous* and it is used in **Romans 3:23-24**

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

These religious leaders were doing exactly what Paul spoke of in Romans 4:2

For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God.

They were boasting before men - *look at my wealth, God loves me more than you.*

But in contrast to showing off their supposed spirituality before men, Jesus states: *but God knows your hearts.*

Perhaps no Old Testament believer came to understand this better than David.

After his sin with Bathsheba and after he admitted that sin and turned by faith to the mercy of God, he wrote Psalm 51:10

Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

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And we find earlier in the story of David that this principle was revealed at Samuel when he went to the home of Jesse to anoint a new king.

He look at David's older brothers as being obvious selections but God said in 1 Samuel 16:7

Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.

So the issue is not what in your bank account but what is in your heart

The issue is not what men think of you but what does God think of you

It is not what you do that counts, it is what is in your heart.

That is where God is looking.

But what had gone wrong with these Pharisees who knew the Scriptures so well.

Who lived and eat and slept the Law and the Prophets?

Jesus gives us an idea of the error in the next verse.

What went wrong with the Pharisees?

Luke 16:16

The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since then the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.

John 1:17, **For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.**

The phrase The Law and the Prophets is used to describe what we know as the Old Testament .

So that body of truth was proclaimed to Israel until *something else* happened.

That *something else* was the coming of Christ and His proclaiming of the gospel of the kingdom.

The technical term the Gospel of the Kingdom is found three times in Matthew and then once in Luke in our passage.

It refers to a presentation of the Gospel of Grace (which is the only gospel) in light of the coming kingdom.

In the early passages of Matthew as here it is directed to Israel.

In the Matthew 24 it is the method of the presentation of the Gospel of grace in the Tribulation.

In all cases it has the Millennial Kingdom in view.

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In the Gospels, the Gospel of salvation is presented as a message of the Kingdom or the message of God.

Only in Luke's introduction, written after the crucifixion, is the Gospel referred to as the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

When the Gospel is presented to the Jews the kingdom is in view and the repentance is mentioned.

In Galatians 1:7, Paul's first letter, the Gospel is first referred to as the Gospel of Jesus Christ

In Acts 20:24 we have the mention by Paul of the Gospel of Grace.

But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

The Gospel is always the same, believe in the one whom God has sent, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Even in the Old Testament the gospel is to believe in the one whom God will send to be the Messiah.

And it was presented in the Law and the Prophets as the Gospel that God will save His people.

So even then, it is Grace.

This is the good news of salvation, God has done it all.

The differences are not in the content of the Gospel, it is at all time the love and the grace of God sending the Savior.

The response is always the same, faith alone in Christ alone.

But the difference is in the presentation.

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In the Gospels to Israel the warning is to believe and repent (in relationship to the covenants to Israel) because the Kingdom is near.

After the Cross the the Gospel is presented as the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Gospel of Grace.

At all times it is the Gospel of God, that is the larger heading so to speak and then under that, depending on the times and the audience, the one Gospel is presented in different ways.

In the kingdom there will be perfect love and law dispensed by a perfect Savior and judge, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The gospel of the kingdom is not the way the gospel is now presented.

Now, in the church age, we have a gospel presented to all people and it's foundation and method of presentation is grace.

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

But the gospel of the kingdom, compared to the legalistic interpretation of the Old Testament Law that was presented by the Pharisees in Jesus' day was presented with love and grace and required nothing more than man's non-meritorious faith.

The word forcing is βιάζω and in the Greek text it means to force one's own way into something.

And you cannot force your way into salvation.

It is grace and must be accepted not by force but by faith,

Many commentaries try to make this last statement a positive and say that it shows how much men want to be saved - but the opposite is true.

Oh yes, the people of Jesus day may have wanted the kingdom but they were not willing to accept it by faith by accepting Jesus.

Instead the continued on the same old law path than leads no where.

It is not by might or by power but by the Holy Spirit - and the simple faith we put in Christ.

Luke 16:17

But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail.

The word *fail* means simply to *fall*.

Here it is an infinitive which would see it as a result of something else.

So regardless of what others may do to the Law, it will not be cause to fall or to be beaten down.

These religious leaders were abusing the Law but their abuses and their petty interoperations of the law do not matter.

The smallest stroke on the smallest letter of the Hebrew Law will not fall, and the Lord gives a comparison.

It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one small stroke of the Law to be destroyed by man.

Something that is even more difficult, harder, tougher to do and see through than that which we know will occur and that is the passing away of this present heavens and earth and the creation of the New Heavens and New Earth after the Mill. reign of Christ.

Now let me ask you, what is the most difficult thing that has ever been done in the history of the human race, in the entire history of planet earth?

The Cross.

And it was at the Cross that Jesus, the sinless Savior did not do away with the Law, did not cause it to fail or fall, but fulfilled the Law.

Matthew 5:17, Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.

And the fulfillment and the perfection of the Law will only come when the Lord rules over the earth.

But what about now?

An Israel unto God does not exist.

We are part of the church, the body of Christ.

And we are not under law but under grace.

Galatians 2:19-21, For through the Law I died to the Law, that I might live to God. 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.

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I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.

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

So these religious leaders are told that while they abuse the Law to fit their own desires the Law will stand and man cannot do away with it.

Christ alone can fulfill it.

These Pharisees were doing with the Law what many Christians today do with the Bible.

They were trying to mold the Word to fit their desires rather than let the Word of God mold them.

They worked the Law trying to justify themselves.

Christians do that today when they fall into legalism, a legalism that says God will bless them if and only if they do something.

Morality, Gain Knowledge, Express Emotions, or get involved in Service.

In any of these systems the believer needs a standard against which to measure his actions and progress so he goes into the Bible and makes it a command of Law.

But the problem with this is that using the Bible as a book of rules and regulations governing behavior is not always easy and it may even go against what one wants to do.

That was the case with the Pharisees and what they had done with the divorce laws of the Old Testament.

We have four positions in view regarding divorce.

The Old Testament Law of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 which allowed for divorce by the husband of a wife found in some indecency.

The passage goes on to say that she can marry another and that if she is dismissed by the second husband she cannot remarry the first.

The question was what is meant by indecency?

Some believed that this was a way of keeping a wife from being found guilty of adultery which would have been punishable by death.

So instead the husband wrote out a bill of divorcement.

In Jesus' time the Rabbis who followed Shammai interpreted this Old Testament Law to allow for a man to divorce his wife only in the case of continued immorality.

The Hillel school of the Rabbis took a broader view and said a man could divorce his wife for any almost any reason, even simple uncleanness, or cooking a bad meal, talking so loudly that neighbors could hear her, talking to a stranger, disagreeing in public with her husband.

To say the least it was that school of thinking that was followed by the Pharisees.

Also the Roman view of divorce must be considered because not only is Jesus living in a Roman occupied country where Herod Antipas had divorced his wife to marry niece.

Remember that Luke was a Greek and was writing mostly to Romans.

Under Roman law either spouse could write a bill of divorcement.

For almost any reason and merely had to be stated in the presents of seven adult citizens of Rome.

So in Jesus' time the family was in danger of being destroyed by the religious leaders who were using the Old Testament Law to fulfill their own lusts.

So Jesus picks out one law from the Old Testament that was being dangerously abused by these Pharisees - divorce.

Luke 16:18

Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.

One writer said that a: *Successful marriage is always a triangle, a man, a woman, and God.*

Alan Bernstein noted that.

Marriage is a school of experience where husband and wife are classmates

Two things we must recognize in this verse.

First, the Lord never intended to give a definitive or comprehensive teaching regarding divorce and re-marriage.

In the passages in the Gospel where the Lord does teach about divorce it is always limited to the Law for Israel or the Law for the Kingdom.

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Later on Paul will also teach about divorce and he will add an additional reason for divorce and the right to re-marry, desertion.

Now either Paul was wrong or Jesus was teaching to a specific problem.

Secondly, in every case in the Gospel where the Lord teaches about divorce the ones addressed are the religious leaders who, we have already seen, were involved in what one has called the divorce gimmick.

They were reinterpreting and twisting the Law to fit their own desires.

So to them the Lord states - *Everyone of you who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery.*

And then he adds that even if they do have the freedom to marry, but they marry a woman who has been divorced under this abuse of the Law, they are also committing adultery.

Principle

In the parallel account in Matthew 19:9 the writer includes the Lord's phrase, *except for immorality or fornication.*

That is an exception.

Jesus taught that when divorce occurs because of immorality, there is a right to re-marry.

Immorality in Matthew 19:9 is the word is PORNEIA and can refer to several different things: Homosexuality, marrying a close relative (incest), sex outside of the relationship during the period of betrothal.

But most commonly PORNEIA refers to unrepentant sexual immorality of any kind.

Thus, in marriage, a situation is which a married person continues an affair with another with no intention of suspension.

In that situation, divorce with the right to remarry is granted by God.

In the Old Testament Law right to re-marry also occurs when the divorced spouse re-marries.

Deuteronomy 24:3-4, And if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife, then her former husband

who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife.

Since reconciliation was out of the question, re-marriage was permitted.

But remember, that was the law for Israel and we are not under law but under grace.

When the former spouse dies the remaining spouse is free to remarry, again, because reconciliation is no longer possible.

This principle is used by Paul as an illustration to being free from the control of the sin nature, the former husband of Romans 7:2-3.

In 1 Corinthians 7:15 Paul gives a situation where a spouse who is an unbeliever divorces a believing mate.

In that situation the believer is a victim and is not longer under bondage and thus free to re-marry.

1 Cor. 7:15, Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases.

Desertion, under the principle given in I Cor 7:15 can lead to the right to re-marry after a period of time.

Many other situations including the threat to life of wife, children, abuse, molestation, are grounds for separation or in our legal framework, divorce, but not having the right to re-marry.

The time factor is always essential to consider in the right to re-marry.

Time must be used to get over the hurt, to get the person out of the soul, to growing doctrine and grow closer to your best friend, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In any divorce it is always the innocent victim who has the right to re-marry.

The guilty party, if they re-marry, are in an adulterous marriage.

In our passage the Lord is talking to the Pharisees who were the guilty party.

Luke 16:18, Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.

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If you find that you were the guilty party and you are in an adulterous marriage, there is a biblical solution.

No guilt reaction.

Recognize your culpability and face what you have done as sin.

Admit the sin and appropriate by faith the grace that God has for you.

Do not divorce, that is just adding sin to sin and hurting more people.

Once you confess and have repented, your sin of divorce and remarriage is forgiven, and your adulterous marriage becomes a legitimate marriage.

In Jesus day the religious leaders, who should have been the ones who were protecting home and family, were the ones who were threatening to destroy the family through their abuse of the Law.

Some women who knew well of these abuses were even refusing to marry fearing that one day their husbands might just had them a bill of divorce and dismiss them.

We may often think that we live in a time when things are really bad, and while they are, they were even worse when Jesus came to His own and His own would not receive Him.

What is the solution?

More laws?

Tighter restrictions?

Throw the abusers in jail?

No, the solution then and now is the *same* - *when you love your neighbor as you love yourself you fulfill the whole Law.*

God hates divorce and anyone who has been through divorce will readily agree with God.

They hate it but it is a reality and God has poured out His grace in the mist of the pain and the hurt and even the bad decisions we may make.

There will be a time on earth that will last for 1000 years in which the perfect judge will dispense perfect justice - that time is **not** now, but we have the Law of Christ, and it is perfect - love one another as Christ has loved you.

In an Indiana cemetery a tombstone (more than a hundred years old) bears the following epitaph:

Pause Stranger, when you pass me by,

As you are now, so once was I

As I am now, so you will be,

So prepare for death and follow me.

An unknown passerby read those words and underneath scratched this reply:

To follow you I'm not content,

Until I know which way you went.

Luke 16:19-21

Now there was a certain rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, gaily living in splendor every day.

And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich mans table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.

Remember we noted that the Pharisees sought to justify themselves in the presence of men by their wealth.

They equated material prosperity and position with spiritual prosperity.

By Jesus told them that God looks on the heart.

The rich man had purple clothing and fine linen, the most expensive threads of the day.

He lived in splendor.

The Bodmer Papyrus XIV (14), tells us that this was a common story of the day and in that extra biblical account gives this rich man has a name, *Ne-ues*, which even in the name means *wealthy*.

He lacked for nothing and notice the Lord says. *every day.*

In contrast there is the poor man.

His name was Lazarus which means *God is my helper.*

He was a beggar, he was in poor health, he long to be feed even with crumbs, the dogs came and licked his sores.

Spiritually we can see in this that his physical health may have been poor but his spiritual health was good, he long to be feed even with crumbs just as the child of God longs to be fed even with

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the crumbs from God's table but God gives more in grace.

And then the dogs - we may think of this as very unsanitary but actually it is not.

The ancient Roman armies traveled with dogs because it was found that the saliva of the canine was very medicinal in healing wounds on a human being.

So these were good dogs and in this I see a picture of God providing - not by money or wealth or power or position but within nature, in the devils world.

He provides.

It is said that man will never have a more loyal friend than his dog.

They will love you unconditionally.

The bottom line for us to see in the lives of these two men is that one has everything, the other had nothing.

One was totally self sufficient, the other had to be totally dependant upon God.

Lazarus was helpless but we will see he was not hopeless.

As the earthly lives of these two men were very different so will be their eternal lives

Luke 16:22,23

Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.

And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom.

Here we are given a picture of life after death prior to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The entire region of the place of departed spirits is called Hades in the Greek New Testament and Sheol in the Hebrew Old Testament .

But within Hades there are different places.

It is not the final destiny of man nor of angels. It is a place of waiting.

Not only an interim state but an interim place.

Prior to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the first fruits of the resurrection of the dead, when a

believer died he went to Paradise which is also called Abraham's bosom.

He was there until the resurrection of Christ and then, as stated in **Ephesians 4:8**

When he ascended on high, he led captive a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.

For the unbeliever, when he died then and even now, he goes to Torments to await the Great White Throne Judgement describes in Revelation 20:11 and following after which he is sent forever to the Lake of Fire.

For the fallen angels, some of whom are chained, they are incarcerated in a place called Tartarus, 2 **Peter 2:4**

For God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell (Tartarus) and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment.

In our Revelation study on Tuesday nights we have seen that some will be released from this place by Satan during the Tribulation.

Luke 16:24

And he cried out and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.

Jesus is obviously using the rich man as a picture of the Pharisees who showed no mercy to others and yet beg for mercy when they find themselves in torment.

They will want what they refused to give.

We see here a glimpse of what awaits man without Christ, with hope, without eternal life in with God.

Normal needs go unsatisfied, he was thirsty.

He was well aware of what he had lost and that he was lost.

He was in agony, he was in flames.

The description is enough to make you never want to be and for you never want anyone else to be there.

Some have said they would rather rule in hell than serve in heaven, but there is no ruling in hell, only

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misery, eternal misery which only gets worse in the eventual destiny of the Lake of Fire - WHY? Because man refuses to believe by faith in Christ.

Luke 16:25

But Abraham said, Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.

Here is another thing that will make Hell, hell. Memories.

He can remember what his life was like and he can remember that he had the chance to believe in the Messiah, the Christ.

To be saved, to receive the gift of eternal life, and yet did not.

Luke 16:26

And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, in order that those who wish to come over from here to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.

The chasm, the gulf is fixed.

No one can cross over after death.

Some try to teach that there will be a second chance for the unbeliever after death, but there is not.

The satisfaction of God's holiness (His Justice and Righteousness) can only be by what Christ did on the Cross, and faith in Christ, now, in this life, is the only thing that can save.

Luke 16:27

And he said, Then I beg you, Father, that you send him to my fathers house--

Lazarus is in paradise, enjoying the splendor of all that God provides for His children.

Secure forever without sorrow, pain, or suffering in the arms of father Abraham.

Even today in Jewish children's stories, that is the one best place to be, in the arms of father Abraham.

But the rich man cannot be there so he begs that Lazarus be sent to his father's house to warn his bothers.

Luke 16:28

for I have five brothers-- that he may warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment.

He had no concern for others in his life and yet now, too late, he has concern for his brothers.

It is interesting to see how many times the figure five comes up in the Lord's ministry.

To the woman at the well the Lord revealed that he knew she had five husbands.

The number five is often used to historically describe the five nations under which Israel found itself - the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Medes and Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans.

Now Israel was to be God's nation and God's witness to the world.

Genesis 12, the Abrahamic covenant concludes this and yet they were not.

The religious leaders ignored the nations and even despised them and did not see them worthy of salvation and yet now -

His concern is for his five brothers representing literal brothers but also the ones to whom the Jews should have taken the Gospel.

His concern is now great, as our should be.

We have a commission to Go and tell the world the good news of salvation, there is one who has died for your sins, you can saved forever, have eternal life by putting your faith in Christ.

What do you think of those who are lost?

Luke 16:29

But Abraham said, They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.

For them they had the message.

Moses and the Prophets.

There was not a lack of information regarding what to believe, only those who lacked the desire to believe the information.

Luke 16:30

But he said, No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!

Remember how many times we have seen that the Jews seek a sign.

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The rich man is so convinced that if only his brothers can see a sign they will believe.

But seeing is not believing - Jesus said to Mary of Bethany in John 11:40

Did I not say to you, if you believe, you will see the glory of God?

If you BELIEVE you will SEE - but seeing is not believing.

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.

Towards the end of Jesus' earthly ministry He would go to Bethany and raise His friend, also or ironically also name Lazarus, from the dead.

Would the Jews believe?

No.

And three days after the Cross, Jesus Himself would be raised from the dead and to this day, even in the face of overwhelming evidence, mankind refuses to believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God, their Savior.

Do not wait until it is too late!

There is a certain level of fear that creeps in whenever we talk about evangelism.

While we can discuss the most controversial of subjects with others in the realm of politics, economics, W2K, international conflict and affairs, our fears arise at the thought of telling others about our Savior.

The one thing that we can talk about that has eternal significance.

POINTS OF FEAR.

The fear of what it might cost us

The fear of rejection

The fear of being thought odd

The fear of what to say, the fear of questions we can't answer

The fear of how to present the gospel

The fear of alienating someone

While all these fears are really baseless, **there is one real fear** we should have and that is the fear of someone we love crying out in the flames of

torment and hell for someone to tell the world that there really is a hell and that salvation is merely a faith decision away - believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

1 Corinthians 2:3-5, 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.

Chapter 17

We are not solitary saints.

We live and work and worship and play with other Christians.

What we do and what we say effects others.

We can be the cause of another's believer's sin.

While there volition is ultimately the power that bridges the gap from temptation to sin, it is us, you and me, who could be the source of that temptation.

The religious leaders of Jesus' day were a source not of triumph but of temptation, not of salvation but sin, not of encouragement but of evil.

Not acquittal but of accusation.

In the context of these chapters the Lord has been teaching against the evil religious legalism of the Pharisees so now he warns his disciples of something that was ever too common

Now it may appear that Luke has gathered some of the Lord's teaching that would be too valuable to be lost and placed them randomly in this chapter.

Remember, Luke received much first hand information from the apostles.

But while it may be random as to the time the Lord taught these truths, it is not random under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

We will see that all four connected sections all dealing with sin and its forgiveness.

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Luke 17:1

And He said to His disciples, It is inevitable that stumbling blocks should come, but woe to him through whom they come!

Marjorie Holmes said.

Oh, to have an eraser that would wipe out painful memories. Not so much of the times when we've been hurt, but those stabbing memories of the times when we've hurt others.

The word stumbling blocks is the translation of the word **σκανδαλον**, which originally was used for a bait stick in a trap.

But then it came to mean anything that was put into the way of another that would cause him to fall.

The Pharisees used their wealth to justify themselves and you cannot do that without putting others down.

They were a source of hindrances to others when they should have been helpers.

And the Lord says - woe to them.

Luke 17:2

It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble.

God protects the innocent and while the discipline that would come upon one who causes a weaker believer or a child to stumble is not described, the Lord does say it would be better for them to die than to harm one of His little ones.

A millstone weighed in the tons and it would be better for this to be placed around the neck of the offender and for him to be cast into the sea and drown than to lead a little one, a younger believer or a child, astray.

A story is told of a man who was dying and on his death bed it was apparent that something was bothering him.

He told his pastor - *when I was a young lad I played on a wide common. Near its center where two roads met and crossed was a rickety old sign-post.*

I remember one day as if it was yester day that I twisted the sign around in wrong direction. And all my life I have wondered how many travelers I sent down the wrong road.

We must accept the responsibility we have over the weak believer and help and not hinder.

Far from bringing about sin and being a source of stumbling, we are to oppose sin and also forgive the sinner.

Luke 17:3

Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

The words IF both show potential reality, believers will sin and sometimes will sin against you (that is the potential).

So here another believer sins and that sin effects you.

You are to rebuke which sounds very strong in our language but can also be translated *warn*.

A warning of the wrong and the result that can occur.

The intention of the warning is repentance, to change one's mind and direction regarding his sin.

The responsibility on our part is to *forgive*.

Luke 17:4

And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, I repent, forgive him.

Now the Rabbis taught that if you forgave a man three times you were perfect.

So Jesus doubles that and adds one.

The number seven is used to indicate an unspecified number of times - even in one day.

The forgiveness is based upon the sinners repentance, his change of mind and attitude.

And the forgiveness is expressed to the one who has sinned.

Now the question is do we have a responsibility to forgive those who do not repent?

Yes we do in our mental attitude but the relationship, the fellowship will only be based upon the expression of repentance on the part of the one who has sinned and our expression of forgiveness to them.

From that, a relationship, fellowship, can be restored.

General Oglethorpe once said to John Wesley,

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I never forgive and I never forget.

To which Wesley responded,

Then Sir, I hope you never sin.

When we reflect on how much God has forgiven us, it makes our own little grudges against others seem rather petty.

Luke 17:5

The apostles got the point and knew what it took to forgive others.

And the apostles said to the Lord, Increase our faith!

Oswald Chambers said.

We talk glibly about forgiving when we have never been injured; when we are injured, we know that it is not possible, apart from God's grace, for one human being to forgive another.

Only by faith in knowing how much you have been forgiven.

Illustration.

A little boy came to the Washington Monument and noticed a guard standing by it. The little boy looked up at the guard and said, "I want to buy it." The guard stooped down and says, "How much do you have?" The boy reached into his pocket and pulled out a quarter. The guard said, "That's not enough." The boy replied, "I thought you would say that." So he pulled out nine cents more. The guard looked down at the boy and said, "You need to understand three things. **First**, thirty-four cents is not enough. In fact, \$34 million is not enough to buy the Washington Monument.

Second, the Washington Monument is not for sale. And **third**, if you are an American citizen, the Washington Monument already belongs to you."

In the same way we need to understand three things about forgiveness.

First, we can not earn it.

Second, it is not for sale.

And third, if we put faith alone in Christ alone, we already have it.

The problem was that the disciples, like many today, want more faith.

But the Lord stood them from the idea of more faith to the type of faith they are to have.

From quantity to quality.

Luke 17:6

And the Lord said, If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, Be uprooted and be planted in the sea; and it would obey you.

It is not the quantity - the mustard seed is one of the smallest of seed.

What is important is where the faith is placed.

If the faith is correctly placed in God and His grace even the most impossible would be possible.

The mulberry tree has deep roots but if your faith is in God and His will is for the mulberry tree to be uprooted and cast into the sea, it would be.

Now with that type of faith - the faith to forgive, the faith to live, it would be easy to become tempted to have spiritual pride.

The idea that we live by faith and you do not could easily creep in especially in the religious climate of the day and of our day.

So to avoid the spiritual pride that could occur from a faith that is willing to forgive, the Lord gives a parable.

Luke 17:7-9

But which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, Come immediately and sit down to eat?

But will he not say to him, Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me until I have eaten and drunk; and afterward you will eat and drink?

He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he?

The main idea in the parable is of doing what you should be doing without pride or boastfulness.

The slave does his job and put his master first and when he does the master is no under obligation to thank the slave.

His work would be to serve his master a meal and the master does nothing more than expect the slave to do his job.

This is also a warning against thinking that our master owes us when we do what we should be doing as we reflect his grace to others.

Now look at how the Lord applies this parable.

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Luke 17:10

So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.

So you too, believer, when you have done all that is commanded you - which is to trust God and live by faith, cannot claim any worth in the presence of God even when our trust in His forgiveness of us brings us to the grace of forgiving others.

Because we have been so forgiven by the God through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul would later on make two statements regarding this kind of forgiveness.

Ephesians 4:32, And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Colossians 3:12-13, And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved - . forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

We forgive because we are forgiven and just as it is the love of God that brings about His grace and His forgiveness, it is spiritual love in us, wrought by the Holy Spirit that will bring us to forgive even those who sin against us.

And just as there is no greater message than love there is no greater expression of that love than to forgive those who harm us.

People need forgiveness, they long to be forgiven.

We have a Father in heaven who seeks us and his forgiven us . . . believe it!

Luke 17:11

And it came about while He was on the way to Jerusalem, that He was passing between Samaria and Galilee.

If we try to keep this in chronological order we have some problems with Jesus being on His way to Jerusalem, getting as far as Perea as we have previously seen and then ending back up north near Galilee.

I think a better explanation is Luke is dealing with a logical outline rather than a chronological outline.

So the story of the ten lepers is the next unfolding of Jesus' presentation of Grace.

Luke 17:12

And as He entered a certain village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met Him;

The rabbis taught that if a leper was on the windward side of a person they would have to stay back a distance equal to what would be in our measurements of about 50 yards.

Luke 17:13

and they raised their voices, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!

They call out to Jesus, because they cannot come too close to him.

They address Him by name, *Jesus*, which is the translation of the Hebrew *Yehoshua* which means the Lord is my salvation.

They then call Him *Master* which in the Greek text is equal to commander.

As in one who can command that they be healed.

They do not specifically ask for healing but rather for mercy.

So let's consider what they know and what they do.

They call the Lord Jesus indicating they see Him as a deliverer or Savior

They call Him Master indicating they know of His authority

They have a need; they are lepers and separated from society and even from this man Jesus

They do complain that they do not deserve this disease nor do they demand to be healed, they ask for mercy

They are humble, in need, not arrogant, and come to Jesus without merit or assets, only asking for grace and mercy.

So the Lord instructs them as to what to do, he sends them and they go, we see in this a faith and an obedience to the Lord and to the Old Testament Law.

Something else interesting about this group of ten.

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We will find out later that one of these is a man from Samaria and was considered by the Jews a foreigner.

So we have nine Jews and one Samaritan, and normally Jews would never consider keep company with a Samaritan but the suffering they are all enduring has torn down social and racial barriers.

An interesting thing, that during a flood, animals that would normally be the predators and the preyed upon can be found together seeking safety and not harming one another.

Here the social rejection, the pain, the disfigurement, binds together those who would normally be at odds with one another.

We should learn a lesson from the lepers - unity for us goes beyond racial, social, economic barriers.

We can seek unity based upon the love, the love that Christ commanded when he told His disciples to love one another as He loves us.

Luke 17:14

And when He saw them, He said to them, Go and show yourselves to the priests. And it came about that as they were going, they were cleansed.

This was the initial part of what was required by Old Testament Law.

Leviticus 13, there are 59 verses covering what the priest is to do in examining a person to determine if he has leprosy and then what is to be done to pronounce him clean should he be healed or cured.

In Leviticus 14 we have as part of the Old Testament Law another 32 verses describing the offering that is to be made should a person be cleansed of leprosy.

So the LAW is very specific in what is to be done.

So Jesus tells these ten men to obey the Old Testament Law.

They OBEY, they are obedient because they believed what this man Jesus told them so they did it - no questions asked - they believed, they acted, and as they were going they were cleansed of their leprosy.

Which now brings up an enigmatic problem . . . what are they to do?

Luke 17:15

Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice,

One turned back and nine went on to the Temple.

At this point we might wonder who is doing the right thing, the one or the nine?

Now in Mark chapter one we have a leper healed and Jesus told him to go to the priest and offer his offering and he did not and the context makes it clear that this was wrong.

Now here we seem to have to opposite.

The one who turns back and does not continue on to the observe the requirements of the Old Testament Law is the one who is commended.

But the account in Mark is very early in Jesus ministry, prior to the rejection He has now faced by the time of our account in Luke.

Much has changed. The religious leaders of Israel have rejected the Savior and many of the people have also since He did not meet their idea of what a deliverer should be.

Soon others will begin to seek Jesus and even foreigners, even Samaritans, will come to Christ as their Savior and be a part of His body, drawn not just from Israel but from all the nations and all the races of the earth.

Things are changing, the Cross is near, the Law will be fulfilled by Jesus.

He is to come the cornerstone, the focal point, the one to whom goes all glory and honor and praise.

And this one leper understood that.

And just in case we may think that he returns, demonstrates his gratitude towards Jesus, and then goes on to the priest look at the last verse in paragraph,

Luke 17:19

And He said to him, Rise, and go your way; your faith has made you well.

At first this account seems to be teaching on gratitude or the lack thereof.

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And there is no doubt that very important teaching is found in this account.

We should be thankful to the Lord for what He has done in saving us.

We seem to live in an age where thankfulness is so often lost.

Barclay in his commentary on this verse written in the early 1950s chided those who were not thankful to God, to others, and to parents.

But centuries before Barclay, Shakespeare in his drama King Lear sees the king lament.

How sharper than a serpent's tooth is it to have a thankless child.

Or those who show ingratitude to others which is illustrated by the lines of poetry that read.

Blow, blow, thou winter wind, Thou art no so unkind as man's ingratitude.

We so often have forgotten to be thankful.

Bible commentator Matthew Henry, after being robbed, wrote this in his diary.

Let me be thankful... **First** because I was never robbed before.

Second, because although they took my wallet they did not take my life.

Third, because although they took my all, it was not much. **Fourth**, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.

So while a very good and true lesson of thankfulness can be found in our passage, is that all that is taught here or is that even the main point of the story?

Every commentary I read seems to end with that point of gratitude and nothing more.

But there is more, a lot more.

Now the number ten is used in the Bible as a figure of rebellion.

It was ten brothers who threw Joseph into the pit, it was ten tribes that broke away from Jerusalem and formed the northern kingdom of Israel, there are the ten commandments that were so often broken by God's Old Testament nation, the anti-Christ will come out of a ten nation confederation.

So the ten lepers, while very real historical figures, illustrate rebellious mankind.

Now they all came to Jesus, they all believed in what he had to say, they all were obedient to His instructions.

They asked for mercy, they believed Jesus, I think they were saved then and there, faith alone in Christ alone.

Their going to the priest was a result of their faith at salvation.

They believed and they obeyed.

Jesus gave them instruction, they had so to speak, a verse to go on and on their way they went - obeying instructions.

Obedying the rules, obeying the Law, ready to offer the sacrifice for their cleansing.

They were on a journey, a quest, a pilgrimage - *Good men, where are you going* one might have asked, *we are a journey, Jesus told us to go, and we are going* - but they are going alone.

I am reminded of Gideon, **Judges 6:14-16**

And the LORD looked at him and said, Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?

And he said to Him, O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house.

But the LORD said to him, Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat Midian as one man.

Gideon refused to obey the Lord unless the Lord went with him.

And then in Exodus 32:34 and God tells Moses that he will send an angel to lead them into the promised land.

Moses thinks about this and in the next chapter, Exodus 33:15-17 we read.

Then he (Moses to God) said to Him, If Thy presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here.

For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Thy sight, I and Thy people? Is it not by Thy going with us, so that we, I and Thy people, may be distinguished from

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all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?

And the LORD said to Moses, I will also do this thing of which you have spoken;

So now let's get back to our ten lepers.

They were now saved, they had their instructions, they were obedient to the word of the Lord.

And they are symbolic of most of the believers you will meet today.

Saved sealed and one day to be delivered and in the mean time living out a mechanical existence as they walk farther and farther away from the Lord.

But one of the ten stopped in his tracks and dared to ask the question, why are we doing this?

I wonder if he thought - why am I going to a priest when I have just meet the one the priest serves, the Messiah, God himself?

Maybe as he thought of the offering he would be required to give he was reminded of David who said in Psalm 51 - *sacrifices and offerings you do not desire but a broken and contrite (faith filled) heart.*

Whatever he was thinking we know he stopped and turned around and went back to worship the Savior.

He went back to the Lord, back to the one who saved him, he went back to do two things, to worship and to give thanks.

Here we have a picture of the very few believers throughout history who have come to truly understand the grace of God.

David was one of them, so was Gideon and Moses before him, the prophets, the disciples - but really so few out of so many.

What did Jesus tell the man?

Go your way

How could Jesus say this?

How could the Lord tell a man to go his own way.

Should we not be about figuring out what the Lord's way is and then go that way?

But that is just what most do and that is why we have so many Christians going in so many different directions.

Jesus could set this man free from the Law, free in every way, telling him to go his own way because in the man's heart he would never be away from

the worship and thankfulness that he had for the One who saved him, cleansed him, and set him free.

Where are you on your spiritual journey today?

Are with the crowds?

With the majority?

With the nine who are marching off to see the priest?

Or are you the one, the one who is going back to salvation, back to the one who did the greatest thing for you that anyone could ever do, the one who solved the greatest problem you will ever have.

Are you there at his feet and at the same time enjoying his freedom?

There is an inscription in the dome of our Capitol in Washington which few people know about.

It says: *One far-off divine event toward which the whole creation moves.*

A visitor saw this inscription and asked the guide what it meant.

He said: *It refers to the second coming of Christ.*

When the dome of our Capitol was erected, some Christian official ordered that inscription to be etched in the dome of our seat of government, believing that its truth was vital to the concern of our nation.

And the Second Coming of Christ is also of vital concern for us.

Luke 17:20

Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed;

We see again the dialogue shift back to the Pharisees.

They question and from previous rounds of interrogation that the intention of these religious leaders and their questions is to trap the Lord finding fault in him.

The Pharisees want to know WHEN and Jesus answers them with a statement that many would be well off to listen to and learn today.

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The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed.

This may seem to contradict what we see later in this paragraph (v 24) and in other passages where He speaks of the signs of the

kingdom to come especially with the fig tree in Matthew chapter 24.

But I do not see the emphasis on the lack of signs but on the signs that can be observed.

But no sign can do that, we may even see signs now that may indicate that the Rapture is near - but we cannot be certain.

In the Tribulation they may see signs that the Second Coming is near, but no one will be certain as to the day or the time.

The best we can say about the signs we see are that that maybe the setting of the stage of future events but we have seen the stage set before and the Lord did not come.

So the coming of the kingdom is not in signs but in the sovereignty of God.

So the warning is not so much against signs but against trusting in signs.

But what he does give them is not a sign but a Savior.

Luke 17:21

nor will they say, Look, here it is! or, There it is! For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.

There were and always will be those who will try to tell us that the Kingdom is coming, it is here now, look at the signs.

But the signs are not the conclusive evidence.

The Messiah, the King of the Kingdom is right there in front for them.

If these leaders of Israel would believe in Him as the Messiah, the promised King the Kingdom would be at hand.

but we know they did not.

They rejected the King and His kingdom.

Luke 17:22

And He said to the disciples, The days shall come when you will long to see one of the

days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.

Notice the shift in audience, He has said what He has to say to the religious crowd but now will take time to teach His disciples.

First, He said that a time would come when the disciples would long to see Him return, but they would not see it (v. 22).

Second, He said that when the kingdom would come everyone would know it (vv. 23-24). It will not be a hidden (only an inner, spiritual) kingdom. It will be a kingdom that the whole world will know. His appearing will be like the lightning (Matthew 24:27, 30).

Third, Jesus told the disciples He must suffer before the kingdom comes (Luke 17:25).

Even today we long to see the Lord coming and yet we wait and know by faith that God is never late.

His timing is perfect.

Luke 17:23

And they will say to you, Look there! Look here! Do not go away, and do not run after them.

Again, as in verse 21 there will be those who will attempt to announce the coming of the Lord and His Kingdom.

Now this looks very specifically at something we have been studying on Tuesday nights as we have been investigating the book of Revelation.

At the middle of the Tribulation the believer in Jerusalem are to flee once they see the image of the anti-Christ set up in the Temple.

God will divinely protect these believers but the forces of the anti-Christ will try to lure them out of hiding by claiming that Christ has come and He is in Jerusalem, but is not the Christ, it is the anti-Christ.

Now by way of application to us, the history of the church is littered with those well meaning believers who have been totally distracted from the day to day joy of the spiritual life by listening to those who call out that the Lord is Coming.

He will come, and we should live as though the Rapture could occur today, but we must not get

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distracted by that and we must not be carried away from the life of faith that the Lord has for us.

There have been times in the past when some were so sure the Lord was coming that they abandoned jobs, churches, responsibilities, sold everything and moved to mountains (to get a head start into heaven?).

They were so consumed with the supposed coming of the Lord that they were not living day by day in Christ.

Luke 17:24

For just as the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day.

Lighting is something that is pretty hard to miss.

When we were in Negril, Jamaica last week we had some tremendous thunder storms and the lighting was so powerful and close, it was hard to miss.

I was sitting in a window set looking out the window and the lightening stuck so close it actually knocked me on the floor.

When the Son of Man comes there will be no mistaking of it - His Day, His second coming will shine forth through the heavens.

But that is for a future time.

Luke 17:25

But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

When Jesus returns at the Second Advent it will be to vanquish His enemies and set up His Kingdom - but before the Crown there must be the Cross.

And He will be rejected by that generation - the generation that will end at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

You realize that many who were there at the Cross mocking Jesus would also be there when Titus the Roman marched his legions into Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple and the city.

Now Jesus is going to draw an analogy to the conditions on earth just prior to His return.

Luke 17:26,27

And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man.

they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

What was happening prior to the flood?

People were going about their business as if nothing was wrong and nothing was going to happen.

Oh sure, there was that crazy Noah out there building a boat but he was a nut case anyway.

So they were eating and drinking, marrying, given in marriage - normal activities.

And even though they are described elsewhere as a wicked generation, their main problem was that they just did not believe that God was going to judge them.

This shows us that apathy and indifference to what God is doing is a much greater problem than antagonism.

In C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*, Lewis writes of the devil briefing his nephew, Wormwood, on the subtleties and techniques of tempting people.

The goal, he counsels, is not wickedness but *indifference*.

Satan cautions his nephew to keep the prospect, the patient, comfortable at all costs.

If he should become concerned about anything of importance, encourage him to think about his luncheon plans; not to worry, it could induce indigestion.

And then this definitive job description.

I, the devil, will always see to it that there are bad people.

Your job, my dear Wormwood, is to provide me with the people who do not care.

Eating, drinking, marrying, not caring - Describes the world of Noah's day, the world of at the time of the Lord's Second Advent and indeed the world today.

The Lord then uses the days of lot as an example.

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Luke 17:28

It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building;

but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.

Sudden, destruction, perfect judgement from a perfect judge, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Zechariah 12:3-4, And it will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.

In that day, declares the LORD, I will strike every horse with bewilderment, and his rider with madness. But I will watch over the house of Judah, while I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness.

Luke 17:31

On that day, let not the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house go down to take them away; and likewise let not the one who is in the field turn back.

This is a warning against the lingering reluctance to part with present treasures, which induces some to remain in a burning house in hopes of saving this and that precious article until they themselves are consumed and buried in its ruins.

They are to take action based upon their faith in what God tells them to do.

Luke 17:32

Remember Lot's wife.

When judgement comes as it will at the middle of the tribulation, the believer is to flee, to not go back and to not look back.

Lot's wife was told to flee Sodom with her family and husband, she looked back.

Her heart was still in Sodom, her attachment was to earthly treasures and the turning back, the delay proved to be fatal.

In like manner.

Luke 17:33

Whoever seeks to keep his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life shall preserve it.

Our lives are not in our hands but in the hands of God.

If He says to flee we must by faith know that in our fleeing there will be great blessing.

At verse 34 the Lord goes to the end of the Tribulation, to the judgment He will bring at His Second Coming.

Luke 17:34

I tell you, on that night there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken, and the other will be left.

There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken, and the other will be left.

The one who is taken is the one who is taken in judgment, the unbeliever.

The one left is the believer who will go into the Kingdom.

Remember the analogy, as in the days of Noah - the ones taken were the unbeliever who were swept away in the flood.

The ones who remained on earth were Noah and his family.

Luke 17:36

Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left

This verse was not part of the early manuscripts of Luke.

It is found in the parallel passage in Matthew 24:40

Matthew 24:38-41, For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.

Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left.

Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left.

Luke 17:37

And answering they said to Him, Where, Lord? And He said to them, Where the body is, there also will the vultures be gathered.

The question the disciples ask is where will these who are taken be taken?

In the popular proverb of the day, Jesus was reaffirming that these people would be taken into judgment. Much as a dead body causes vultures to *gather* on it, so dead people are consigned to judgment if they are not ready for the kingdom.

And why were they not ready?

Unbelief in Christ most certainly but why did they not believe?

Apathy and indifference.

I do not really meet that many people who are antagonistic to Jesus Christ but I do meet many who just do not care, who do not have an opinion, who are indifferent to spiritual things.

But God is not indifferent to them.

He sent His Son, His only Son into the world to die on the Cross for them, to die even for those who do not care.

And that no caring, that indifference, that apathy is the greatest danger we face as God's people today.

Illustration

In May 1934 a Charlotte, North Carolina farmer lent a pasture to some thirty local businessmen who wanted to devote a day of prayer for Charlotte because the Depression had spread spiritual apathy in the city.

They had planned, despite the indifference of the ministerial association, to hold an evangelistic campaign later that year.

During that day of prayer on the land their leader, Vernon Patterson, prayed, *out of Charlotte the Lord would raise up someone to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth.*

God did hear their prayer.

The farmer who lent his pasture for the prayer meeting was Franklin Graham and his son Billy became a Christian during the evangelistic meetings that followed that gathering of prayer and the rest is history.

Chapter 18

Luke 18:1

Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart,

Luke states the purpose of this parable right up front. A positive and a negative.

The positive: That disciples ought to pray.

The negative: That they do not lose heart.

This parable comes immediately after the teaching about the Kingdom. The Jews would pray for the coming of the kingdom. Even Jesus in His model prayer said Thy Kingdom come.

But as believers pray for the coming of the Kingdom or for us, the coming of the rapture, we must know that it is according to God's timing and not ours. God may make us wait but He is never late.

The religious Jews of Jesus day taught that people should pray no more than three times a day so as to not weary God. This was taken from Daniel 6:10 where he prayed three times a day and the historical mention became Law (something believers are real good at doing even today).

But Jesus wanted His disciples to persist in prayer and not lose heart. This little phrase means to be wearied to the point of giving up. In the Greek text it means to turn, to give up, to run away, to turn coward.

There are six things listed in the NT that can cause us to lose heart, to give up, but must not:

2 Corinthians 4:1 We must not lose heart at the steady and perhaps slow work of the Holy Spirit in our lives as He conforms us to the image of Christ. Hence, do not lose heart at your rate of Christian's growth.

2 Corinthians 4:16 We are to not lose heart at grown old, the outer man decaying. Because we have an eternal future with Christ.

Galatians 6:9 Do not lose heart in doing good.

Ephesians 3:13 Do not lose heart in the midst of suffering.

Hebrews 12:3 Do not lose heart in resisting sin.

And our passage, Luke 18:1 Do not lose heart when prayers seem not to be answered.

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Why would we lose heart, give up, in prayer? As prayers go unanswered and it may even seem to us that God does not hear us. So the Lord gives a parable of prayer persistence

Luke 18:2,3

saying, There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God, and did not respect man.

And there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, Give me legal protection from my opponent.

There are two characters in the parable.

First, an unbelieving judge who had no regard for God or God's people. This judge would have been a Roman judge.

All matters in Jewish courts were decided by elders and if no resolution was possible a three-judge panel would determine the merits of a case.

The Roman judge who was out for himself was common in Israel. So much so that the Jews even had a play on words for this type of self-serving judge. The word for a judge in the Hebrew means a judge of prohibitions and punishments. But the Jews changed this to mean a judge who is a robber.

The other character is a poor widow who is used to represent all those who are in need of the mercy of the authorities. She had no resources to extract justice from the judge. She could not buy justice and had no had the connections to influence the judge. Her only resource was her persistence. She kept on coming to the judge, coming, and coming, and coming over and over again.

Luke 18:4,5

And for a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, lest by continually coming she wear me out.

And finally the unrighteous judge gives in because he tired of her persistence. So the widow won the protection of the courts.

Now we should not be surprised that the Lord will next apply this parable to God and the

believer. In the parable that would make the unrighteous judge parallel to God.

But parables to not hang on every point of comparison. Remember Jesus used the unrighteous and scheming steward as a parallel to the believer who serves God.

The idea expressed is one of hyperbole, of which the Lord was very fond. If an unrighteous judge would do this or an unrighteous steward do that, how much more a righteous God and those who trust Him who seek after His righteousness?

Application of the parable

Luke 18:6,7

And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now shall not God bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them?

Specifically in view and by interpretation we would see these prayers as prayers calling on God to bring justice to earth . . . thy kingdom come . . . Lord, come for your bride, your church now.

But by way of application we can see the importance of persistence in any prayer request.

We persist and our prayers come more in line with God's will.

We persist and come to where we no longer see the need for that which we initially asked.

We persist and God waits that we might know that it is He who gives us grace We to learn of God's perfect timing.

We persist to learn patience And as we see in verse 8, we persist to grow in faith

Luke 18:8

I tell you that He will bring about justice for them speedily. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?

When the time comes, God will bring about justice for His people on earth and even vengeance for those who have been martyred for their faith. The question is, when the Lord comes will He find believers who are trusting in Him by faith or will He find those who have given up.

Second parable

Now in the first parable we heard of an unrighteous Roman judge; in this parable we hear of a righteous Roman tax-collector.

Luke 18:9

And He also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt:

We might call this an indictment parable because it is told to the ones who trusted in themselves. Those who hear this parable are to get the point they they are wrong in their justification of self and their trusting in self.

Two things are said of these legalists:

They trust in themselves that they are righteous. That is, they believe that by their works, performance, service, position, knowledge they can approve themselves to God and stand holy before him.

Secondly because they are into their works and position, they view others with contempt. The word means to consider as not even being worth considering, to view as nothing.

The Pharisees of Israel considered the Gentiles to with such contempt that they would not even evangelize them.

Luke 18:10

Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer.

We of course have met the Pharisees before, and we know they are for the most part legalists who justify themselves and display their righteousness before men putting themselves up and putting others down.

The tax-gatherer would have been a wealthy Roman aristocrat who was chosen to collect taxes because of his integrity. According to the Rabbis this would have been at 9:00 am, noon, or 3:00 pm, the three times of prayer.

Luke 18:11,12

The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer.

I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.

Remember what the Lord said of the Pharisees in Luke 16:15,

You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts;

Here we go one step farther, the Pharisee, in his prayer, tries to justify himself before God.

Oswald Chambers said that pride was the sin of making self our god.

He is thankful, which at first sounds good, but then we consider why he is thankful. "I am not like other people."

A man in pride faces many dangers: Pride beckons us into living independently of God.

Pride undermines our faith.

Pride can cut us off from God and others.

Pride distorts our view of ourself and others.

Pride prevents proper prayer But there is also someone else there praying

Luke 18:13

But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me, the sinner!

In contrast to the Pharisee, the Roman tax-collector would not have even ascended the steps of the Temple.

While the Pharisee would have lifted eyes and hands to heaven, the Roman casts his eyes down in humility. He is beating his breast, which was a Roman military custom for submission to authority and the admission of wrong.

The content of his prayer is to ask for mercy, that mercy be given to me the sinner.

Mercy is from the same root as propitiation so this is a plea that God be not angry with this sinner, that God not judge, that God give instead out of grace what this man knows he does not deserve.

The definite article here makes this man the sinner, he is not aware of anyone else and he is not comparing himself to anyone else.

In contrast to the dangers of pride, let's consider the nine advantages of humility.

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Humility is the proper attitude before God.
Humility keeps us from depending on our own strengths.
Humility makes our prayers direct and honest.
Humility clarifies our dependence on God.
Humility challenges our pride.
Humility is a deep awareness of unworthiness.
Humility increases our appreciation for God.
Humility is essential for service to others.
Jesus Christ is our model for humility.

Application of the parable

Luke 18:14

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.

Who is justified, the self-righteous pharisee? No, the Roman, the tax-collector, the man who saw his net spiritual worth as zero and sought nothing more than the mercy of God.

Paul would later answer the question that is somewhat left at this point in the parable. How is a man justified before God?

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

Romans 5:1, Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is only one way to be justified before God and that is by what He has done for us in grace and our faith in Him and His work.

Now we have looked at two principles of prayer, prayer persistence and humility in prayer. But stepping back a moment, let's consider something very basic about prayer . . . Prayer is one of the greatest applications of our faith that we have in the Christian life.

When you pray you speak to one who is not visibly present, you form words and thoughts in your mind and you expect someone who is not even present to know what you are thinking . . . and that demands faith.

Do you believe it? We can apply three principles then from these parables to our lives in Christ:

First, the principle of prayer persistence: pray and let God make your prayers into an anthem of praise for Him even when he makes you wait.

Second, humility, prayer expresses our personal dependence upon God and full understanding that we earn and deserve nothing, it is mercy and grace.

Third, the principle of faith. We believe it and put our lives in the hands of God.

Luke 18:15

And they were bringing even (also) their babies to Him so that He might touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them.

This event takes place in Perea as Jesus is on His journey to Jerusalem and the Cross.

Most likely He is staying in a home and others learn that he is there and bring their children to Him.

Here in Luke we have the word for babies, that is βρεφος but in Matthew 19:13 and Mark 10:13 we have the word παιδια which would mean small children.

The confusion is resolved when we see that Luke adds the word *also* which mean in addition to another group.

So in addition to small children some were also bringing babies.

The word *they were bringing* is masculine which would indicate that this was the fathers who were bringing their children and babies to Christ.

This word is προσφέρω which is much stronger than the simple word to bring.

This intense form was commonly used for bringing sacrifices and here suggests the idea of dedication.

This looks at the dedication of the ones who brings the child to training the child in the ways of God and his Word.

When we put these elements together, the FATHERS bringing the child, to be BLESSED, and the DEDICATION on the part of the fathers, we see a very important challenge.

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It was the fathers who were the leaders, the spiritual leaders, over their children.

They, the fathers, were the ones who took responsibility to see to the spiritual well being and spiritual growth of the children.

So unlike today when we see this privilege and challenge given to the mothers while fathers think they can do their job by just bringing home a pay check.

The biblical ideal is always and always has been the father as the spiritual leader in the home.

The REAL may be that the mother has to take this responsibility neglected by the fathers of our present society.

But men, husbands, fathers it is your job and in that job there will be blessings untold as you bring your children to Jesus Christ.

Now they, the fathers, brought the children to Jesus, in order that he might touch them.

Now this was part of Jewish tradition in Jesus' day.

To bring a child to a rabbi that he might bless them for their future life and well being.

The tradition date to Genesis 48:14-16 when Jacob blessed his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh by laying his hands upon their heads.

But the disciples, hanging around outside the house, rebuked the fathers for bringing the children.

Remember back in Luke 9 the disciples found a man casting out demons in the name of the Lord and they rebuked and hindered him.

Now these fathers bring their children for a blessing and instead they get rebuked

The word itself means to unjustly scold or blame another and to do it ineffectively.

So not only was their rebuke unwarranted but it was without results.

This verse brings into the mind's eye a frightening picture.

These fathers, who are the ones taking the responsibility of spiritually guiding their children, these sincere and devout fathers, coming to the Lord for encouragement and blessing but instead getting chewed out by the disciples, the servants

of Jesus - They reach out to Jesus for help and are hindered by his disciples.

But is that so removed from what we see today.

When God puts us in a place to help, and one comes reaching out to the Lord, and we give him rebuke instead of blessing, we scold instead of encourage, and instead of help we hinder.

I want you to see the problems these disciples have.

A misuse and abuse of their authority.

They were using their authority to protect Jesus from being disturbed, without regard to the ones who needed the help that only He could give.

They presumed what the Lord wanted.

They did not ask him what they should do.

They just started to scold and rebuke.

They could have turned to the master and sought guidance and direction - just like we can.

But just like us today, we would rather ride our own presumptions than turn to the mind of Christ for the true answers.

They forgot a prior lesson.

Luke 9:48, Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for he who is least among you, this is the one who is great.

When we studied that passage we saw that to receive a child you had to be aware, sensitive, selfless, and willing.

And the disciples were none of these and forgot the doctrine they had been taught.

They failed to understand GRACE.

They failed to understand that what God has to offer is freely given to all and that in giving grace God gives to the helpless, to the insignificant, to the dependant ones who just come to him.

Too often today the church stands as a club, restricted to only those who qualify according to the same standard the disciples were using, some human merit.

But this church stands as a refuge for the hurt, the helpless, and we offer hope.

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In the months and years to come I have no way of knowing who or what may walk through those door, but we do not pre-qualify.

If you want Jesus Christ, you are welcome here.

Luke 18:16

But Jesus called for them, saying, Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

The disciples were attempting to turn the children away because they saw them as being unimportant.

They were thinking in the human viewpoint terms that Jesus had earlier challenged when they were hindering a man who was casting out a demon.

HOW MANY TIMES MUST they hear this before they get the point. Probably about as many times as we must hear the Word and its truth taught before we get the point.

Principle

Repetition is essential to locking truth into the soul.

And it is only once truth is locked in that it can be applied.

THEN JESUS TELLS THE DISCIPLES WHY.

For you see the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Lewis Sperry Chafer defines the Kingdom of God as all intelligences in heaven and on earth who are willingly submitted to God.

And with that submission there is tremendous benefit and value, what we might call blessings.

So Jesus is saying that the blessings that God has for you in life belong to those who are like children.

Luke 18:17

Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all.

The comparative adverb $\omega\varsigma$ stands in the middle of this verse to show that there is an approximate comparison of the attitude of a child and the attitude we must have as we receive all that God has for us.

The word RECEIVE means to openly welcome.

The Lord indicates that there is benefit, value, blessing to receiving the kingdom of God.

But the qualification is to receive it as a child.

These things can be said of the attitude of a child: A realization of helplessness.

Have you ever seen the frustration that can come when your child tries to do something and they just are not big or strong enough. They may try and try but to no avail.

Man tries and tries to receive the blessings of God but only when we stop trying are the gates of grace opened wide.

True spiritual success is born in the parched soil of helplessness rather than the fertile ground of achievement.

We must abandon the false piety of achievement that stands in the way of receiving all the highest and best God has to offer. A realization of dependence.

The very word that is used for a child looks at one who is dependent on another.

From helplessness comes the need to depend upon one who is able.

This is interdependence, not co-dependence

A realization that what God has is for those who have no claim on it.

What rights belong to a child, what property or claims to possessions can they make, none.

A child also takes openly and confidently that which is given.

As a child, did an adult ever fool you. You were open and trusting but perhaps your trust was misplaced.

Children have not developed the cynicism of an adult. They are open and once they receive they are confident because of the giver of what they receive.

We must be as a child, open for the gift and confident in the giver.

And a child doesn't try to earn or deserve what is given. They freely receive the gifts that are offered.

And we as adults must realize that we cannot earn or deserve the free gifts of God.

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A child travels light, discards the old baggage.

A child freely receives unconditional love.

One writer has said of this passage that.

The child's littleness and immaturity, and need of assistance, though commonly disparaged, keep the way open for the fatherly love of God, whereas we as grown-ups so often block it.

And when it is blocked, when the attitude of child is not there, there is no receiving of the Kingdom and its blessings.

They have no share, or part in what God has to give.

And why should they, they are more involved with their ability and achievement than their helplessness and need.

No child ever would think of presenting a resume to the Lord to qualify for God's highest and best but we as adults to often think our achievement will win the favor of our Father, but his favor is given in grace.

And it is only with that attitude that we also, like a child, can have it all.

When we realize that we have no claim on grace, that is when we will awaken to grace.

A little boy was overheard talking to himself as he strutted through the backyard, baseball cap in place, toting ball and bat. He was heard to say, "I'm the greatest hitter in the world." Then he tossed the ball into the air, swung at it and missed. "Strike one!" Undaunted he picked up the ball, threw it into the air and said to himself, "I'm the greatest baseball hitter ever," and he swung at the ball again. And again he missed. "Strike two!" He paused a moment to examine his bat and ball carefully. Then a third time he threw the ball into the air. "I'm the greatest hitter who ever lived," he said. He swung the bat hard again, missed a third time. He cried out, "Wow! Strike three! What a pitcher! I'm the greatest pitcher in the world!"

Many years ago during a war in India, a young soldier was given a very difficult assignment.

A hilltop that seemed inaccessible was an ideal position for the placement of a gun, and the recruit was commanded to carry the weapon to that strategic location.

He made several strenuous attempts, but failed each time. Finally he went to his commanding officer and declared, This assignment is impossible!

When his superior heard these words, he replied emphatically, Impossible! Impossible? Soldier, I've got an order for it right here in my pocket!

The embarrassed young man determined to try again. He returned to the hill and succeeded in accomplishing his mission.

The Rich Young Ruler.

Luke 18:18

And a certain ruler questioned Him, saying, Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

Both the verbs DO and INHERIT show us that this young man is very hung up on doing, doing something that will guarantee him eternal life.

The aorist tense would indicate that he thinks he can do one thing, one good work, that will assure him of a reward or blessings in heaven.

The word GOOD is **αγαθος** which at least shows us he is thinking of something of intrinsic good or absolute good but the verb is still active so it is he that does that which is of merit for salvation.

Luke 18:19

And Jesus said to him, Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

Jesus understands immediately that this young man is hung up on doing good. So he puts good, the absolute good of which this man spoke, in its proper place, or perhaps we should say, with its proper person.

No one is good except God alone

While this man recognized Jesus as a good teacher, he is not recognizing Him as God - so Jesus in a sense poses a riddle.

If God is the only one who is **αγαθος** then you must be taking to God.

Luke 18:20

You know the commandments, do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honor your father and mother.

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Since this man is so intent on doing good, Jesus challenges Him with doing good.

And this is the demand of the Law, keep it all for the only way to have a relationship with a holy God is to be holy as God is holy.

Exodus 22:31, Leviticus 11:45, Leviticus 19:2 2

Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them,

You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

That is the demand or the requirement of the Law, to be as holy as God which is impossible.

Like many people today this young man was focusing on morality and while morality is part of Christianity, it is only part.

We are called to a much greater way of life, a way of life that is found in a person and not in a list of ethic.

Many are good but many are not believers in a person, Jesus Christ.

If Satan can't get you into sin he will get you into legalism, living a list of do's and don't's rather than living every day with your best friend, Jesus Christ.

Luke 18:21

And in his legalistic arrogance, he answers, no problem.

And he said, All these things I have kept from my youth.

Now the preposition used does not indicate that he is saying that he has done this since he has gotten past his youth, but that even while a youth he did all these things.

Zane Hodges in his book *Absolutely Free*, states that: *This is easily the most self-righteous boast to be found anywhere in the New Testament.*

This is arrogance personified in this young man.

He is telling the Lord that he is about as close to perfect as you can get.

Luke 18:22

And when Jesus heard this, He said to him, One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess, and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.

Presses him to the full extent of LAW.

Jesus is going to bring him to a point of doing good that he refuses to do.

Everything else he at least verbally attests to.

If not doing it, he would do it.

Anything else would have at least been tried but the Lord brings him to the one thing that he is not willing to set aside.

This is very similar to the journey of self and sin discovery that Paul came to in Romans 7.

He looked at the Old Testament Law, the ten commandments especially, and said to himself, well done, except for the last one.

That one nailed him, he was a covetous man.

Romans 7: 18-19, For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish

And this is what nails the rich young ruler - His wealth!

Jesus zeroed in on the one thing that was for this man a distraction. His possessions and his wealth.

This was not a requirement for salvation but rather a statement designed to get this man off his arrogant high horse.

To get him to realize that in doing good we as mankind can never do enough to meet the demand of a holy God.

The man asked about eternal life, heaven, so the Lord told him about heaven.

You want the riches of God for all eternity?

Then stop depending on your riches on earth.

AND FOR US, WHATEVER WE DEPEND UPON apart from the Lord, we become a stumblingblock of offence to us as we press on the maturity.

For him it was his wealth, what is for you, what is for me?

Principle

We all carry with us baggage from the past.

This baggage from the past can range from sin to self-reliance.

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It can be almost anything, even success that we have achieved.

But whatever it is, it is a stumbling block to advance in the Christ dependant life.

The things that we hold on to are often the things that we think shape our image of self and our image of God.

For the rich young ruler it was his wealth.

Perhaps some was inherited but then he made even more money.

He had the latest model chariot, the best designer robes, sandals purchased at Gucci of Jerusalem.

He saw himself as one who could not only make money, but then pay the price for whatever he wanted.

A new robe one day, a fine meal another day, and even eternal life - but what God gives is not for sale.

Because this baggage from the past shapes our self-image, we will not easily abandon it.

We stand in fear of giving up that which we have relied upon for so long.

We think that this is the real me, this is what we are.

This is who we are. This is what we do.

For some it can be an attitude of rebellion, control or manipulation of others, of being able to get others to like you.

All something you have worked on and developed.

For others it might be some aspect of self-reliance.

Your strength or your beauty.

For others maybe some secret sin that looms from the past, something you return to for comfort and security.

For some it is the very real horrors of the past, you were unwanted; you were abused, molested as a child.

And you think that is what you really are so these pains from the past are not given to the Lord to heal.

But you hold onto them and use them as an excuse for what you do and who you are.

But whatever it is that you think is shaping your self-image; it is that which is keeping you from being conformed to the image of Christ.

You will never fall back into the arms of Christ by faith if you have something you hold to so tightly that you think is the real you, and forms a source of security apart from Christ.

Solomon saw this in every form, as he entered a frantic search for happiness that was always just beyond his reach.

He tried everything, he relied upon his wealth, fame, popularity, wives, education, and like the rich young ruler, his wealth.

David sought security in his children, his family, and those sons closest to him brought him heartache beyond compare.

Amnon raped his sister, Absalom killed Amnon, and then Absalom wrestled away the kingdom from his father.

Paul saw it on the road to Damascus.

He was very self-reliant, could do anything, even kill and persecute the follows of this Jesus of Nazareth.

But then he was blind, and a blind person is not self-reliant, he is dependent.

In all these examples and even more, and right here with the rich young ruler we see the patient love of Jesus Christ.

With Solomon the Lord let him run his own course and learn that nothing worked.

With David the Lord took away everything, except himself.

With Paul he took away his sight and then gave him three days to do nothing but think.

And with the rich young ruler, he challenged him to the very core of what he thought he was, he said:

One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess, and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.

How often has Jesus looked at us, loved us, and then worked in our lives and circumstances to give us the chance to set aside that very thing that we so depend upon, that very thing that is apart and distant from Him.

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The Lord gives every one of us a choice.

You can look at yourself in the hard and honest mirror of the Word and then go to Him, pray for wisdom that you do not rely upon anyone else but Him.

You can seek by faith His Word to shape your image, to let Him form you into the person you could be in Him.

Or you can hide away the baggage, ignore it, rationalize it, pretend it doesn't exist and when it comes just excuse it by saying, well, that is just what I really am.

And in the sin nature, your right, that is what you are, but only in the flesh.

In Him, armed with the power Spirit and the Truth of the Word you are so much more.

Jesus even said this to the rich young man.

Give it up and you will have more, give up the wealth that you can't take with you, and I'll give you a wealth that no one can ever take away.

But when you hide away the things that you think are the real you, the things you depend upon, Jesus will open you up and make those things with all their horror stare you right in the face - he will put you in a position where you cannot ignore, rationalize, or joke about them.

You will have to make a choice.

YOUR WAY - OR GOD'S WAY.

Dependence upon the weakness of self or the eternal strength of a Lord who loves you so much, he gave His life for you.

Luke 18:23

But when he had heard these things, he became very sad; for he was extremely rich.

He came face to face with the God of the universe who only wanted to give him wealth beyond compare, and he walked away sad and grieved.

But his sadness was minor when we consider the sadness of One who loved so much that he would give his life for this young man.

The young man wanted something, But the Lord wanted him, the young man wanted to make a

purchase, But the Lord wanted to give Him his very life.

The young man held on to that which would tarnish with time, But the Lord wanted to give him that which was eternal.

There is no sadness that can compare with the sadness, the hurt, the pain of the Lord Jesus Christ when one who is offered everything, turns and walks away.

We have started our study of the Rich Young Ruler.

We found a man who was living on a path of Law and works.

So much so that I think that he thought that his keeping of the Old Testament Law had saved him, given him entrance into the Kingdom.

So now he comes to Jesus, who he sees as a good man, seeking what he must further do to receive the *inheritance* of the kingdom, what we would call eternal rewards.

So what did Jesus do?

He pressed the issue - if you are living by law are you really willing to go the full distance of the law.

To not only keep the Law but sacrifice what you have?

Isaiah 28:12-13

OFFER OF REST: *He who said to them, Here is rest, give rest to the weary, And, Here is repose*

THEIR NEGATIVE RESPONSE.

but *they would not listen.*

God gives them more of what they want.

So the word of the LORD to them will be, Order on order, order on order, Line on line, line on line, A little here, a little there,

Purpose

That they may go and stumble backward, be broken, snared, and taken captive.

I think we can see two things working together in the dialogue between the this rich young ruler and the Lord.

FIRST.

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We need to ask why this man is so stuck in works and performance even to the point of being blind to his own violations of Old Testament Law - v 21 *All these things I have kept from (even in) my youth.*

SECONDLY.

Why did Jesus tell him to obey more Law?

Now in looking at the first issue, we see that this man carried some baggage from the past that affected his view of God - that is, he was impressed with his works and thought that God would be impressed by his works.

We are raised and we live in a merit based system

In our childhood we are rewarded for the good we do and punished for the wrong we do

In school we learn that if we work hard there is reward, a better grade and that if we do not work hard there can be failure

We are a nation of laws and we are punished when we break the law and rewarded by the accolades of society when we obey the laws

At our jobs we are rewarded with advancement and salary increases when we do a good job and can be fired when we do a bad job

Society does not teach us grace, our employment does not teach us grace, in school we do not learn grace and even, for the most part, our homes and upbringing do not teach us grace

In a fallen world among fallen men this is the way it is.

We reap what we sow and I am not advocating that it be any different

But somewhere along the line of life we must learn that this is not the way God's grace works.

Isaiah 55:8-9, For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

This is the crisis of grace, which we come to at salvation and in the spiritual life.

We realize that all of our achievements (and our failures) have nothing to do with God's love for us.

We carry from the past that which we try to apply to our relationship with God.

For this man it was his works, for Paul it was his self-reliance, for Solomon his wisdom and wealth, for David it was his children.

What is it for you?

Isaiah 28:12-13

OFFER OF REST: *He who said to them, Here is rest, give rest to the weary, And, Here is repose*

THEIR NEGATIVE RESPONSE.

but they would not listen.

GOD GIVES THEM MORE OF WHAT THEY WANT.

So the word of the LORD to them will be, Order on order, order on order, Line on line, line on line, A little here, a little there,

PURPOSE.

That they may go and stumble backward, be broken, snared, and taken captive.

The Lord zeroed in on the one thing this man clung to by way of his works.

He would not go that distance and in the same way God will press us to the distance when we are any path other than grace.

This answers A ver important question. Why do so many Christian drop out?

Oh, they are still saved, they still have eternal life. But they have become so discouraged and disillusioned.

WHY?

Because they are on a path that is causing them to stumble and fall and yet they will not enter the rest, the repose of God by Grace and faith.

Now remember the disciples are overhearing this as Jesus responds to the man.

Luke 18:24

And Jesus looked at him and said, How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!

The Lord at this verse does not eliminate entirely the idea of a rich man entering the kingdom of God, only that it is difficult.

There is always the volitional option to stop depending on your wealth and your works and start depending on Christ.

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The same option given to the rich young ruler is mentioned in the Psalms.

Psalm 49:6-8, There are those who trust in their wealth, And boast in the abundance of their riches.

No man can by any means redeem his brother, Or give to God a ransom for him For the redemption of his soul is costly, And he should cease trying forever.

Luke 18:25

Then he illustrates.

For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

This is not just hard, it is impossible.

Some try to play a little game with the fact that there was a gate called the *eye of the needle* which was pedestrian gate and if a camel was to try and go through it, it would be possible but very difficult.

What those who try to use this interpretation do not stop to think is that it would also be very stupid since there were many other wide gates into Jerusalem.

But we find in the writings of the Rabbis that they used this statement along with one about an elephant going through the eye of a needle to describe the impossible.

So then, this is an idiom for the impossible and the disciples get the point.

The Reaction of the Disciples.

Luke 18:26

And they who heard it said, Then who can be saved?

Matthew, in his account of this dialogue, adds that the disciples were talking among themselves and asking.

Who then can be saved.

Aorist, passive, infinitive.

The word **σωζω** for salvation in the spiritual sense.

So to them the problem now is, they have just heard that it is impossible for a man to enter the kingdom of God.

So one step ahead, and two steps back, in their minds.

But what they do not know is that now they are at the point in their thinking that Jesus has wanted then to be at ever since he called them.

They are listening to Him, looking at themselves, and saying - No Way, Impossible, infeasible, insurmountable, can't do it.

And that is where the Lord wants them.

For them to come to the conclusion the rich young ruler never came to.

The conclusion so few believers today ever get to.

Luke 18:27

But He said, The things impossible with men are possible with God.

I want to give you nine things that are impossible for man but are possible when we take our stand of faith with God.

Love.

For God and for others, others who love you and even those who don't

Joy.

Something on the inside that makes you happy in every circumstance and relationship

Peace.

Something else on the inside that gives you peace even in the midst of problems.

Patience.

The ability to wait for the best and never give in to second best which is not best at all.

Kindness.

Being able to treat others as Christ treated you.

In grace.

This word comes from the same root as grace and is your graciousness to others.

Goodness.

Victory over sins that tear you up, hurt you soul, and harm others.

Faithfulness.

Loyalty to the Lord and to others, a virtue that is given because of who you are, just as the Lord is faithful to us.

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Gentleness.

Humility which includes authority orientation and knowing that you have a place in God's plan and what that place is.

Self-control.

The discipline of the Holy spirit that allows us to get the job done, see the tasks and the relationships of life through to their completion.

If you were trying to write these down you really don't have to.

They are listed for you in Galatians 5:22-23

We look at that list and we say, impossible, and we are right? What kind of God would ask us to be and do all those things.

A God who with the list gives us His power, His ability, His provision, His own Spirit.

And then says stand with me - and all things are possible.

Luke 18:28

And Peter said, Behold, we have left our own homes, and followed You.

Peter goes way back to the decision he made that day on the shores of the sea of Galilee when he left a lucrative fishing business to follow Christ.

He speaks for the other disciples who also left wealth and fame and family to follow Christ.

This is a boast, BEHOLD can be translated NOW LOOK.

WE LEFT is aorist tense which looks at a past decision, TO FOLLOW a perfect tense, from the past to the present

This is like saying, look what we lost, what we gave up, what we have done for you, look at our sacrifice, and yet now you are saying it is not enough.

By leaving everything you just set aside that which you could depend upon, but that only takes you away from the viewpoint on man.

One more step needs to be taken, stand with God and then see the impossible become possible.

Not just in eternity, but right now.

Luke 18:29

And He said to them, Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,

But what about that which is given up?

We as believers often called upon to set aside normal activities of life in our service.

This is never a means of blessing but is done as a result of blessing.

We do what we do, even by way of sacrifice, is not done to receive blessing but because we are so blessed by God.

Luke 18:30

And then the promise for the disciples and for us.

who shall not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life.

A woman named 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. But so much of her life could have been different.*

How many of the people of our world are in blindness and yet 2000 years ago, a procedure was accomplished at the Cross to give men sight.

And yet mankind refuses and remains in darkness.

We are going to see a blind beggar given sight, but first we are going to see another kind of blindness on the part of the disciples.

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Luke 18:31

And He took the twelve aside and said to them, Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished.

Jesus lets His disciples know of the danger that awaits them. Our Lord does not lead us blindly into danger. He warns and at the same time encourages.

He tells them that what is going to happen is not something that will be a surprise, it has been written in the prophets, God is fully aware of what will occur.

Jesus, in His humanity, does not know the details but His Father does and He is not fearing but rather by faith, He is resting.

We too need not fear the future, because God is already there.

Luke 18:32,33

For He will be delivered to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again.

Jesus tells them of the horror and of the honor, of the gore and the glory, of the Cross but also of the Crown.

Luke 18:34

And they understood none of these things, and this saying was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.

We have a progression here.

First, they did not understand anything the Lord was saying, notice we read they understood *none of these things*.

Because of that inability to understand even the basics, the more advanced information was hidden from them.

Remember, God both reveals and conceals.

So the result was that they did not comprehend what was being said

They were in blindness, spiritually, they were refusing to see the greatness of the Lord, His plan, His grace - and this is a great prelude to what happens next as Jesus encounters a blind beggar on the Jericho road.

Question?

At the end of the chapter, who is going to be blind and who is going to see?

HEALING OF THE BLIND MAN.

In Matthew's account of this incident we find that there were two blind men. Luke describes only one as does Mark but Mark names him, this is the blind beggar, Bartimaeus.

Luke 18:35

And it came about that as He was approaching Jericho, a certain blind man was sitting by the road, begging.

Jesus had been ministering on the East side of the Jordan and now is going to Jerusalem for the Passover and His Passion.

Jericho is on the West side of the Jordan about 14 miles from Jerusalem. The ancient city of Jericho had been uninhabited since the days of Joshua.

But a new Jericho had been built by Herod the great and was the location of his winter palace.

The events of this portion of Luke 18 probably occurred as he was on the road between the old Jericho and new Jericho.

New Jericho was a Roman city and by crossing the Jordan, Jesus was now under the authority of the Romans and the Jewish Sandhedrin or high council of elders.

Jesus knows that he is in enemy territory but that very present danger did not prevent Him from His mission and His ministry, He still had things to teach the disciples and He still was preparing them for their future mission.

And he still has people to help.

Their is great multitude going to Jerusalem for Passover.

As they leave the city with the Lord and His disciples their pilgrimage is interrupted by the shouts of a blind man.

It is Mark who tells us his name.

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Mark includes the lineage of Bartimaeus as son of Timaeus.

Now usually a blind beggar doesn't have a pedigree but Mark, writing at a later time, includes this perhaps because Bartimaeus is by the time of the writing someone well known in the first century church.

SITTING BY THE ROAD indicates that he was there begging alms from the travelers on their way to Jerusalem.

Blindness, both from birth and occurring later in life, is a big problem in the Near East.

Especially in the ancient days when the trash, garbage, and discards were burned openly the soot was damaging to the eyes.

A man who visited the Near East in the 18th century noted even then that half the men he saw had problems with their eyes as a result of infections.

So the blind beggar sitting by the road was a common sight in the ancient Near East.

Luke 18:36-38

Now hearing a multitude going by, he began to inquire what this might be.

And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.

And he called out, saying, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!

The sense of hearing in a blind man is very acute.

He listens more intently than those who can see.

And here we learn that Bartimaeus had been listening.

He heard about Jesus Christ and in his darkened world had the opportunity to think about what he had heard.

What he heard was of the words and works of this Jesus of Nazareth.

What he was then thinking was that this man was the Messiah, the promised Son of David.

He put what he had heard together with what he knew and came to a conclusion, this is the Messiah who can cause the blind to see - so he then applied.

He cried out.

The verb SAY is present tense participle indicating that he keep on crying out and did so an accompaniment to something else.

That is the information he had in his soul regarding Jesus Christ.

After addressing Jesus, the Son of David, Bartimaeus now makes a request.

Have MERCY on me!

The mercy of God simply defined is the action of Grace. But it goes a bit beyond that to the action of Grace to hold back the judgement of God that we should deserve.

So with one hand God gives us grace, that which we do not earn nor deserve.

And with the other hand God's mercy holds back the judgment that we should receive for our sin and rebellion against him.

Discipline comes when mercy is slacked.

Psalm 25 is great psalm of David recovering from sin and there he asks God for mercy.

Psalm 25:7, Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; According to Thy lovingkindness (Mercy) remember Thou me, For Thy goodness' sake, O Lord.

So Bartimaeus seeks the Lord for mercy regarding his blindness.

Hold back and remove the judgment.

The imperative mood is not so much a command as it is a last hope, he knows that this is his chance and that only Jesus can help him.

We might call this *the imperative of last resort*.

Luke 18:39

And those who led the way were sternly telling him to be quiet; but he kept crying out all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me!

The word translated STERNLY TELLING HIM means to strongly censure or rebuke.

The aorist tense of BE QUITE is ingressive meaning that he should ingress or enter a different state, a state of quite rather than shouting.

You see the harmony of their journey was disturbed, they did not see why this blind beggar should force his misery upon them and Jesus.

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But this man continued to cry out indifferent to the rebuke of the crowd.

He knew that Jesus was here, now, and this was his opportunity to seek the Messiah, the son of David.

He was persistent, he did not let up, even when the crowds rebuked him, he kept on crying out for the mercy that only Jesus could give.

Luke 18:40

And Jesus stopped and commanded that he be brought to Him; and when he had come near, He questioned him,

Jesus stopped and stood in the road and issued a command, that the man be brought here (imperative mood).

The crowd, being obedient to Jesus, very quickly changed their tune, they now encourage and help the blind man to come to Jesus.

Now before we go any further, we need to look at the **analogy of blindness** and the Lord's healing of this physical limitation.

Every miracle of healing the Lord performed was designed to give us an analogy to the spiritual healing we need.

We are blind and deaf to spiritual things, we are lepers alienated from God, we are dead in our sins, we are lame unable to walk the Christian walk - we need the touch of Christ in our lives to heal us spiritually.

Isaiah 42:18 and other Old Testament passages tell of the work of the messiah in giving sight to blind and hearing to the deaf:

Hear, you deaf! And look, you blind, that you may see.

When Jesus healed the deaf and blind he was fulfilling these prophecies that were written about Him.

And He was teaching us that we are spiritually deaf and spiritually blind.

By way of analogy deafness relates to the unbeliever who cannot hear.

Faith comes by hearing and in the analogy the deaf person is cut off from the hearing of the Word.

Continuing the analogy, blindness relates to the believer who is blind to the wonderful and great things God has for him.

He cannot see them, he is blind to the plan of God.

The healing of one born blind is the one miracle that no one had ever done and was to be the one sign of the Messiah.

Bartimaeus knew who Jesus was and believed that he was the Messiah, the son of David, but was blind and could not follow Him.

In the same way Christians believe in Christ but are blind, sitting by the way side as Christ and His people are moving on.

The analogy of blindness was used in the New Testament in a number of passages.

Ephesians 1:18, I pray that 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.

1 John 2:11, But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Revelation 3:18, I advise you to buy from Me - eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see.

2 Peter 1:9, For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.

So then Bartimaeus is like the believer who calls after Jesus Christ - and Jesus stops and beckons him.

Mark tells us that Bartimaeus throws down his cloak, which was the most valuable thing a beggar had.

In doing this he threw off dependence on earthly things to come without hesitation to the Lord.

Luke 18:41

What do you want Me to do for you? And he said, Lord, I want to regain my sight!

I think it is very interesting that Jesus would ask a blind man what that man wanted Him to do for him.

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Wouldn't it be obvious that the blind man wanted to see?

But when we come to Jesus Christ, it is not always obvious to us what we really need.

The Lord always knows but in our darkened state we do not always know.

So the Lord, with such grace, asks.

What do you want Me to do for you?

And that question rings out to us through the centuries, What do you want of your Lord Jesus Christ?

And the answer should be the same answer that was given that day by the blind beggar Bartimaeus - *I want to see.*

Not to just see with eye but with the soul, to see clearly the grace of God, His perfect plan, the abundant life He has for you, to see His highest and best.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10, 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.

The positive, growing Christian who is living by faith, by truth, by the Holy Spirit will see what no else can see - he sees even the deep things of God.

Donald Grey Barnhouse tells the story of a man telling a small boy about blind Bartimaeus.

He asked him,

What would you have asked for if you had been in his place?

The boy answered,

Oh, I would have asked for a nice big dog with a collar and a chain to lead me about.

Bartimaeus knew better what he needed. He did not want reformation, but regeneration. Though this is the need of the world today, how many choose the blind man's dog to the seeing man's eyes.

Luke 18:42

And Jesus said to him, Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.

Jesus Christ will never refuse a request that is in line with God's will for us.

The faith of this blind beggar was great because it was directed at one who was great, Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of David.

Faith is nothing more than the decisions we make and we can make bad decisions and we can place our faith in the wrong thing or person.

The strength of faith is the object of faith, nothing more, and nothing less.

Luke 18:43

And immediately he regained his sight, and began following Him, glorifying God; and when all the people saw it, they gave praise to God.

The blindness that has imprisoned him was now gone, he could see.

And in the freedom his new sight gave him he chose to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you have eyes to see?

Do you have the freedom of sight?

Spiritual sight?

How do you use what God gives you?

Are you one who sees?

Are you one who follows the Lord Jesus?

Chapter 19

In Luke 18:24-25 we heard Jesus say.

How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

In Chapter 19, well, the camels better get ready because a rich man is about to be saved

Luke 19:1

And He entered and was passing through Jericho.

This would be new Jericho that had gained importance as Herod's Winter place.

Jericho was an important trade city so the collecting of taxes in this city and region would have been a very important task.

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I think it is significant the Jesus enters Israel and the first city He comes to is Jericho

About fifteen hundred years before this Joshua (which is the Hebrew equivalent of Jesus) brought the people of Israel into the Promised Land and to this same city.

Now the promised One comes to Israel and follows the same route, the promise has now come to the people of the promise in the promised land - will they accept Him or not?

Luke 19:2

And behold, there was a man called by the name of Zacchaeus; and he was a chief tax-gatherer, and he was rich.

Now last week we saw a blind beggar come to Christ and follow the Savior.

Just as that blind man was outside the norm of Israel due to his physical limitation, the man we will meet this week was also outside the norm of Israel due to the choices he made.

What do we know of him?

First, his name, Zacchaeus.

Which means *innocent*.

This is an unusual name in light of his profession.

He was chief tax-collector.

Now as we have studied in the past, the Romans used wealthy Roman aristocrats to be the tax-collectors.

Their wealth and position insulated them from corruption.

They in turn found wealthy provincials, native of the land, to act under them.

Zacchaeus was such a man.

He is said to be rich, a wealthy land owner with many people working for him and now had other tax-collectors working under him.

This also would have meant that he was hated by the Jews.

As a tax-collector, and even more so as a chief tax collector, he was considered a traitor to his people.

Luke 19:3,4

And he was trying to see who Jesus was, and he was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature.

And he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way.

John Martin, in his commentary on Luke says that this whole incident seems ludicrous. Here was Zacchaeus, a wealthy and probably influential man, running ahead of the crowd and climbing a sycamore-fig tree (Amos 7:14) to get a chance to see Jesus.

The fact that he climbed a sycamore tree is also significant.

This tree bears no resemblance to our sycamore tree.

It is was a type of fig tree but the fruit had to be mixed with real figs for it to be edible.

The tree was a common food for the poor and the wood was a common although inferior building material for the poor who could not afford cedar.

The actual name for the tree comes from *moron*, the word for foolish.

So not only both in its fruit and its wood, it was symbolic of the poor it is also symbolic of that which is foolish.

And here is perhaps the wealthiest Jew in the region of Jericho climbing up in a tree of poverty to see Jesus but he doesn't need to just see Jesus, that is foolish - he needs to believe in Jesus.

I think we really have to get a visual picture of this.

I have to think back to Jesus' earlier teaching about *becoming as a child*.

This very wealthy and important man is certainly acting child-like.

And I think we can understand the Lord's surprise at all this, seeing this man, finely attired, up a tree.

Luke 19:5

And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.

Zacchaeus had gone up a tree, I have to wonder if there was any thought at all in Jesus' mind that in not too many days He too would be on a tree, dying for the sins of the world.

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Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, but what he needed was to be with Jesus.

Knowing who Jesus is, seeing Him from a far, is not what man needs.

We need to be with Jesus.

Jesus is the one who said (Matthew 11:28) *Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.*

Luke 19:6

And he hurried and came down, and received Him gladly.

We can assume that Zacchaeus was well known in the region, so much so that the Lord knew him by name.

This was more than Zacchaeus had hoped for.

He just wanted to get a glimpse of Jesus and now Jesus is telling him that He will stay with him at his home.

The words *received Him gladly* mean a lot more in the Greek text and even more when we see how Luke used these words.

The word *received* means to welcome, to make at home. In Luke 10:38 it is used when Mary and Martha welcomed Jesus into their home in Bethany.

In Acts 17:7 Luke uses to tell how Jason of Thessalonica welcomed Jesus into his home proclaiming that Jesus is the King.

The word *gladly* is used nine times in Luke's Gospel to denote an attitude of joy that accompanies faith and salvation.

So from this we can see that Zacchaeus is more than just welcoming Jesus into his home, he is welcoming Him into his life and putting faith in Him as the Savior.

But whenever man begins to live by faith, whenever man is saved, others will judge the man by who he is.

Luke 19:7

And when they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.

They are the crowd and they cannot understand why Jesus would even talk to such a sinner and

traitor as Zacchaeus much less go into his home and be his guest.

We may not fully appreciate this. In the Jewish culture of Jesus' day, to go into someone's home was to fellowship with them and fellowship meant agreement.

The Jews for example were prohibited from going into the home of a Gentile and saw a Jew who worked for the evil Roman Empire as totally despicable.

Just like today, the people who were with Jesus, forgot that Jesus came to save sinner.

But the crowd wanted anyone who would come to Jesus to be pre-qualified.

But the only pre-qualification of salvation is faith and faith is to trust someone else and to be saved we need to trust Jesus Christ.

Seeing is not believing.

Jesus would see Zacchaeus' desire and call him to be with Him in faith.

What can we assume about Zacchaeus at this point?

I think we can see his humility, he abandons all pretense, maybe even had to take off his fine cloak, to climb a tree like a little kid.

And he did not care if others laughed at this the wealthiest man in the region up in tree.

His humility preceded his faith.

So that when Jesus called him he did not question it, he came to the Savior.

Others questioned - how can this be?

Doesn't Jesus know who this man is?

He is a traitor, tax-collector, one who abuses his own people.

They wanted to exclude Zacchaeus from the salvation that would come to Israel, they failed to see that he too was a Son of Abraham.

You see the people wanted Zacchaeus to clean up his act before he came to Jesus but that is not the way the Lord works, He receives us as we are and where we are, even up a tree.

But the words of the crowd have an effect on this man.

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Luke 19:8

And Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.

When we read that Zacchaeus stopped the word that is used is one that means to stand and make a formal declaration.

It was often used in the Temple for the Pharisee who stood to make a statement or give a testimony.

Here Zacchaeus is making a stand like a Pharisee but with something the Pharisee did not have - humility. He says that he will do two things. Give half of his possessions to the poor And pay back four times to anyone who he has defrauded

It was common for the publicans to put a fictitious value on property or income, or to advance the tax to those unable to pay, and then to charge usurious interest on the private debt.

The fourfold payment was that which the Roman courts demanded (Jewish court required far less) for someone who was a thief.

So Zacchaeus is holding himself to a standard required by thieves and even goes to the higher standard of Roman Law over Jewish Law.

Now was this required by Jesus?

If we do not understand grace we could even say that this was not enough.

Remember another rich man, a rich young ruler who came to Jesus?

What was the demand of the Law that Jesus gave him?

Give up all your wealth, give all to the poor.

Remember.

Sell all that you possess, and distribute it to the poor

Reflecting on that demand, if we thought that was a requirement for salvation rather than Jesus testing the rich young man who was on a path of Law and Works we would have to conclude Zacchaeus was only doing half a job.

But this is not a demand of grace (that is a contradiction).

This is instead a result of FAITH.

We have heard that faith without works is dead.

Here we see works directly coming from this man's faith.

He believes in Christ, and immediately is led by the Holy Spirit to put his faith into practice.

The word

give is not a word for vindication but rather for a vow, he vows to do this not out of LAW but out of LOVE - love for the Savior and now love for others.

Luke 19:9

And Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.

Salvation comes to this house.

This is a memorable statement.

Salvation had been offered to Israel and so many in Israel rejected this gift of grace.

But Zacchaeus accepted it by faith and now Jesus says that salvation will come to the whole house because He sees in this man a desire to serve, a desire to give, and what more could he give than the gift of salvation in Jesus to his family and all his household.

REASON: The very thing the crowd forgot is not announced, he too is a son of Abraham.

Was he also a sinner?

YES!

Was he also a traitor?

YES.

Did he deserve salvation?

Absolutely not?

And that is what pre-qualified him for faith alone in Christ alone.

And we see this in the humility of this wealthy and important and powerful man, up a tree.

HUMILITY.

Humility is the proper attitude before God

Humility keeps us from depending on our own strengths

Humility keeps our prayers direct and honest

Humility trains us in faith

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Humility and faith train us in obedience
Humility clarifies our dependence on God
Humility challenges our pride
Humility is a deep awareness of unworthiness,
not worthlessness
Humility increases our appreciation for God
Humility is essential for service to others

Jesus Christ is our model for humility

Jesus then concluded his remarks to the crowd by stating.

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

And he is still doing that, only now we can say Jesus came, finished His work, but now continues to seek and save the lost - Don't hide from the One who seeks to save you, to deliver you, and to give you the riches of His glory.

And here is good news, you don't have to climb a tree to have all His love and grace.

Hudson Taylor, the great missionary who carried the Gospel to the interior of China, was approached by a man with one leg. This man said, *I want to go to China as a missionary.*

Taylor asked,

Why do you think you can be a missionary when you have only one leg?

The man replied,

Because I don't see any men with two good legs going.

The issue in the parable we will examine is what you have but what will do with what the Lord has given you.

Luke 19:11

And while they were listening to these things, He went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.

Now Jesus is in Jericho and heading to Jerusalem. Jericho is about 15 miles from Jerusalem, just beyond the northern saddle of the Mt of Olives.

Many who are with Jesus are presuming that the kingdom of God would appear as they entered the Holy city.

But Israel had rejected her king and His kingdom.

They were wanting the Messiah-King to come but on their own terms and in their way, to defeat the enemy Rome and liberate Israel.

Luke 19:12

He said therefore, A certain nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return.

Lets rearrange the text for a moment.

Lets put v 14 with v 12: *But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, We do not want this man to reign over us.*

Verse 14 seems to have nothing to do with the parable itself.

It seems to be more of a commentary on the rejection of Jesus, the Messiah-King of Israel by the Jews.

But it has a historical basis and this perhaps is the only parable that includes a historical incident that these people would be very familiar with.

The historical basis seems to have been in the activities of the descendants of Herod. **Herod the Great**, upon his death, had left the kingdom to Herod Antipas, Herod Philip, and Archelaus.

Archelaus went to Rome to ask the Emperor Augustus Caesar to make him king over what his father had left him.

The Jews sent approximately fifty men to Rome to express the fact that they did not wish to retain Archelaus as their leader.

They did not like Archelaus and with good reason, he had already massacred about 3,000 Jews on the first

Passover after his fathers death.

The Emperor gave Judea to Archelaus but would not confer upon him the title of king.

REMEMBER: The winter palace of Herod was in new Jericho so the people of this region would have been well aware of these political and historical events.

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And Jesus is like one who has gone into a far country to receive a kingdom and the people of that kingdom have rejected Him.

Luke 19:13

And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas, and said to them, Do business with this until I come back.

This parable is going to conclude a section of Luke in which we have seen the Master teaching and training His disciples.

They have heard parables, seen miracles, and witnessed events that were designed to prepare them for what will happen in Jerusalem and their ministries following the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.

Seven lessons from Luke 17:11 to 19:27

Jesus' disciples should be thankful like the leper

Persistent in prayer as was the woman with the judge

Humble in prayer as was the Gentile tax-collector

They should be childlike in their lives of faith

Like the blind man they should now have sight to see

They should be like Zacchaeus and not the rich young ruler

And here, each disciple should build upon his salvation by faith with a life of faith.

The Parable of the Minas or Pounds must not be confused with the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30). The talents, which were given out in different amounts to each of the slaves, represent opportunities to use spiritual gifts and ministries; and since we all have different gifts, we are given different ministry opportunities.

But the servants in this parable each received a mina, about 50 shekels or three months' wages, which represents the *deposit of the Gospel* that has been given to each believer.

God wants us to multiply the faith we have put in Christ at salvation into a life of faith in Spiritual living.

Ten servants, just as we had ten lepers who Christ healed and only one got the point of grace and faith and returned to worship his Savior.

Now we have ten servants representing believers, they each have the same amount, equal privilege and opportunity, and they each have a responsibility - *do business with this (not some other funds) until I get back.*

Luke 19:14,15

But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, We do not want this man to reign over us.]

And it came about that when he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him in order that he might know what business they had done.

We are looking at the rulers trust in His servants and the test of His servants.

The ruler gave his servants a set sum and then left.

In doing so he demonstrated the trust he put in them to wisely use the sum that was given.

He did not tell them what to do or how to invest but left this up to their freewill.

In the same manner God has saved us by faith and the one thing all of us have in common is the life of faith.

The issue is not in what we have, all believers have equal opportunity and privilege, but how we will apply or use what we have.

And that is the test - we a man or woman in Christ use what they have to increase their life of faith or will they horde it away seeing faith as that which saved but as that which cannot be used for day by day life itself?

Luke 19:16,17

And the first appeared, saying, Master, your mina has made ten minas more.

And he said to him, Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, be in authority over ten cities.

The reward of compounding the faith of salvation into a life of faith that increases and increases is not rest - that is the reward of the life of faith as it is lived.

The reward here looks to the eternal future where rewards in the millennia reign will be ruling with Christ.

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For Israel the reward is to rule over earthly cities whereas for us, Christians, we will rule with Christ (Revelation 2:26) over nations.

The TEST was in small thing yet it is in the small things that faith compounds into faithfulness.

Too often Christians think that they must do great things, big things, but it is the many small things in life that counts.

Do we have the kind of life of faith that would allow us to trust the Lord with our life in learning that we have a fatal disease and yet go to pieces if we have to stop at too many stop lights?

Are we living by faith in the small things?

It may not be the charge of the elephant that defeats us; it may be the charge and constant annoyance of the mosquito.

We also see the inappropriate proportion.

A city for a mina and yet you could not even begin to buy a home for mina.

Hence, they are not reaping what they have sown but more than that, they are reaping what the king, the ruler, has sown.

He has these to give away.

Luke 19:18,19

And the second came, saying, Your mina, master, has made five minas.

And he said to him also, And you are to be over five cities.

Again, a city for a pound and he reaps what the master sows.

Now we are not told of the others but we can assume they to in one measure or another, increased what the ruler gave them.

Brings up again the point that it is not quantity but quality and then just as God leads us individual in the gifts and ministries he has for us.

Luke 19:20,21

And another came, saying, Master, behold your mina, which I kept put away in a handkerchief;

for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down, and reap what you did not sow.

Now we come to servant #10 - he has done nothing with what he was given.

FOUR THINGS we see in this servant.

Behold your mina.

He is actually proud of the fact that he did not lose it.

Notice that while the other servants just said *here is your mina and the results*, this man says *Behold your mina*.

That is, take notice of what I have done.

In a napkin or cloth.

This did not even comply with the minimum standards laid down in the Talmud for the safekeeping of money.

So he ignored even the common sense conventions of the day.

And why did he do this?

He states that *for you see, I was afraid of you*.

This is imperfect tense so he is giving a reason for what he did and it is middle voice, he is thinking this will benefit him.

And yet we see that he thinks he knows the ruler well: *you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down, and reap what you did not sow*.

He uses a proverbial expression of the day that was likened to one who could get blood out of a stone.

He recognizes that he reaps what he has not sown, which is an idiom for grace.

Romans 4:4-5, Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness.

Luke 19:22

NOW THE RULER RESPONDS.

He said to him, By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down, and reaping what I did not sow?

He will judge according to what the man states.

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In this we see that God will often allow us to judge ourselves.

If the servant really believed this about his master he should have acted accordingly.

He should have done something with the money but he did nothing.

His actions showed that he was not concerned about the ruler's business nor the ruler's return.

Like many believers today who are not concerned about the Lord's business or the Lord's return.

Luke 19:23

Then why did you not put the money in the bank, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?

In the Greek this means put the money on the *table* or the *bench*.

They did not have banks as we have them today.

The Master is referring to the money lenders bench where he could have put the money and received a small interest on it.

Our word *bank* by the way is taken from the old English word for *bench*, the money lenders bench.

Luke 19:24

And he said to the bystanders, Take the mina away from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.

The mina is taken from the unfaithful servant and given to the one who demonstrated they were willing to correctly handle the master's gift.

Luke 19:25

And they said to him, Master, he has ten minas already.

This is so contrary to human viewpoint thinking that others object.

Yet we must remember that God's way are higher than man's ways and God's viewpoint higher than our viewpoint.

We would want to take from the haves and give to the have nots.

Luke 19:26

I tell you, that to everyone who has shall more be given, but from the one who

does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.

God has a plan for the human race.

If those who the Spirit gifts to accomplish God's work on earth do not do it, God will use others who will.

And those others will receive the reward.

Principle: The man who does not employ his spiritual gifts loses them; the man who uses them increases them.

Another principle that come from this is that there is no standing still in the spiritual life. You are either moving ahead in the plan of God or falling behind.

Luke 19:27

But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence.

This goes back to the ones mentioned in v 14.

This is not the servant who did not wisely use what the Master gave him.

In this parable we see three kinds of people.

Faithful servants

Unfaithful servants

And those who reject the king and are his enemies

So the question for us is which person are we?

Dietrich Bonhoffer said: Only he who believes will be obedient.

Andrew Murray: The secret of true obedience is the clear and close personal relationship to God.

All our attempts after full obedience will be failures until we get access to his abiding fellowship. It is God's holy presence consciously abiding with us that keeps us from disobeying Him. I must consciously include the Lord in every thought, activity, and conversation until the habit is established.

Luke 19:28

And after He had said these things, He was going on ahead, ascending to Jerusalem.

To ascend to Jerusalem is a participle which shows us that there is another purpose involved in this.

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He is going to the Cross and to do that He is going to Jerusalem.

Luke 19:29

And it came about that when He approached Bethphage and Bethany, near the mount that is called Olivet, He sent two of the disciples,

The villages of Bethany and Bethphage are East of Jerusalem and accessed by going over the northern slope of the Mt. of Olives. Bethany was the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus and became the resting place of Jesus each night prior to night of his arrest.

Bethphage is close to Jerusalem and would have been considered a suburb of the Holy City. The village to which he sends his two disciples would have been Bethphage.

We are not told which two disciples. My guess is James and John. I do not think he would have sent Peter. If anyone questioned Peter about taking the colt he probably would have hit them or pulled out a sword.

Luke 19:30,31

saying, Go into the village opposite you, in which as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it, and bring it here.

And if anyone asks you, Why are you untying it? thus shall you speak, The Lord has need of it.

These specifics can be accounted for in either of two ways. First, we can assume that the Lord was given information by God in a miraculous manner that told Him where this colt was to be found. Or, we could also consider that the owner of the colt and the home where it could be found was with the Lord and gave him use of the animal. We have no way of knowing for sure, but we do know that the disciples unhesitatingly, followed the instruction.

Luke 19:32

And those who were sent went away and found it just as He had told them.

I think it is interesting that these disciples so quickly followed the Lord's instructions. The instructions were at least unusual. And considering the religious thinking of the day, the

instructions were contrary to what most people would have believed to be the way the Messiah would enter Jerusalem. So the disciples, contrary to what seemed logical, obeyed as a result of faith:

1. The two disciples executed the instruction, being obedient by faith.
2. Their faith was not in the logic of what was said, but in a person they trusted fully, the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. The human tendency of the sin nature. would be to argue, to seek a reason, to question. They did not, they just did what the Lord told them to do.
4. Their motive for their obedience was their faith in the person of Christ. Not some plan or some base gain. They did what they did by faith in the Lord.
5. On the Lord's part, he gave them specific instruction, he gave them His word. They had the influence of truth in their lives.
6. In the same way, Christians today are called upon by the Lord through His word to do that which may be contrary to our logic, our ideas, our rational, our plans. But we must be obedient to a person, not a plan or idea, obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ. So the disciples went to Bethphage and just as the Lord promised, found a young donkey tied outside a house. Now as they were executing obedience they RECEIVED OPPOSITION.

Luke 19:33

And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, Why are you untying the colt?

Now the owner of the colt rightly questioned the actions of the disciples.

We will find that as we execute faith-obedience to the Lord there will be those who not only question, but criticize, and even condemn our actions of obedience.

Our Lord has not promised us a life without opposition. As you get serious about following the Lord you can bet there will be distracters who will oppose you.

We are going to see that on the following day as the Lord goes into the Temple that every religious

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group present takes a shot at Jesus Christ. But he stands firm on the Word.

Following the Day of Pentecost the apostles were opposed at every turn. But they concluded in Acts 5:29 But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men.

Luke 19:34

And they said, The Lord has need of it.

I want you to consider that they did not do this because it felt right.

If anything, going to a strangers house and taking a young donkey would have felt all wrong. Nor did they do this because it made sense, if anything it made no sense at all. Neither man's rationalism nor his empiricism was the reason they did what they did. No, they did what they did because of their faith and trust in the one who told them to go.

Luke 19:35

And they brought it to Jesus, and they threw their garments on the colt, and put Jesus on it.

Now remember that this colt had never been ridden before. And that fits with what we are seeing in this passage. The colt, a dumb animal, was obedient to the Lord. It did not try to buck him off. Like we so often try to buck him off.

Principle: Better to be a jackass and be obedient than a superior creature, man, and be disobedient.

This also fulfilled the law regarding an animal that was dedicated for a sacred purpose. It was not to have been used in any common way prior to its use by the priests.

This animal had a most important task, to bring the king into the city.

Luke 19:36

And as He was going, they were spreading their garments in the road.

Now the custom for a pilgrim coming to Jerusalem to worship during the time of the Passover was to enter the city with great joy but also in a humble fashion. Even if you had ridden your mule to the city you would dismount and walk through the gates. Yet here we see Jesus,

who had walked to the city, find a colt and ride through the gates. Yet this is the King entering the city, His city, that was the place of His temple.

And while this was not the customary way to come into Jerusalem to worship, He was not there to worship. He was there to claim the victory of the Cross. Luke does not mention what is the most well-known symbol of the Triumphal Entry, palm branches.

The palm branches used during the triumphal entry (Jn. 12:13) were a token of rejoicing (Lev. 23:40; Neh. 8:15; Rev. 7:9). They may also have carried a political significance, since they had been used at the feast of tabernacles when Judas Maccabeus' recapture of the Temple from the Syrians was celebrated.

Luke 19:37,38

And as He was now approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen saying, blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!

Combining other Gospel accounts we find they crowd cried out four things:

Hosanna: God save us.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord: A customary greeting in ancient Israel

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.

Hosanna in the highest: Orientation to the fact that salvation had to come from God.

Luke 19:39

And some of the Pharisees in the multitude said to Him, Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.

What is their problem?

Zechariah 9:9, 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.

The Rabbis had a real problem with this verse. They saw the single advent of the Messiah as an advent of triumph and victory. How would it be that the King would enter Jerusalem in such a lowly manner.

Eventually the Rabbis reconciled this by stating in the Babylonian Talmud that: If Israel was worthy the Messiah would come on the clouds of heaven, if they were not worthy, lowly and riding upon an ass. Israel had rejected the Word, the Prophets, and now the Son of God. Israel was not worthy, and the Messiah would enter Jerusalem in a humble and lowly fashion. Fulfilling the Rabbis' testimony of their unworthiness.

Luke 19:40

And He answered and said, I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!

You can't suppress the truth - Now the Pharisees were students of the minor prophets. And they would have been familiar with the passage Jesus was referring to. And they would have known that it is a passage that condemns the sin and rebellion of the Jews;

Habakkuk 2:10-12, You have devised a shameful thing for your house By cutting off many peoples; So you are sinning against yourself. Surely the stone will cry out from the wall, And the rafter will answer it from the framework. Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed And founds a town with violence.

The religious leaders wanted the truth to not be told. They did not want people to think of Jesus as the Messiah. If he was and according to their theology they would have been deemed unworthy and of course they thought of themselves as very worthy. They wanted Jesus to quiet down the crowd but instead he refers to a passage that if applied, would have been a stinging indictment of their sin.

The religious leaders were the one group who probably knew enough to have known what was happening and that knowledge left them with a choice. Believe or reject - we saw the disciples, they believed and did as the Lord instructed them to do. We saw the people who voiced approval but that approval would be short lived. They spoke with their mouths but did not believe in their souls.

And then the Pharisees, who could only think of shutting up the people, suppressing the truth and continuing in their ignorance. But it would not end with their ignorance. In their rejection of the Savior ignorance would soon become antagonism and within a few days they would have Jesus nailed to a Roman Cross.

What do we know about God? About His Son? About His Spirit? That knowledge we have gives us a choice, a great choice to chose Christ at Salvation and continue by faith to chose all the grace that God has for us - by faith.

Will you be a vocal bystander? An antagonistic leader? Or a Faithful disciple?

William Blake (1757-1827) look upon the critics of Christ in his post enlightenment age and said as we might to these critics of Christ and the critics today - Mock on, mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau; Mock on, mock on; 'tis all in vain! You throw the sand against the wind, And the wind blows it back again.

The attitude of worship is not found in text but in context, it is not an isolated experience or service but a manner of life, appreciating and adoring God who has done everything for you.

A fisherman who was out of fellowship with the Lord was at sea with his godless companions when a storm came up and threatened to sink their ship.

His friends who knew he went to church once, begged him to pray; but he said, *It's been a long time since I've done that or even entered a church.*

At their insistence, however, he finally prayed, *O Lord, I haven't asked anything of You in 15 years, and if You help us now and bring us safely to land, I promise I won't bother You again for another 15!*

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Luke 19:41

And when He approached, He saw the city and wept over it,

We have the joy of the Triumphal Entry followed by the Jesus' compassionate tears over the city, followed by the cleansing of the temple.

Cries of Joy, crying of tears, cleansing of sin and evil.

A study in contrasts.

Jesus had set His face towards Jerusalem and now He is here.

Earlier that day the crowds welcomed Him as their king but in a few days they would cry out for His death.

The city of Jerusalem, that city of David, Zion, the bright and shining city on a hill, has always stirred great emotion

Even today it is not unusual to see tourists with tears and their eyes as they first approach this historic and holy city.

A city that held so much promise.

And was the object of so many promises.

But here the king has come and while there is initial acceptance, Jesus also knows that by the end of the week the leaders and people of this city will demand that the government of occupation nail Him to a Roman Cross.

So much potential, so much promise, and so much loss.

The particular form of the verb *εκλαυσειν* would tell us that He actually burst into tears.

This is no silent weeping. His disciples would have been startled, they would see the Savior burst into tears and hear the moaning of His soul.

What He saw or did not see which was faith in Him, brought pain to His soul which then brought tears to His eyes.

This is not the first time a servant of God has wept over Jerusalem.

600 years earlier Jeremiah, looking a Jerusalem in the ruins left by the Chaldean armies said.

Lamentations 3:51, My eyes bring pain to my soul Because of all the daughters of my city.

But Jesus is also seeing a city, a people, in ruins.

And through the Spirit He is also seeing their future.

Luke 19:42

saying, If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes.

In this day - Sir Robert Anderson, has attached great meaning to the three words, *this thy day*. According to the prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27 (often called the seventy-week prophecy) God told Daniel he would deal with Israel for yet another seventy *weeks*, which is interpreted as 490 years. The prophecy then states that after sixty-nine of these weeks, or 483 years, the Messiah would be *cut off* (rejected and crucified). The prophecy was to start on March 14, 445, BC. Sir Anderson found that if begins counting forward from that day, he discovers that the 483 years (173,880 days) runs out on April 6, AD 32

This was the day of the Triumphal entry and although welcomed by the masses, He was officially rejected by Israel's leaders.

All this was in mind when our Lord uttered the words of this statement *in this day*.

A day that could have brought peace to Jerusalem and yet there will be no peace.

They have and will even more so, reject their King of all kings.

Luke 19:43,44

For the days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank before you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.

Often prophecy can have two fulfillments and they can even be very different.

While this can look all the way ahead to the 2nd Advent, we have a closer fulfillment.

What we read in vv 43-44 actually will occur in 70 AD when the Roman commander Titus, lays a siege against Jerusalem.

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In three days in 70 AD the Roman's built a rampart against the city, entered it and eventually destroyed it.

Often Jewish people today look back on that and consider it one of the darkest days in their history but an even darker day was the day it was predicted by the Lord.

Because on a day they could have recognized their King, His visitation to them, they rejected.

The word for visitation may sound unusual to us but it meant then the official visit of a king or ruler to one of his subject cities.

It was often considered the most important day in the life of that city, town, or village.

So in the analogy, their King has come, but they will kill their King and the potential for and blessing peace will be lost.

Luke 19:45

And He entered the temple and began to cast out those who were selling,

There are actually two occasions on which Jesus drove the moneychangers out of the Temple.

One was early in His ministry and is recorded in John 2:14-17.

And then the second cleansing of the Temple recorded in Matthew 21, Mark 11, and here in Luke 19.

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 Caiaphas 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 A.D. 30, just a few years before this time, there were four markets located on the western

slope of the Mount of Olives [see slide] were 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 followed 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 Caiaphas 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.

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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.

Now 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.

Jesus did three things.

Threw the merchants out of the court

Overtured the tables of the moneychangers and sellers of doves

Prevented anyone from using the forecourt as a shortcut from one part of the city to another

Jesus' spirited protest brought together not only Old Testament prohibitions but also religious requirements of the day.

Zechariah 14:21, And there will no longer be a tradesman in the house of the Lord of hosts in that day.

Also the Babylonian Talmud states that no one was allowed to enter the Temple Mount with a staff, sandals, or his purse and it specifically denied the use of the court of the Gentiles as a short-cut.

So what he was doing was completely in line with the Scriptures and even the Talmud.

And He, whether the priests recognized Him or not, was the Lord of this House.

Luke 19:46

Rarely does the Lord do anything without teaching a principle from his actions.

saying to them, It is written, and my house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a robbers den.

The Lord teaches from two Old Testament passages, both found in the major prophets.

Isaiah 56:7, Even those I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.

Jeremiah 7:11, Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Behold, I, even I, have seen it, declares the Lord.

The primary problem was that by entering into this illegal trade the Priests prevented people from worshipping God.

And that is worse than anything else they could do.

Principle: We can see six problems with what the priests did in establishing the Temple markets.

1. Disregarded the Word of God. The Old Testament prohibited such activities at the Temple but the priests did not care.
 2. A lust for power and money. These lusts became more important to the priests than their purpose of worship.
 3. An inordinate competition. They were competing for power and profit with the Sanhedrin.
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4. An insensitivity to others. They excluded an entire group of people from worship and did not so much as bat an eye.

5. An increasing Greed. In the three years the market had operated the priests sought more and more wealth and power.

6. An attitude of superiority formed in arrogance. The priests decided the Gentiles were inferior and expendable and did not deserve a place to worship.

But we have to consider our actions today and ask if we too exclude others from what we have with the Lord? And do so out of some greed for power, profit, or some political maneuvering?

The priests of Jesus' day pre-judged the Gentiles, found them to not measure up to their human standard, and then dismissed them as being a part of the Temple worship.

Problems we face today.

Do we dismiss people as being unimportant in the plan of God?

Do we judge according to our standard rather than seeing others as God sees them.

So we see others through our own weakness and strengths, both part of the Sin Nature rather than God's forgiveness?

Have we eliminated the importance of being a people of prayer?

Everything the priests were doing and so many things believers do today denies the unconditional love we are to have for others, the same unconditional love God has for them AND have we set aside the importance of prayer.

Do we call for prayers in the school?

While we have so little prayer in our churches?

James Owoso.

When do you meet for prayer?

But what do we see Jesus doing?

Luke 19:47

And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him,

What do you think Jesus was teaching?

I think He was teaching them that the true people of God are those who call upon the name of the Lord.

They know the importance of making God's house a house of prayer.

Luke 19:48

and they could not find anything that they might do, for all the people were hanging upon His words.

We are sorry to announce the passing of Mrs. Prayer Meeting. She died recently at the Neglected Bible Church on Complacency Avenue. Born many years ago in the midst of a great travail and revival, she was strong and healthy as a child, fed largely on testimony and Bible study she grew into world-wide prominence and was one of the most influential members of the Church family.

However, in recent years Sister Prayer Meeting has been failing in health, gradually wasting away until rendered helpless by stiffness of the knees, cooling of the heart, lack of spiritual sensitivity and the concern for spiritual things.

Her last whispered words inquired about the absence of her loved ones, now so busy in world.

Experts, including Dr. Good Works, Dr. Socializing and Dr. Unconcerned disagree as to the fatal cause of her final illness. They all administered large doses of excuses, even ordered a last minute motivational bypass, but to no avail.

A post-mortem examination showed indifference, lack of faith, and theological excuses contributed to her death.

Chapter 20

Dwight Eisenhower said. *"The older I get the more wisdom I find in the ancient rule of taking first things first--a process which often reduces the most complex human problem to a manageable proportion."*

Speaking of priorities, Pascal said *The last thing one knows is what to put first.*

In this portion of our study of the life of Christ we are going to see the Lord refuse to change his priorities under the pressure of attack by the Jewish leadership.

We saw in the final verse of chapter nineteen that following the incident of the cleansing of the

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Temple, the people were intently listening to Jesus - hanging on every word.

So it is in that teaching and learning environment that we find Jesus, on Tuesday of the passion week, in the Temple.

Luke 20:1

And it came about on one of the days while He was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, that the chief priests and the scribes with the elders confronted Him,

This verse really sets the stage for us.

Jesus is teaching the people and preaching the Gospel.

The people of listening and learning and no doubt, some are being saved.

But then we have the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders.

The chief priests were angry at Jesus because he threw the profiteers out of the Temple court and in doing so took away a major source of illegal revenue.

The scribes, well, they were upset with Jesus because He was teaching and in doing so, interpreting the Law which was their assumed right to do so.

The elders (both Pharisees and Sadducees) were angry with Jesus because He was winning the hearts of the people and they demanded that the people be spiritual loyal to them.

So consider for a moment the source of this antagonism and anger towards the Savior.

Loss of the opportunity to take people's money

Loss of the opportunity to control people's thinking

Loss of the opportunity to have people's loyalty

If you look into what causes conflict between churches and church leaders and denominations and factions within a church body today - you will most likely find those same three sources of antagonism and anger.

Man has not changed and will not change until he allows the Holy Spirit to work a change within his soul.

Man's methods have not even changed - these leaders now come to Jesus with a question.

But not a question that is designed to seek information and understanding, but a question that is designed to trap and accuse.

We are told that these leaders of Israel came to Jesus while He was teaching and they *confronted Him*.

This is a word that comes from the simple word meaning *to stand* but with a prefix which means *to stand upon*.

We might say *they set up Him* as in an ambush.

This word makes it very clear that this is a well devised attack.

And we see this over the next 47 verses as they try to find fault in Jesus, the innocent lamb of God.

There is no doubt that this is an inquisition, a planned attack designed not to find truth but to find guilt.

Now what we have happening here is something these religious leaders are not even aware of.

Jesus, the Lamb of God who will take away the sins of the world in His sacrifice of Himself at the Cross is being but under pressure, He is being questioned and examined here in the Temple.

Under the Old Testament Law and the regulations of the Tabernacle and the sacrifices, when one came to the altar to offer a sacrifice the priests would examine it to find if it was without spot or blemish.

A perfect lamb or young bull, to be an atonement for sins.

Without even knowing it these priests of the Temple are examining the Lamb of the once and for all sacrifice for sins.

And as he is attacked and questioned He stands His ground of grace for it is for these who are so angry with Him that He will die and even then say - *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do*.

Luke 20:2

and they spoke, saying to Him, Tell us by what authority You are doing these things, or who is the one who gave You this authority?

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The THESE THINGS looks back to the previous day and the cleansing of the Temple.

There are two questions being asked - by *what authority* and then *who gave you* this authority?

Since Jesus was of the tribe of Judah he certainly was not a priest.

So how was it that He exercised authority over these things that were under the authority of the priests of the Temple?

Was he claiming the authority of a prophet or a king?

And then who was behind him, who were His backers so to speak.

Was He the leaders of a revolutionary group and did He suppose He had the backing of the people?

By asking these two questions they were certain that they would be able to trap Him in some kind of self-incriminating statement.

AT ISSUE IS AUTHORITY.

When we deal with any question of authority we are really dealing with that which is most basic and fundamental to all human behavior.

Refine any issue down to its essentials and what is left is the question of authority.

Authority can either be:

YOURSELF - the principle of anarchy as you are a law unto yourself.

MAN - the principle of humanism with all its weaknesses

GOD - the absolute principle of the Creator God who is sovereign over all

In cleansing the Temple, Jesus did not even state that He acted out of his own authority although as God he certainly could have.

He acted out of the authority of God as recorded in the Old Testament

He even quoted the text of Isaiah 56:7 to them reminding them that the Temple was to be a house of prayer for all nations. *It is written, AND MY HOUSE SHALL BE A HOUSE OF PRAYER, but you have made it a ROBBERS DEN.*

His authority had been stated the previous day.

The Scriptures, over which these leaders of Israel were pledged to be the custodians, and yet they had rejected the Word of God.

Principle

They were not willing to accept the divine authority of the Word on the day before, and they were not about to accept any explanation of authority on this, the day after.

As men in authority they were not oriented to authority

Even presidents and kings, despots and dictators are under the authority of God.

Romans 13:1-7 tells us that even the rulers who do not believe they are under divine authority are under the strong hand of God.

For an authority to reject authority puts him in a position of weakness rather than strength.

Good authority will always be humble, submissive, and obedient to the authority over them.

Jesus Christ, God's Son, the God-man, was at all times under the authority of the Father.

The Sanhedrin saw themselves as the ultimate authority even rejecting the authority of the God and God's Word

Thus, their question on authority is at best absurd and at the least borders on heresy.

Luke 20:3

And He answered and said to them, I shall also ask you a question, and you tell Me.

The Lord is going to employ a standard debaters technique.

You ask me a question but if you ask the *wrong question* you will get a *wrong answer* so I will ask you a question that will clarify your question.

In this we see that the best defense is often a good offense.

Luke 20:4

Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?

Jesus asks about the baptism, not the man nor the ministry, but the baptism.

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John's baptism had been a new thing in Israel with no precedent in the Old Testament

The Jews had Temple washings but not baptism like John's.

Jesus cleared away the non-essentials.

They could not back track on this or play any opinion games.

He puts them in a dilemma - in chess this is called a fork, its like heads I win, tails you lose.

He asked them by what authority did this new thing occur?

Man's authority or God's?

All authority resides in either man or God - under whose authority are we?

Principle

In any given instance in life we are either trying to please men or please God. When we try to please men we are placing ourselves under their authority.

When we please God we are placing ourselves under a higher authority.

Luke 20:5,6

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, If we say, From heaven, He will say, Why did you not believe him?

But if we say, From men, all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet.

Their fear of the people prevented them from giving their opinion regarding John.

They did not like John because he refused to be under their pseudo-authority.

John was under the authority of the State and under the authority of God.

But rejected this little band of little people who tried to set themselves up as an authority.

But the people respected John and the council feared the people.

And that is interesting.

The Sanhedrin who saw themselves as the ultimate authority were really a bunch of cowards fearing the ones over whom they attempted to rule.

They were more concerned with Public Relations than Truth.

They wanted to cover their assets rather than raise the ire of public opinion.

If they had given an answer, even the wrong answer, the correction would have been given by the Lord.

The people would have been even angry at them for their rejections of John's authority.

They would have been soundly criticized and in that criticism they may - may have been forced to re-evaluate their erroneous position.

Luke 20:7

And they answered that they did not know where it came from.

They professed ignorance like a child caught in the act.

Who did this ? - I don't know, not me!

Jesus said their ignorance then required him to give them no answer.

Luke 20:8

And Jesus said to them, Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

Principle

God never has to prove that he is God, and the Lord never gave His energy to proving he was the Son of God.

His proof and His priority was His service, completing the task for which he had been sent by the Father to earth.

His mission was not to prove his mission, but to complete it.

Principle

You do not cast the pearls of truth before swine of unbelief.

Matthew 7:6, Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

In the context of Matthew 7 the Lord was speaking to the religious hypocrites who denied his ministry and mission.

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Their denial did nothing to prevent Him from completing his ministry and His mission.

When He went to the Cross he died for their sins, their sin of denial of Him.

The best thing he could do for them was not prove to them who he was or by what authority he did what he did but to - just do it.

In the same way, we who are called by His name, too often think we have to prove or vindicate ourselves.

We do not, that is not what we are called to do.

The greatest thing you can do for others, even for those who reject you and hate you is to complete your mission, your destiny in the plan of God.

If we are to be conformed to the image of Christ our Savior we will not waste time in proving ourselves, we will do as did the Lord.

Complete the mission.

But what do you do when the inquisition comes, and it will.

If you are standing in faith and in truth there will be criticism.

I am sure you have had to deal with this.

Questions as to why you do not go along with the crowd, why you go to church, why you believe what you believe?

When you are put under a microscope there are two things to consider.

First, what do others see?

When others do look at you do they see a contradiction or do they see someone who is real.

Now with Jesus the inquisitors would see someone who is perfect but with you - what do they see.

Do they see your priorities.

Do they see someone in whom God is working.

We never have to give any excuse for our lack of perfection.

But we do need to stand firm is resolve of the life of faith.

God does not require perfection, only progress, progress in the life of faith.

And then secondly, when we are put under the microscope, how do we deal with what others reveal?

Have you ever been discouraged knowing what others see in you?

If so you need to listen to the words of a man of God who was constantly under investigation by others.

The apostle Paul said:

1 Corinthians 4:3-5, But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself.

For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. 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.

I hope as you look at yourself as others look at you that you do not see someone who has arrived but that you see yourself as God sees you, as a child of God who has received the greatness of His grace.

Harry Ironsides had some great advice regarding criticism.

He said to listen to it.

If is true, then mend your ways.

If it is not true, forget it, and go right on serving the Lord.

In our passage the religious leaders are present to criticize the Lord who will go right on serving God, fulfilling His mission.

And now the Lord is going to criticize them, and they are going to react with a negative attitude and response and build even more sin.

We find ourselves a mere few days prior to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

He has chosen to return to the Temple mount and enter the arena of argumentation.

A time of intense conflict with the religious leaders of the day who were already angry with

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Him because of His cleansing of the Temple the previous day.

There are some tremendous apologetical principles in this encounter.

Jesus, alone and with no defense except the truth, went head to head with the greatest religious minds of His day.

These Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes were the foremost thinkers of their day - but for the most part they had rejected faith and the Father and embraced legalism and their interpretation of the Law as their standard of life.

So when Jesus, with his message of truth, grace, love, and sacrifice came to Jerusalem, the antagonism would reach a new level that would lead to the Cross.

But have things really changed?

If Jesus were here today with his message of truth would the great human thinkers embrace him or attack him.

We know the answer to that because they do attack Him.

They attack you whenever you speak his words.

You are his representatives, his ambassadors, and just as he was under attack, you are under attack.

But He withstood them by the same means you can withstand the critics today - with truth from God's Word.

AND JESUS NEVER EXPECTS US TO GO WHERE he has not gone.

He chose to go to the Temple and be verbally attacked by the most learned men of His time - and He won, for US.

The parable

Luke 20:9

And He began to tell the people this parable: A man planted a vineyard and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey for a long time.

In Matthew and Mark we are told that the Lord gave spoke a number of parable the Lord that day.

We have two here.

The parable of the vineyard is recorded in length because it was the most specific and garnered the most sever reaction

But we also have the parable of the stone the builders rejected in vv 17-18.

Isaiah 5:1-7

The Old Testament parable of the vineyard.

This was well known to the religious leaders of Jesus' day so there should be no mistaking what this is about.

Psalm 80:8-15

A Psalm of Asaph that also uses the parable of the vineyard to refer to Israel.

The owner of the vineyard rented the vineyard out to vine-growers.

Now this type of renting is a bit different than renting something today.

It is a business arrangement in which while a certain amount was to be paid, there was also to be a portion of the profits given by the tenants to the landowner.

Here is something interesting, normally a parable was given to instruct the positive ones while not giving the negative one more to reject.

But this is different.

This parable is for the rejecters of truth and we be understood by those who are the antagonist.

Hence, this is a warning parable.

Luke 20:10-12

And at the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order that they might give him some of the produce of the vineyard; but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

And he proceeded to send another slave; and they beat him also and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed.

And he proceeded to send a third; and this one also they wounded and cast out.

The ones who are sent are called SALVE: δουλος rather than SERVANTS which would be διακινος.

The slave is viewed as one who is obedient to his master while the servant is one who serves his master by serving others.

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Here the SLAVE refers to the Old Testament prophets who had as a primary and at times only responsibility of being obedient to God, the owner of the vineyard.

Mark tells a bit more about the abuse these slaves received in

Mark 12:5, And he sent another, and that one they killed; and so with many others, beating some, and killing others.

Beaten, ill-treated, wounded in the head (death blow), even killed.

Later on the writer of Hebrews summarizes what Israel did to these true heroes of the faith in the Old Testament economy.

Hebrews 11:36-38, And others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated, men of whom the world was not worthy, wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

And who did these things to these Old Testament men of God?

Not the unbelievers, not the Gentiles, but Israel.

And the worse was yet to come.

Luke 20:13

And the owner of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.

I want you to see two things with this verse.

There was a legitimate expectation that the tenants would respect the son of the owner.

In application, God has a legitimate expectation of his creation, mankind, that man will respect and believe in Christ.

The expectation is based upon the principle of grace.

Man did nothing to be created, nothing to obtain life, nothing to obtain eternal life.

A gift is given as it was with these tenant farmers and an expectation of acceptance is made.

This is a legitimate, realistic expectation.

Secondly, there is no price too high, no cost too dear in God's love towards us and our need for a Savior.

He was willing to send His only Son.

Romans 8:31-32, What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

Luke 20:14

But when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned with one another, saying, This is the heir; let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours.

According to our system of law this is absurd, but the Jewish legal code indicated that if property worked by a tenant farmer was found without owner and heirs, it would be given to the tenants.

The presence of the son could be assumed to mean the owner was dead and the son was coming to claim the vineyard.

Wrong assumption, resulting in wrong application, and sin on the part of the tenants.

Luke 20:15

And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What, therefore, will the owner of the vineyard do to them?

And in very few days this is exactly what the religious hierarchy of Israel is going to do to Jesus Christ.

Luke 20:16

He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, May it never be!

What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine-growers, and will give the vineyard to others.

This previews the same condemnation upon Israel that Jesus referred to with the cursing and withering of the fig tree.

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The privileged position Israel had will be lost, the stewardship over God's creation will be taken from them and given to others - the church in the Church Age

The Old Testament HERS are you and me.

We could put our names in that blank.

Christians who are now the stewards over the household of God in this age.

Luke 20:17

But He looked at them and said, What then is this that is written, the stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner stone?

This is a quote from

Psalm 118:22-23 and Isaiah 28:16

This Psalm, written 1000 years before the time of Christ took on new meaning as Jesus quoted it to the religious leaders.

Roman architecture was very uniform, and only the reticular stones would be used **until they needed an arch.**

Then a keystone was required.

Picture the builders setting aside the stone that were not on uniform size, then needing one special stone to serve as a keystone in an arch.

And finding again the one that was rejected and now it become the most important stone in the structure.

These verse are actually a promise, some may reject the Lord but others, by faith, will see him as most important.

The rejected stone is Jesus Christ.

The Lord was originally referred to as the Rock by Moses in Deuteronomy 32:30-31

Deuteronomy 32:31, Indeed their rock is not like our Rock, Even our enemies themselves judge this.

In David's final Psalm he refers to the Lord as the Rock of all Israel:

2 Samuel 23:3, The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me, 'He who rules over men righteously, Who rules in the fear of God.

In the Psalms the analogy of the Lord as the Rock takes on very specific meaning.

Psalm 18:2, The Rock is my fortress and my deliverer

Psalm 28:1, The Rock is the Lord who hears prayer

Psalm 31:2, The Rock is the rock of my strength

Psalm 62:2, He is the Rock of my salvation

Psalm 78:35, The Rock is our redeemer

Psalm 92:15, The Rock is righteous in every way

The analogy of the Lord as the Rock looks at the fact that rocks don't change.

The Rock is our Savior, our deliverer, our redeemer, our strength now and forever.

Luke 20:18

Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.

This is one of those statements that can be both a negative, and a positive.

First we see that the rejected stone, the Lord Jesus, will break anyone who falls upon Him.

And that is the negative, the word for broken to pieces is *συνθλαω* and means to be broken together.

This is a picture of the religious leaders being broken against their own false teaching and evil positions.

Indeed these religious leaders are planning to *fall upon* the Lord Jesus.

But then we have the Lord, the rejected stone, falling on others.

And here is where the translators did not know what to do.

They made this a parallel statement to the first where it is really an antithetical or opposing statement.

On whomever it (He, the Lord) falls, it will scatter - but the word scatter is *λικμαω* and means to winnow or separate the wheat from the chaff.

So this is the positive.

The same rejected stone that will break to pieces the opposition will separate the positive believer from that opposition and then break him.

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And we need to be broken, broken from evil, from sin, from self, from arrogance, from denial - from anything and everything that would separate us from Jesus Christ.

What is Jesus the Rock to you - a stone that crushes you to pieces or a stone that breaks you from anything that would keep you from God's Love.

God uses broken things. It takes broken soil to produce a crop, broken clouds to give rain, broken grain to give bread, broken bread to give strength. It is the broken alabaster box that gives forth perfume--it is Peter, weeping bitterly, who returns to greater power than ever.

Is there an easier way?

Sure, we can learn by faith, apply by faith, live by faith, but we do not take the easier way do we.

God often needs to break us to get us to realize how much He loves us.

THE REACTION.

Luke 20:19

And the scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on Him that very hour, and they feared the people; for they understood that He spoke this parable against them.

These two parables now put the religious leaders in the position of either responding positively or reacting negatively.

Here is something else that hasn't changed.

The antagonism, the anger, the hatred of the truth.

They had killed the slaves who came to the vineyard and now they will kill the Son.

They rejected the stones and now they reject and desire to destroy the Rock.

And again, as before, we see these very powerful men cower before the people.

They knew the parable was spoken against them, they wanted to kill the Lord rather than confess their sin and correct their error.

But they feared the people.

Principle

The parables were the adversity of warning discipline to the religious leaders.

Upon hearing the parables they could have repented, but instead they rejected.

They converted the adversity of discipline to stress which then drove them to the sin of murder.

They had a choice, they had a chance, they did exactly what the Lord said they would do.

They killed the Son, the dearly beloved son.

WHEN GOD IS REJECTED the heart become harder, more scar tissue in built and sin compounds - listen to the warnings.

Now in this parable we see the leaders of Israel rejecting the One who God sent.

In John 6:29 the people asked what was the work of God.

Jesus answered, the work of God is to believe in the One whom God has sent.

God sent His Son to the earth to be the Savior of man but so many reject.

In Isaiah 48:16 we read that God sends His Son and the Holy Spirit:

Come near to Me, listen to this: From the first I have not spoken in secret, From the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord GOD has sent Me, and His Spirit.

Let us not reject the One the Lord sent to His church, the Holy Spirit.

Luke 20:20

And they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, in order that they might catch Him in some statement, so as to deliver Him up to the rule and the authority of the governor.

In Matthew's and Mark's Gospel we have a parallel account and there we are told that the Pharisees conspired with the Herodians and the scribes of each faction to trap the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a strange combination because normally the Pharisees would have nothing to do with the Herodians.

But their common enemy, Jesus Christ, brought them together.

This is not unity, this is conspiracy.

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They want to catch Him, trap Him into a statement of blasphemy that would be a crime in both their Law and Roman Law.

They believe that if they can do this that the governor, Pilate, would give them the authority to stone this man Jesus to death.

This plan will not work.

Luke 20:21

And they questioned Him, saying, Teacher, we know that You speak and teach correctly, and You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth.

These guys are smart, real smart.

They come to Jesus with all the right words, the smooth flattery, and then slip in a loaded question.

First they say that they have known all along, perfect tense of OIDA, that Jesus is a teacher.

They add that they think he teaches correctly, a lie of flattery.

Then they continue by saying he not partial to anyone.

This point of flattering is like saying they know He is His own man and not influenced by any of the religious sects of political groups.

You are not partial to any.

His teaching does not line up with the heretical sects and parties.

But teach the way of God in truth.

More flattery.

If they believed that they would not be trying to trap him.

Now the interesting thing is that all these statements would be great if they really believed that.

But they do not.

Flattery can take on two forms.

Flattery can use the truth and speak the truth but does so not believing the truth.

The objective here is to convince you that the one flattering you that he is really your friend and ally.

Here you are deceived about others.

Flattery can also use that which is not true.

It can build you up with false confidence which is arrogance.

In this type of flattery you end up deceived about self.

In both cases the objective is deception

Luke 20:22

Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?

Now remember we have Pharisees who oppose Rome and support the religious rule of Jerusalem including the Temple and then we have the Herodians who support Caesar and Rome.

When Judah became a Roman province in A.D. 6, the Emperor established an annual head tax or poll tax on every Jew.

The money went directly to the Emperor's treasury and of all the taxes imposed by Rome was the most despised.

Both the Pharisees and the Herodians opposed the tax but for different reasons.

1. The Pharisees opposed it on religious grounds saying the Old Testament forbade the payment of such tax to a foreign power - their interpretation of the Law.

2. The Herodians opposed it because of it was impractical, costing time and money to collect and did not benefit the citizens in any way.

On the surface the question is rather remarkable.

It would appear that no matter what Jesus answered, he would raise the ire of one of the two groups or Rome itself.

His Apparent Options.

1. Do not pay the tax.

But that would be seen as civil disobedience and while it would conform to the two groups asking the question, it would put him in jeopardy with the Roman officials.

2. Pay the tax under protest.

But what would the protest be.

Religious or political.

A religious protest would be inconsistent with the Herodians and a practical protest would be inconsistent with the Pharisees.

3. Pay the tax with no explanation.

But that would give both groups a point of argument and further confrontation and debate.

4. Practically, he would be better off to insult the Herodians because the Pharisees were far more powerful especially in Jerusalem.

5. What these antagonists did not know but we do know is that Jesus had paid the poll-tax while in Capernaum.

Matthew 17:24-27.

Luke 20:23

But He detected their trickery and said to them,

The word *detected* is the Greek word *κατανοεω* and means to look upon, to notice, to observe.

Trickery is the word for craftiness or cunningness.

They thought they were so bright in putting this question to Him.

I can almost see the smugness in their expressions.

Luke 20:24

Show Me a denarius.

The most common of Roman coins, the name is taken from the word for TEN and it was at one time said to be equal to ten mules.

But inflation made it worth less.

In the parable in Matthew 20 we assume it was the standard day wage for a laborer.

Now like our coinage, Roman coins bore the image of rulers and at the time of Jesus, only one ruler, Caesar.

And at this time, Tiberius Caesar was the ruler

Luke 20:24

Whose likeness and inscription does it have? And they said, Caesars.

Prior to giving an answer, he asks a question.

The word *likeness* is *εικων* and is in other places in the New Testament translated *image*.

It was said in the Roman Empire that Caesar's domain extended as far as his coin was acceptable.

Luke 20:25

And He said to them, Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesars, and to God the things that are Gods.

The word *render* is *αποδιδομι* and has a number of meanings one of which is to give back to someone what is owned by them.

To discharge what is due, to pay up.

So the answer to the trick question is who really owns the coin?

Whose picture or image is on it?

Whose inscription is on it?

Caesar's!

And therefore give to him what is his.

But then Jesus adds to this and takes this opportunity to teach about the believer's relationship with God.

And to God the thing that are God's

By not repeating the word *render* Jesus makes this an exact parallel.

You pay taxes when asked because the coins in your purse belong to the one who asks for them.

Now are you willing to pay to God what really belongs to Him?

And then we have to ask, what does belong to Him?

You may say - everything - and you would be right but is the Lord looking at something more specific in our passage?

In order to find out we have to step away from our text and go on an investigative search for truth.

And there is no better place to begin than at the beginning and with the word *image*.

Genesis 2:26-27, Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Notice the plural use of the words *US* and *OUR*

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THIS IS A REFERENCE TO THE TRINITY: [No allegory or analogy is exact on every point]

1. Father Eternal, the soul of man will never die so the image of the Father is the soul
2. Son Body: as God created a body for man God created a Body for the Lord Jesus Christ
3. Holy Spirit Spirit: the human spirit is given by God at the moment of salvation just as the human spirit was given to Adam

Original man was created in the image of God and God's image was on him.

BUT THEN, after the FALL.

Genesis 5:3, When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.

Three Principles

In man's fallen state, as an unbeliever, he does not have God's image on Him. But in regeneration [salvation] man is born again, created as a new spiritual species, with the image of God on him

God's image is on the Christian

Romans 8:29, For whom He foreknew, He also predestined [to become] conformed to the image of His Son.

Colossians 3:9-10, Since you laid aside the old self - 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

2 Corinthians 3:18, But we all - are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit

1 Corinthians 15:49, And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly

So the image of God on us is a positional, progressive, and potential reality.

Principle

At salvation the image of God is impressed upon us [Like a Brand]

In the filling of the Holy Spirit [fellowship with God] the image of God is expressed through us

In eternity we will forever bear the image of the God who saved us

If you are a Christian God's image is on you

How do we apply this?

Being made in God's image refers to characteristics God shares with us

Man's (the believer's) threefold existence reflects the trinity

God's image on the believer is the basis for our value to God

God's image is shared equally by women and men (Genesis 2:27 *in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them*)

God's image on all believers is an foundation for our spiritual love towards other believers

God's image in us means that we belong to him

Therefore, we render / yield to God

the that which belongs to God

But what is it that belongs to him?

Since God is our creator, all creation, including the Christian's Body, Soul, and Spirit, belong to Him.

Paul tells us to yield our bodies to God as instruments of righteousness.

Colossians 1:22, He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach

Romans 12:1, I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

A good question to ask in response to that statement is HOW?

Romans 12:3, For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

Present, yield, render to God yourself in humility, with sound judgment (from the Word of God), and by means of the faith which God has given to everyman.

So how do we do this?

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We trust Him with the Faith He has given us, at every moment in our lives.

Luke 20:26

And they were unable to catch Him in a saying in the presence of the people; and marveling at His answer, they became silent.

They gave up their little conspiracy and will try a different tactic, but even then to no avail.

They will arrest Him, they will put Him on trial, they will turn Him over to Rome, he will be nailed to Roman Cross, He will be proclaimed as innocent, He will die for us, and yet death will not hold Him.

As we present ourselves to God we will be tested.

Sometimes these test come from just the fact that we live in a fallen world with other fallen men and women.

At times the test are from Satan and at other times from God Himself to expand our faith reliance on Him.

1 Peter 1:6-7, You have been distressed by various trials, 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.

Tested by fire, this is δοκιμαζω and was used of the refiner's fire. The metallurgist would purify gold and silver, he would heat it up and skim off the dross, then so again and again.

We have ways of measuring the purity today but back then it was a simple process.

The metallurgist would refine and refine until he could look into the pot and see his image in the molten precious metal.

What does God see when He looks at you?

His image is on you, does He see His Image?

Cecil Northcott tells of a discussion in a camp of young people from many nations were together at camp.

One wet night the campers were discussing various ways of telling people about Christ.

They turned to the girl from Africa. Maria, they asked, what do you do in your country?

Oh, said Maria, we don't have missionaries to send or even Bibles in native dialects to give away.

We just send one or two Christian families to live and work in a village, and when people see what Christians are like, then they want to be Christians too.

In the end the only all-conquering argument is the argument of a Christian life.

And when we come to the end of these days of argumentation in the Temple we will see that Jesus stands firm not in logic or argument, but in who He is what He came to do, to save mankind.

Looking at Christ should be the all conquering argument that we too should desire to be like Him.

The scribes of the Pharisees have taken their turn in trying to discredit Jesus, then the Herodians interrogated Him, now we have the third major group, the Sadducees come to Jesus with a question they think will trap Him.

But we know, in hind sight, that the innocent Lamb of God who would on the Cross take away the sins of the world will be found without fault or blemish.

Luke 20:27

Now there came to Him some of the Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection),

We have not heard a great deal from the Sadducees, mostly we have seen the Pharisees being on the attack during the earthly ministry of Christ.

Who are these men?

The Sadducees were are wealthy aristocratic of Israel.

This exclusive religious party developed during the intertestamental period.

We are clearly told that they were out of step with biblical and traditional teaching regarding the resurrection of the dead.

And yet this is the very point they will use to attempt to trap the Lord Jesus Christ.

Where we see the Pharisees as the religious legalists of their day, adding their pet requirements to the Law, and we see the Herodians as the secular politicians of Israel's

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with loyalty to Rome, the Sadducees are somewhere in between.

Sadducees

The name itself comes from two sources, an aristocratic priest named Zadok (inter- testament) and the Hebrew word for righteous.

They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament as being inspired.

They flatly rejected the Talmud and the Mishnah and any oral tradition. Acts 23:8

For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.

Since the doctrine of the Resurrection is developed in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament , they rejected the idea of the resurrection.

They believed death to be total extinction, no heaven or hell.

Only what you had on earth in time.

The Old Testament Law to them required no interpretation.

They were very ridged, seeing things in terms of black and white, even when the Scriptures gave some latitude or flexibility.

Since they were the wealthy and the powerful, their focus was on secular matters of politics and society rather than on spiritual things.

I see the parallel today to these religious groups in the following way.

Pharisees

The legalist, ready to add to the Word their own law and enforce this upon others.

Washing dishes a certain way, praying a certain way, the dos and the don'ts.

Just like the legalist today.

The Herodians: The believer who is completely distracted by politics and involvement in social causes.

The marchers and the protesters.

The Sadducees

The more conventional Christian who has been successful, is perhaps prosperous, and is very involved in society.

The service clubs, the political parties, the right group here and the right group there and - even the right and socially acceptable church.

They view their faith as part, a compartment of their life but not their life itself.

They accept from the Word what they want or what is agreeable to them and ignore or reject the rest.

These would not be limited to just the liberals today.

There are some believers in conservative churches who are playing Christianity as it suits them and their life-style.

Luke 20:28

and they questioned Him, saying, Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a mans brother dies, having a wife, and he is childless, his brother should take the wife and raise up offspring to his brother.

Ask the wrong question and you stand to get the wrong answer.

When believers take a low view of the Word, as did the Sadducees, they will not hesitate to only use Scripture or doctrine they do not even believe to gain their purpose.

The principle they state as the basis for their question is found in **Deuteronomy 25:5**

When brothers live together and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a strange man. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her to himself as wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.

This called the law of the Levirate Marriage.

The word Levirate comes from the Latin LEVIR which means a husband's brother or brother-in-law.

Reasons for this Law.

The patriarchal system meant that a single woman had very little protection in her society

God was building a nation and that nation was built under a patriarchal system

The LAND was to remain in the tribe, clan, and family and this acquired the possession

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This was God's system of grace in His Old Testament nation but we are not a nation today and the patriarchal system is no longer in force.

In an agricultural land based, one nation based system the structure of marriage and family are different than they are in our society

As we look at the Lord's answer, remember, the reason for the Levirate Marriage was to rise up children in the name of the dead brother.

Also we can note that they are referring to the non-canonical book TOBIT where a story is told about a woman married to seven husbands all who died without children.

But since the Sadducees did not even accept the prophets as inspired it is absurd for them to refer to a story in a book most people of their day did not even consider inspired.

But in their evil attempt to trap the Lord Jesus Christ they will try anything and use any source.

vv 29- 33 They now use the Law which they accepted and the resurrection which they rejected to propose an application

Luke 20:29-33

Now there were seven brothers; and the first took a wife, and died childless and the second and the third took her; and in the same way all seven died, leaving no children. Finally the woman died also. In the resurrection therefore, which ones wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife.

What we read next is very interesting.

The Lord could have shut them down very quickly by telling them they did not even believe in the resurrection so why bother with this hypothetical situation.

BUT INSTEAD He is going to use their question to teach truth regarding the resurrection as well as truth regarding the power of God.

Luke 20:34

And Jesus said to them, The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage,

The Lord will use the word *age αἰών* in this verse and the next to describe time on earth as opposed to eternity in heaven.

So we could say in this world as opposed to the next world.

Luke 20:35

but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage;

Considered worthy is one word in the Greek NT: *καταξίω*, the *κατα* means that this worthiness is according to a standard and that standard is the standard of absolute holiness.

The worthiness that is required to attain to the that age and the resurrection is the very worthiness and holiness of God which cannot be earned or accomplished, only received as the grace of God, received as is all grace, by faith.

Luke 20:36

for neither can they die anymore, for they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

Since marriage was given for populating the earth, be fruitful and multiply, as well as the relationship between man and woman, and in the next world, heaven, no one dies, there is no need to have children.

So there is no need for marriage for that reason which was the reason of the Levirate Marriage.

Luke 20:37,38

But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the burning bush, where he calls the Lord, The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

Now He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to Him.

Jesus refers to the story of Moses and the burning bush which is found in Exodus, chapter three (Exodus 3:6) which is a portion of Scripture accepted by the Sadducees.

Hence, they cannot argue the source.

This event in the life of Moses occurred about 1440 BC.

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Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived from 2000 BC to 1870 BC.

They were a long time dead (by 500 years) even when God said this to Moses.

The Sadducees would have believed them to be extinct, no longer existing.

But God said I am, right now, still, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Furthermore, by citing Exodus 3:6 he also reminded the Sadducees of something very current.

The official Jewish prayers of this time include seventeen benedictions.

In these the prayers ask for blessing, protection, love and mercy on the one praying but also upon Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Now how could God bless, protect, love, and favor someone who no longer exists?

So with that Jesus states the principle.

He is not the God of the dead, but of the living;

Jesus' Response Shows us Six Things.

He did not sink to their level and counter-attack

He was gracious, gave them an answer even when they denied their own premises

He answered with truth.

They asked the wrong question but He gave them the right answer.

He answered their question and then went on to address their problem.

He was aggressively in applying truth to every situation and question

And He used what they believed, He quoted from the Law of Moses.

He meet them where they were and gave them an opportunity to get with truth of God's word

When we deal with the critics, the doubters, we must meet them where they are and give them truth, that is our purpose.

We need not argue or attack, only convey that Jesus Christ lives and the God of the living.

But with all this grace and truth, they rejected.

They did not believe in the resurrection and they did not believe that Jesus was God and that even if

they did manage to kill Him, He would rise from the dead

Two points on the resurrection

The resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of the Christian faith. The resurrection of Jesus is the key to the Christian faith. Why?

Just as he promised, Jesus rose from the dead. We can be confident, therefore, that he will accomplish all he has promised.

Jesus' bodily resurrection shows us that the living Christ is ruler of God's eternal kingdom, not a false prophet or impostor.

We can be certain of our resurrection because he was resurrected. Death is not the end – there is future life.

The power that brought Jesus back to life is available to us to bring our spiritually dead self back to life.

The resurrection is the basis for the church's witness to the world. Jesus is more than just a human leader; he is the Son of God.

The resurrection is the decisive point of the Christian faith.

I passed on to you right from the first what had been told to me, that Christ died for our sins just as the Scriptures said he would, and that he was buried, and that three days afterwards he arose from the grave just as the prophets foretold. (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

There will always be people who say that Jesus didn't rise from the dead. Paul assures us that many people saw Jesus after his resurrection:

Peter, the disciples (the Twelve), more than five hundred Christian believers (most of whom were still alive when Paul wrote this, although some had died), James (Jesus' brother), All the apostles, And finally Paul himself

The resurrection is an historical fact. Don't be discouraged by doubters who deny the resurrection. Be filled with hope because of the knowledge that one day you and they will see the living proof when Christ returns.

In Jesus earth walk, His earthly ministry, we have seen a display of what perfect humanity looks like.

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It is now time for Jesus to focus on and present Himself as God, the Messiah who was promised of old.

The scribes understood that the Messiah would be the Son of David.

This was a title that is ascribed to Jesus fifteen times in the Gospels.

The scribes did not understand how this would work so there was controversy regarding the doctrine.

So when Jesus asks a question regarding this, He jumps into a controversial matter.

Luke 20:39

And some of the scribes answered and said, Teacher, You have spoken well.

These were the scribes of the Pharisees who would have opposed the Sadducees and even though the entire religious leadership of Jerusalem wanted this Jesus out of the way, including the Pharisees, the scribes could not resist getting a dig into the Sadducees.

So they speak up - *you have spoken well.*

We might see that as obvious since He is the Christ.

Luke 20:40

For they did not have courage to question Him any longer about anything.

Then we see that the questions ended, the interrogation is over and while in other Gospels we may see one or two independent questions asked of Jesus, the High Priests have exhausted their lines of attack through the Pharisee, Herodians, and Sadducees.

So now Jesus takes this opportunity to question them, specifically the Scribes who were the ones who really studied the Scriptures and who professed that the Messiah would be the Son of David.

Being students, teachers, and interpreters of the Law they knew the covenants and they knew II Samuel 7, the promise to David that his descendant, his Son, would sit forever on Israel's throne as King.

Luke 20:41

And He said to them, How is it that they say the Christ is David's son?

He gives them a paradox, almost like a riddle.

We do not really teach in riddles today but in generations past, even in the England of CS Lewis' day, we find riddles used to drive home a single point.

And that is what the Lord is going to drive home.

This is an attempt to get these religious leaders to recognize who He is.

In the text we find the word CHRIST which is the equivalent to the Messiah, the anointed one.

Two points are clear in the Lord's question.

First, the son or descendant of David is also David's Lord.

This is said early in David's reign and while he did have a number of sons by this time, he would have not referred to them as his Lord. So he is referring to a descendant yet future.

Secondly, this then would mean that his descendant must also be God since He is his Lord now and He is also yet to come.

So there really is only one answer.

As God the Messiah is David's Lord but as man He is also David's descendant.

Therefore, He must be God who will come to earth as man.

In **Revelation 22:16** we read.

I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star.

Both ROOT and OFFSPRING - The one who created man and yet is born of man.

In 25 occasions in the Gospels Jesus is referred to as the Son of God.

Fifteen times He is called the Son of David and in more than 80 times He is called the Son of man.

This can only be if He is the God-Man, the divine person who took on himself a human nature.

But the religious leaders of Jesus' day could not figure this out.

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They were confused as to how the Messiah could be predicted to suffer as a man and yet also reign as God.

How could the Messiah be both a Lamb and a Lion?

There were three popular explanation of this paradox.

Some religious leaders of the day simply rejected the idea of the Messiah coming as a Lamb to suffer.

They just rejected any Scripture that referred to that.

Others saw the two different manners in which Messiah was predicted to come as depending upon the holiness of Israel at the time. If they were good, He would come as a Lamb, if they were evil, He would come as a Lion to judge.

Then some, a few, the Essenes, came a bit closer to the truth by saying that there were two Messiahs, the first one who would come as a Lamb and then the second who would come as a Lion.

No one had it right, that the descendant of David is the man who would suffer and that the Lord of David was the God who would come to judge and to rule.

The God-Man, Jesus the Christ.

Luke 20:42,43

Then the Lord quotes from Psalm 110, a Psalm that would have been well known by the scribes.

For David himself says in the book of Psalms, THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR THY FEET.

Discussion of Psalm 110.

Now remember, Jesus is at the Temple, the Priests and religious leaders are trying to trap Him, and He quotes from this Psalm,

They, the Priests and religious leaders would have know the rest of it and would have seen how it applied to what was going on that day.

Psalm 110:1, (A Psalm of David.) The LORD says to my Lord: Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet.

The interpretation of the Psalm is for the Second Advent.

But by way of application we can see that it is predictive of the week of passion of the Lord Jesus.

We call this Operation Footstool and it is mentioned here in the Old Testament but nearly 20 times in the NT.

It is a major teaching found in the New Testament and thus a major promise to us.

Jesus will win!

This is one of the oldest prophecies in the Bible.

Goes all the way back to **Genesis 3:14-15**

And the LORD God said to the serpent - And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.

Heel to head, a death blow, as in making Satan and Satan's followers, even the unknowing ones, the Lord's enemies, into a footstool.

This will occur at the Second Advent [see slide]

Psalm 110:2, The LORD will stretch forth Thy strong scepter from Zion, saying, Rule in the midst of Thine enemies.

I think we can easily see from Luke that the Lord is in the midst of some very powerful enemies, the Priest, Pharisees, Herodians, Scribes, Sadducees.

Yet He is standing the ground of Truth in the face of His enemies - the Hebrew word for rule is **RA-DAH** and can mean to *prevail* and the Lord has certainly prevailed over these religious leaders.

Psalm 110:3, Thy people will volunteer freely in the day of Thy power; In holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Thy youth are to Thee as the dew.

By application we can see this as the popular support the Lord received at the Triumphal entry and the few days following.

Remember that often the religious leaders feared to answer Jesus because they feared the people who supported Him, Matthew 21:26 and 46.

Psalm 110:4, The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.

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Jesus had set His face like flint towards the Cross and nothing, no argument or attempted entrapment by the religious leaders would alter His purpose.

He would go to the Cross as the Highest of Priests after an order that predated the order of the priests present at the Temple, He was a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek and as a priest He would offer a once and for all sacrifice for sins, Himself.

Psalm 110:5, The Lord is at Thy right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath.

Although Pilate the Roman leader of King would have Jesus nailed to a Roman Cross, God was in control and eventually Pilate would be shattered.

Psalm 110:6, He will judge among the nations, He will fill them with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country.

The word judge which in the Hebrew is **DIN** can mean to plead a case for, or to vindicate.

At the cross this is what Jesus did in the presence of the Father, He took our sins and pleaded our case and He did this for the nations, Gentiles.

The chief men in application refers to the Chief Priests and religious leaders of Israel who so opposed him.

Psalm 110:7, He will drink from the brook by the wayside; Therefore He will lift up His head.

In Matthew 20:22 Jesus asked His disciples James and John.

Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?

This looks at the Baptism of the Cup where Jesus on the Cross drank the Cup of the sins of the human race.

When Jesus was on the Cross, after He said it was finished he bowed His head and gave up His spirit, but then His head was lifted up in the resurrection and ascension by the Father - He lifted up His head in authority at His right hand to await the time when His enemies would be made His footstool.

Luke 20:44

David therefore calls Him Lord, and how is He his son?

There is an answer to this riddle but to give the answer would demand that they recognize Jesus as the Messiah, as the Son of David, and God the Savior.

But instead of answering, in Matthew 22:46 at this point we read: *And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question.*

NOW IN LIGHT OF THEIR SILENCE Jesus speaks to His disciples and tells them to watch out for these religious leaders who while refusing the truth, demand the respect and recognition of others.

What a contrast they are with Him.

He is not demanding anything, only presenting Himself as the one sent from God in whom they are to believe.

Luke 20:45-47

And while all the people were listening, He said to the disciples,

Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues, and places of honor at banquets,

who devour widows houses, and for appearances sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation.

The way they took houses from widows and got away with it was by saying that a man who had died has left his home and property to the Temple.

Since this type of gift was verbal, the widow had no recourse of law especially since it was the lawyers who were doing this.

So here is a contrast for us.

Jesus presents Himself to the people as the Messiah, as God, as the Savior.

The religious leaders demand that people respect and follow them.

Jesus gives man the opportunity to believe in Him.

The best man can do is make demands upon others.

The Necessity for eternal God to become Man, or the necessity of the humanity of Christ.

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It was necessary for one member of the God head to become man because God cannot set aside His divine essence

It was necessary for Jesus Christ to become man to be qualified to be our Savior

It was necessary for Jesus Christ to become true humanity in order to physically die so that He could be raised from the dead to eternal glory.

It was necessary for humanity (in a resurrection body) to ascend into heaven and be acceptable to God the Father so that believers, in resurrection bodies, would also be acceptable to the Father.

It was necessary for God to become man in order to act as mediator between God and man.

A mediator must be equal with both parties.

It was necessary for Jesus Christ to become man in order to be our High Priest

It was necessary for the Lord Jesus Christ to become man to fulfill the Davidic covenant

Jesus Christ presented Himself as God and gave man the choice to believe in Him,

when we do by faith we continue to live by faith as we humble ourselves before Him.

Chapter 21

We ended Luke chapter twenty with the Lord's warning against the religious leaders who rather than humble themselves before the One who has just presented Himself as their Messiah, they, in their arrogance, demand that people honor them.

Their arrogance is so out of control that they even devour widow's homes.

This was done by saying the deceased husband left his home and property to the Temple.

And there was no recourse of law since it was the lawyers and judges and priests who were doing this.

Now we open in Luke twenty-one with a contrast.

A poor widow, perhaps one who had lost her home by the evil schemes of the arrogant religious leaders. We are going to learn about giving with the right attitude.

Illustrations

A man called at the church and asked if he could speak to the Head Hog at the Trough. The secretary said,

Who? The man replied, *I want to speak to the Head Hog.*

Sure now that she had heard correctly, the secretary said,

Sir, if you mean our pastor, you will have to treat him with more respect--and ask for The Reverend or 'The Pastor

But certainly you cannot refer to him as the Head Hog.

At this, the man came back,

Oh, I see. Well, I have ten thousand dollars I was thinking about donating to the Building Fund.

Secretary.

Hold the line--I think the Big Pig just walked in the door.

Sometimes our generosity comes from mixed motives. It seems that some vandals had cut down six royal palms along Miami's Flagler Street. Since the palms were very expensive, Dade County authorities weren't sure if they could replace them very soon. But then someone donated six more and even had them planted. The old ones had been about fifteen feet tall and provided a nice foreground for a *Fly Delta* billboard. The new palms are thirty-five feet tall--completely hiding the sign. The new donor: American Airlines.

Luke 21:1

And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury.

According to the Mishnah, there were thirteen trumpet-shaped receptacles for receiving the offering located against the wall of the Court of the Women.

The fact that the Lord knew that many who were rich were giving a great deal was because it was customary to announce the size of the gift publicly.

Also, the horns were metal and if you threw in a handful of heavy copper, gold or silver coins, the sound would ring out.

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Luke 21:2

In contrast to the rich who were giving much and even in contrast to the scribes who devour widow's houses we have a poor widow.

And He saw a certain poor widow putting in two small copper coins.

The coins were the **Hebrew Lepton** which were equal to 1/400th of a shekel.

Luke 21:3

And He said, Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them;

Jesus saw in this woman an example for the disciples to appreciate and to follow.

Especially in contrast to the religious crowds they had been dealing with.

Of course when it comes to the amount, this is not so.

But when it comes to the attitude and the grace behind the giving, it is certainly so.

It is not the amount, but the attitude

Not the cash but the character

Not the sum but the soul

Not the money but the mind of love

Not the greatness of the gift but the greatness of grace

Luke 21:4

The Lord then goes on to teach.

for (you see) they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on.

Very interesting contrast, they gave from surplus, περισσευω, the overflow, the more than enough, the prosperity or the amount that is left over.

So their giving came as an after thought, lets see what we have left now that I have spent the amount I had on things I need and things I want.

But the widow gave all she had to live on - which meant that she would now have to depend on the Lord for her livelihood tomorrow and the next day and the next.

Principle

She gave not to be noticed but to worship.

Commemorating the grace of God

The sum is not as important as the attitude

She was a widow, with no one dependant upon her so she gave all that she had at that time to live on knowing that God would supply her needs

This is a very important point in the Lord's illustration of this woman's giving, as a widow she had no dependants.

She did not have to provide for others and she chose for herself to live in faith dependence upon the Lord.

She was not making this decision for someone else.

The larger sums given by the rich would be used in the Temple but God loved the attitude of the poor widow

Principle

God can always get a few wealthy people to give, but it takes grace in the soul and then the actions of love and grace to please God in our giving

And that comes by faith, faith and its results pleases God because we are trusting Him.

What is wonderful to see is those who have been prospered give generously and graciously with the right attitude.

She gave more, although the sum was less, than all the wealth that was given

Application

The mental attitude of faith, grace, and love is of supreme importance to God, not the amount.

We need to develop an attitude of wanting to give.

God loves a cheerful giver. When we give, even we think we cannot afford it, we become more dependent upon God.

If you give sacrificially, remember it is you who are making the sacrifice - not your husband, your wife, your children, your loan officer, etc.

You may wish to give to the point where you do without, but that is only applied to you.

You do not have the right to impose a sacrifice on others

If your desire is right, God can always get others to give to make up the gap between your desire and your capital.

2 Cor. 8:7, But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also.

A parallel abounding.

Abound in faith, the word, and love and you will also abound in the gracious work of giving.

2 Cor. 8:8, I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also.

Giving cannot be commanded because as we noted in v 7 it is the result of faith, love, grace, understanding, all the things which are the work of the Holy Spirit in you.

How absurd it would be to try to command or demand grace.

Paul then gives the standard for our giving, the grace giving of Jesus Christ.

2 Cor. 8:9, For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

and

2 Cor. 8:12, For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have.

Readiness is our willingness and our desire.

That is what God is seeking and whatever is given, even two mites, a fraction of a penny, is acceptable to God.

2 Cor. 8:20, taking precaution that no one should discredit us in our administration of this generous gift;

Grace giving also requires grace receiving and proper and open handling of the gifts given through God's people.

Here at our church we have checks and balances and men who take very seriously the gifts you give.

We are totally open regarding our finances.

If you want to know salaries, utilities, missions giving, how much we spend on bathroom supplies, that information is all available to any

member and is often posted in the financial reports.

2 Corinthians 9:6, Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully.

This is one those life principles that Paul applies to a spiritual concept.

If you plant a few seeds, you get a small crop (even I know that).

So with giving which is the crop, you give little if the seeds of faith, love, and grace are not sown in abundance.

If they are however, we will see a natural outcome of that which is grace giving.

This is not some give to get promise, if it were the next verse would make no sense.

2 Cor. 9:7, Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.

Giving is a response to God and what He is doing, and all of our response to God is worship and worship is something that we may do collectively but it is an individual thing in which we, in this case, give as we have personally determined.

God loves a believer who gives with an attitude full of joy.

2 Cor. 9:8, And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;

Here is the mechanics of giving, God fills us up to overflowing with His grace and we spill out to others in our giving.

There are three kinds of givers -- the flint, the sponge and the honeycomb.

To get anything out of a flint you must hammer it.

And then you get only chips and sparks.

To get water out of a sponge you must squeeze it, and the more you use pressure, the more you will get. But the honeycomb just overflows with its own sweetness.

2 Cor. 9:15, Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

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Even though the gifts are given by God's people, Paul knows the true source, it is God Himself - so thanks be to God!

Repeating Luke 21:4

for (you see) they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on.

In this entire portion of Luke the one principle we keep on seeing is that God wants the right attitude first.

There is no value in pretense in the Christ Centered Life.

God wants you to stand before him as what you really are and then - let the Holy Spirit conform you to the image Jesus Christ.

A young recently graduated business man named Paul received a new automobile from his brother as a pre-Christmas present. On Christmas Eve, when Paul came out of his office, a street kid was walking around the shiny new car, admiring it. "Is this your car, mister?" he asked.

Paul nodded. "My brother gave it to me for Christmas."

The boy looked astounded. "You mean your brother gave it to you, and it didn't cost you nothing? Boy, I wish--"

He hesitated, and Paul knew what he was going to wish. He was going to wish he had a brother like that. But what the lad said jarred Paul all the way down to his heels, "I wish," the boy went on, "that I could be a brother like that."

Paul looked at the boy in astonishment, then impulsively asked, "Would you like to ride in my automobile?"

"Oh, yes! I'd love that!"

After a short ride the urchin turned, and with his eyes aglow said, "Mister, would you mind driving in front of my house?"

Paul smiled a little. He thought he knew what the lad wanted. He wanted to show his neighbors that he could ride in a big automobile.

But Paul was wrong again. "Will you stop right where those two steps are?" the boy asked.

He ran up the steps. Then, in a little while, Paul heard him coming back, but he was not coming fast.

He was carrying his little crippled brother. He sat him down on the bottom step, then sort of squeezed up against him and pointed to the car.

"There she is, Buddy, just like I told you upstairs. His brother gave it to him for Christmas, and it didn't cost him a cent. And someday I'm gonna give you one just like it.

Paul got out and lifted the little lad to the front seat of his car. The shining-eyed older brother climbed in beside him and the three of them began a memorable holiday ride.

Paul learned a great deal about the attitude of grace in giving that day.

Years ago a small group of Japanese believers were heckled and abused whenever they assembled to worship the Savior.

But the persecutors could not shake the faith of the new converts.

Each time the Christians gathered, the mob would throw stones at them, but they still faithfully continued to have their weekly meetings.

Eventually the opposition became so great that the outdoor services had to be temporarily abandoned.

Later, when a time of relative peace and tolerance had come to the community, many were won to Christ. Returning to the spot where the believers had frequently been attacked, they began to pick up some of the rocks.

Using them as part of the building materials, they constructed a small house of worship, rejoicing that God had worked all things together for good.

God wins!

In the last few chapters in Luke we have seen our Lord stand His ground against the various attacks for the religious leaders of Jerusalem.

Now he is going to talk to His disciples about the attacks and persecutions they will face.

If we follow Christ, there will be suffering but as Peter would later write.

1 Peter 4:19, Let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

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Luke 21:5

And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts (gifts resulting from a vow), He said,

I see this talking about the temple as a nervous reaction to the intensity of the previous arguments.

The disciples, witnessing the strong words of the Savior start looking around at the building and commenting on that rather than the strong content of the previous arguments.

Luke 21:6

As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.

So to that the Lord gives a bit of prophecy, these stones you are discussing will be so destroyed in the future that not one stone will rest upon another (idiomatic for total destruction).

This is a prediction of what will happen in 70 AD as Titus the Roman leads his legions against Jerusalem and total destroys the city.

Luke 21:7

And they questioned Him, saying, Teacher, when therefore will these things be? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?

Understandably, the disciples want to know WHEN?

So would we.

But in answering them Jesus gives two answers for the price of one so to speak.

He speaks of the immediate future for Israel and then also goes far into the future, even what is yet the future for us, and touches upon the Tribulation period.

What He says about one is true of both - and how the child of God is to deal with one is true of both.

Principle

The response of the child of God to what is happening in the world, in any dispensation, is the same - to trust God, to live by faith, to be lead by the Holy Spirit.

Luke 21:8,9

And He said, See to it that you be not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, I am He, and, The time is at hand; do not go after them.

And when you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow immediately.

In verses 8-12 Jesus lists four areas of distraction.

Verse 8, being lead astray by those who claim they have the power of Christ, the power to deliver.

Verses 9-10, being lead astray by world events and circumstances

Verse 11, being lead astray by natural disaster

Verse 12, being lead astray by persecution

Two things not to do. Do not be misled, do not be terrified.

In the Tribulation the antichrist will try to draw out the believers who have fled and are being hidden in safety by God by claiming that Christ has come.

The believer is told not to be deceived, not to believe this lie.

Even today we have those who who claim to be Christ, while not saying so specifically, they claim to be the one who God has sent.

In the Tribulation there will be a number of signs of what is to come but in **Matthew 24:30** we are told to the one sign that will signal the coming of Jesus.

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.

Luke 21:10,11

Then He continued by saying to them, Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom,

and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.

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Does it seem that there are far more devastating earthquakes today than in previous times?

YES, but do these mean the end is near?

They may - but also they may not.

The church age is not an age of prophecy.

There is no prophecy that needs to be fulfilled for us prior to the Lord coming at the rapture for His church, and then the seven years of Tribulation, followed by the Lord's Second Advent.

So Christians get very excited about things happening in the world, about Israel, about this and that and they want to believe the end is near, and it may be.

The stage may be being set for these future events.

But in the late 1930 international events seemed to be even more evident of the Lord's return and yet the stage was struck so to speak.

Our hope is in the Lord's promise that He will return and not in world events or the current millennial madness.

At the beginning of the church age as Israel was under discipline, the Jews experienced persecutions, earthquakes, famines.

These all occurred even prior to 70 AD and the destruction of the Temple.

Because the authorities saw Christianity as being a mere sect of the the Jew's religion, Christians were also persecuted.

The Emperors Caligula, Claudius, and Nero all threatened war against the Jews and wanted to destroy Jews and Christians

In AD 38 in Alexandria the Jews and Christians were persecuted by the Romans.

In Seleucia over 50 thousand Jews were killed.

Four major earthquakes rocked parts of the Roman empire all between the time of this prophecy and AD 70.

One in Crete (AD 46), one in Rome (AD 51), in Phrygia (AD 60), and in Campania (AD 63).

Also there were four major famines during this period one which is mentioned in Acts 11:28 in Judea in AD 44.

Persecution

Jesus now gives some warning as to what His disciples can expect even prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Those who hear these words will suffer persecution.

BUT through out the church age, and even now we see Christians being persecuted for their faith.

Luke 21:12

But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My names sake.

We read of this happening in the book of Acts to the Peter, James, John, Stephen, Barnabas, Silas and Paul.

But we can also read of this happening today - perhaps in no other place are Christians being as persecuted and killed as in the Sudan.

Where once the Sudan Interior Mission lead hundreds of thousands to the Lord, today the Muslim government as declared that it is not a crime to torture and kill Christians.

2 Corinthians 2:14, But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

What we see next is that regardless of the circumstances, God always wins!

Luke 21:13-15

It (the persecution) will lead to an opportunity for your testimony.

So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves;

for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.

The utterance is our testimony.

To be able to tell what Jesus has done for us.

Not a theoretical defense of the faith, leave that up to the apologists and polemicists.

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But to be able and willing to tell of what Jesus has done for us.

To *not prepare beforehand* is to not prepare a defense but we are to have a testimony.

If we are to compare this to **I Peter 3:15** where we read.

Always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

BUT TWO DIFFERENT forms of the world *defense (apologia)* are used.

In Luke the word means to give a defense of oneself, to defend self.

Whereas in Peter's letter the word means to defend what you believe.

And how do we do that, by way of what we know and the personal relationship we have with Christ.

Are you able to tell others what Christ means to you?

Are you able to tell others about your salvation?

I would challenge you as we did at our deacon's retreat with our men, sit down and write out your testimony.

Tell others of three things.

Life before Salvation

Salvation

Life after Salvation

Be able to do this in one minute and then be able to do this in three minutes.

This is not a defense of the faith, it is a personal testimony of what Jesus Christ has done in your life.

Luke 21:16,17

But you will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, and you will be hated by all on account of My name.

I read this verse and I am reminded of the old game show, Who do you Trust?

Who do we really trust?

In whom do we put our faith?

When it comes down to it, the only one who is guaranteed never to let you down is the Lord Himself.

He will never leave you nor forsake you.

Instead He is the one who promises to protect you.

Luke 21:18

Yet not a hair of your head will perish.

Our promise that we are eternally secure.

Also a personal promise to me that in heaven I will have hair.

Luke 21:19

By your endurance you will gain your lives (souls).

Endurance, hanging in there to the end, whatever the end may be.

By your endurance there will be special rewards for you in the future.

You will rule with Christ during His reign on earth.

You will gain what only God can give - those who persecute you may gain position and power here on earth but not only are we reminded in these passages that Jesus always wins, but that in eternity, an eternity that lasts forever, you win as you endure

1 Corinthians 10:13, No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.

2 Timothy 2:12, If we endure, we shall also reign with Him;

So what is left for us to do?

We put our faith in the Lord, trusting Him

We endure, through faith and the Spirit until the end, whatever the end may be

We are ready and willing to tell about Him, others can come to know Christ through our lives of love and endurance

Over 50 years ago, Dr. C.I. Scofield said in his notes on revelation., *Doubtless, much which is*

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designedly obscure to us will be clear to those for whom it was written.

And such in the nature of biblical prophecy.

We read of great signs and wonders, great events, natural calamities, international upheaval.

We even see things in our time that seem to parallel these events.

But the times and the seasons, and the future, are in God's hands.

We anticipate the Lord's return, first for His church in what we call the Rapture, and then about seven years later at the Second Advent when the Lord of lords and King of all kings will defeat the enemies of God and establish His kingdom on earth.

Luke 21:20

But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand.

Question: When is this going to happen?

And this is where we see the importance of bringing in to harmony all the Gospels.

If we look at to Matthew 24 or Mark 13 we will see the those writers included the following verse.

Luke 21:21

Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of the city depart, and let not those who are in the country enter the city;

This verse is found in Matthew and in Mark but it is preceded by a different statement.

Their the Lord tells his disciples that they are to flee when they see the abomination of desolation set up in the Holy Place, the Temple.

So what we have here is Luke including another statement that was made by the Lord in addition to the one regarding the Abomination of Desolation.

We have a prophecy then that does look ahead to the middle of the Tribulation but also one that can be applied to the more near future for these disciples who are with the Lord.

This is the uniqueness of prophecy and it demonstrates that in every dispensation there are certain divine truths that are to be applied.

In 70 AD when the Romans came against Jerusalem, many of the people fled and one group in particular fled to a mountain top called Massada.

And we learn from Eusebius, and Epiphanius, that at the time of this siege, all who believed in Christ left Jerusalem, and removed to Pella, and other places beyond Jordan.

Not one Christian is said to have died in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

But here the Lord is also looking into the far future.

To the middle of the Tribulation when the anti-Christ will make take over Palestine.

He will be helped by the false prophet and will set up his own image in the Temple and demand that people worship him.

When this happens this is to be a sign to those who have put faith in Christ to get out and they will flee, presumably to the region around Petra, at the southern end of the dead sea.

Luke 21:22

because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

Here again we are given an indication as to what the Lord is talking about.

The days of vengeance mention specifically in Isaiah 34:8 and 61:2 and in Jeremiah 51:6 and are predicted to be a time just prior to God regathering His people and establishing His kingdom.

The difficulty of following the lord.

The Lord has told them they are to flee and yet we see that for some this will be more difficult than for others.

Luke 21:23,24

Woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land, and wrath to this people,

and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot

by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Prophetically we would see v 24 as back then, now, and yet still in the future.

Since the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD the Jews have been scattered throughout the nations.

Even now that there is a Jewish state, Israel, the vast majority of Jews are found in other nations.

In v 23 however, we see that following the Lord is not always easy, but it is always right.

Some will have more difficulty than others, but the Lord will make the path straight.

What we see in these verses is for a time yet future even for us and a people other than the church - but while all the Bible is not written to us, it is all written for us.

When we by faith obey the Lord, it may seem contrary to circumstances.

We may see everything as being alright, but the Lord says go.

Human Viewpoint sees only what is happening now.

Divine viewpoint sees the now and also sees what we cannot see, the future.

We follow the Lord by faith.

And it is that faith that we come to the greater reality of the very Words of God.

For some this faith-obedience will be easier than for others but our present circumstances must never keep us from believing and following the Word of God.

We are told throughout the New Testament that the Jews are a people who seek signs.

So Jesus tell them that in that day there will be signs.

Luke 21:25,26

**And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves,
men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.**

Luke takes all of what we have been studying on Tuesday nights, from Revelation 4 to Revelation 18 and puts it into two verses.

Luke 21:27

And then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory.

The Lord draws from Daniel 7:13-14 to describe His second coming.

This is later described in vivid detail in Revelation 19.

The Lord will come to deliver believers and destroy the enemies of the God.

After this He will establish His kingdom on earth.

Luke 21:28

But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

When these things begin to occur, His followers will lift up their heads, a symbol of rejoicing, because their redemption (that is their safety in the kingdom brought by the returning King) will be drawing near.

Parable of the fig tree

Luke 21:29-31

And He told them a parable: Behold the fig tree and all the trees;

as soon as they put forth leaves, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near.

Even so you, too, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near.

They were to learn a parable so as to better understand what the Lord had just taught.

What was taught dealt with the Tribulation period, not the CA.

Just as when we see the fig tree begins to bloom, rather like our Bradford Pear trees that seem extra beautiful this year, we know, summer is near.

Despite the temperatures of the last couple of days.

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So there will be specific signs that will allow the children of God in the Tribulation to know that Jesus' Second Coming is near.

The word *recognize* is the Greek word **γινωσκω** and looks at a certainty of knowing.

And while we have a lot of people today and have had many in our past and even in the past decades and centuries of the church age who have said *Jesus is coming in this year or on that date* they are wrong.

They were not certain or sure they did not have **γινωσκω** which is promised to the these believers in the Tribulation.

Luke 21:32

Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place.

Some relate the generation mentioned here to the generation of believing Jews at the end of the tribulation.

More likely and in keeping with the way Jewish thinking works, I think Jesus is going back to the question that started all this - when will the Temple be destroyed. vv 6-7.

So what Jesus has done is initially answer their question, then use the question to give principles that will apply to them and also to their descendants so to speak in the Tribulation.

And now come back to that.

About twelve time in Luke the Lord is critical of *this generation*.

The generation of Jews living at that time.

In **Luke 11:50-51** the Lord stated.

the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, [will] be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.

And many of that generation lived the additional 40 years to witness the destruction of Jerusalem.

So I would say that this verse is brining the teaching back to an application to the disciples and that generation of Jews living a the time of Jesus death on the Cross.

Some try to change the word generation to race and make it mean the race of the Jews which is a wonderful dispensational argument and one I would love to embrace, but the word *generation* does not really stretch that far.

We can however go to many other passages to see that God does have a future for Israel.

Luke 21:33

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

What a promise.

This is certainly true of the predictions but it also a great promise regarding God's Word, the mind of Christ.

These things are not subject to change.

As God is immutable so is His Word.

Psalm 55:19, God will hear and answer them-- Even the one who sits enthroned from of old-- Selah. With whom there is no change, And who do not fear God.

Malachi 3:6, For I, the LORD, do not change

Isaiah 40:8, The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.

Psalm 119:89, Forever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven.

Luke 21:34

Be on guard, that your hearts may not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day come on you suddenly like a trap;

Don't be distracted - have what one Christian song writer has called *forever eyes*.

The Lord mentions dissipation, which looks at sickness and in this case is brought on by the horrible events of the destruction of Jerusalem nor by drunkenness which in this case is a giving up and giving in to intoxication.

When life is going badly one is often effected emotionally and physically and then there are those who just lose themselves in a bottle.

The believer need not do that, we can face the uncertainty of the future knowing that God is already there and He is there with a plan.

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We do not have to be distracted by worry.

The coming of the Lord is pictured as a trap and it is a good trap.

I watch documentaries and I have seen the wildlife service capture wolves to take them to better areas of the country that would be better habitats for them - they are being trapped to be taken to a better place.

Yet they still fight the traps.

When the Lord comes for His church at the Rapture He is going to take us to a far better place.

When the Lord comes at the second advent He is coming is like a trap, good for some, and destruction for others.

Luke 21:35,36

for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.

But keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.

So what are the believers of the Tribulation to do while they await the Second Advent?

What are the believers of Jesus day to do while they await the destruction of Jerusalem?

And what are we to do while we await the coming of the Lord for His church?

Keep alert, pray for strength and pray for the Lord to deliver - . true then, true now, and true in the future.

These things call us to the life of faith and trust that we can have in God.

God has saved us, given us eternal life, we are His children.

We can trust Him with the future knowing that God has a purpose and and plan that works together all things for His glory and our good.

Ray Stedman of Peninsula Bible church in Palo Alto, California, once asked a young boy what he wanted to be when he grew up. The boy answered, *A returned missionary*. The boy looked ahead not to the years of graduate study, not to the years of separation from home and loved ones, not to the months and years in steaming jungles or

parched deserts--but to the completion of his mission.

He looked to the future and knew that the Lord would be there.

Summary of his activity.

Luke 21:37,38

Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet.

And all the people would get up early in the morning to come to Him in the temple to listen to Him.

Chapter 22

One of the more popular TV programs of the 1980 was Cheers.

And while most people could not remember the names of the cast of the often repeated story line, the theme song was sung and hummed by hundreds of thousands of people - people who desired to be able to go to *a place where everyone knows your name*.

It has been said that the neighborhood bar is possibly the best counterfeit there is to the fellowship Christ wants to give his church.

The bar is an imitation dispensing drink instead of grace, escape rather than reality, but it is permissive, it is accepting and it is an inclusive fellowship.

It is unshakeable.

It is democratic.

You can tell people secrets and they usually don't tell others or even want to.

The bar flourishes not because most people are alcoholics, but because God has put into the human heart, the desire to know and be known, to love and be loved.

And so many people seek a counterfeit at the price of a few drinks.

This alone speaks strongly of the desire we have as human beings for friendship.

We will see this morning that Jesus Christ in His humanity had many many enemies.

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But we will also see that God gave him a few faithful friends.

Luke 22:1

Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching.

These feasts help us determine when this is occurring.

It would have been in the Hebrew month of Nisan (which would roughly correspond to our month of April) and would be on Nisan 14th for the Passover and Nisan 15th to the 21st for the feast of Unleavened Bread.

The Passover was the ancient Jewish celebration of deliverance from Egypt.

When the angel of death passed over the homes on which had been sprinkled the blood of the Lamb.

It is appropriate the Jesus would die for the sins of the world on during this Jewish holiday since He was the Lamb of God that would take away the sins of the world and the His sacrifice would be a once and for all sacrifice.

His death would allow those who believed in Him to be passed over by death and have eternal life.

Luke 22:2

And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might put Him to death; for they were afraid of the people.

Here we read of the results of the prior two days of interrogation at the Temple.

Remember that the chief priests gave it everything they had, sending against our Lord the Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees, and scribes.

Trying to catch Him in some sin or self-incrimination statement that they could use to accuse Him and kill him.

Although they failed at this, they were not about to abandon their evil scheme of wanting to kill the Lord of Glory.

Luke 22:3

And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve.

While v 2 tells us what the religious leaders were plotting, v 3-4 tells us what Satan was doing.

Luke 22:4

And he went away and discussed with the chief priests and officers (priestly aristocracy in charge of the temple guard) how he might betray Him to them.

The decision to betray Jesus was Judas'.

The power to betray Jesus was Satan's.

We see that this is something that entered into Judas' mind then he went and discussed this with the chief priests and officers of the Temple.

Luke 22:5

And they were glad, and agreed to give him money.

For this he was given thirty pieces of silver, about a months wage.

Luke 22:6

And he consented, and began seeking a good opportunity to betray Him to them apart from the multitude.

We see that he agreed and at that point went beyond the decision to betray the Lord and began to plan how to do this out of the seeing and hearing of the people who were coming and listening to Jesus teach.

The religious leaders impressed upon Judas the need to capture Jesus away from the people so as to cause a minimum problem with His followers.

They knew, Judas knew, what they were doing was wrong and had to be done covertly.

We, knowing the rest of the story, know that this opportunity was eventually found when Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray on the night of the Passover supper.

We can see a **downward spiral** in Judas that lead to His betrayal of the Lord.

He was enslaved to covetousness.

He was the treasurer of the twelve and came to coveted the funds he held

In the discharge of that most sacred trust he became *a thief*

(John 12:6)

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The desire to enrich himself settled in a purpose and plan as evident by what took place in Simon's house at Bethany

Next came his determination to betray Jesus

But this decision put him under the authority and power of Satan

But once he did the deed, his conscience plagued him with guilt, so much so that he took his own life

This is a warning and lesson to us all.

Once we begin to play around with sin, even sins of the mental attitude, ones others cannot see, we can hit a downward spiral that can lead to destruction.

Judas was a false friend.

And false friends are like a shadow, keeping close to us while we walk in the sunshine, but leaving us when we cross into the shade.

Now let's take a moment and consider what we have here:

Consider the enemies.

Jesus had the religious leaders of all of Israel against Him, the Chief Priests of the Temple, who controlled the Temple guard (an very strong military force).

He had a friend, one of His followers plotting his betrayal.

And He had Satan against Him.

With all those who are against Him we may wonder who is for Him?

Who is in His corner?

GOD!

Now let's apply this to ourselves.

Do you have enemies?

Or perhaps I should put it this way.

Have you ever had the leading authorities of the nation against you and wanting you dead?

You friend wanting to betray you?

I really hope not.

But even if things were that bad, even if you had that kind of opposition in life, do not fear if you have God as your Father.

Philippians 3:18, For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ,

We do share in common with our Lord the opposition of Satan.

He is our enemy, he hates us and has a horrible plan for our lives.

He wants us out of the race or dead and it doesn't matter much to him which it is.

And as a result of this opposition we will suffer.

Peter said in his first epistle.

1 Peter 3:14, But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED

1 Peter 3:17, For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

1 Peter 4:16, But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God.

1 Peter 4:19, Therefore, let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

We should be beginning to get the point.

As a Christian you will have enemies and you will face opposition.

But if God is for you, who can be against you?

Jesus will never lead us anywhere He has not been.

He had more enemies and the results were far worse than anything we may ever face.

But in His humanity He showed us how to handle the opposition - He endured to the end putting His earthly life in the hands of His Father, our God, our Father.

While Judas is out getting paid off to betray the Lord, God provided His Son with a few faithful friends.

Luke 22:7

Then came the first day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.

The Jews of Jesus' day operated off two calendars for the Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread.

The Passover was a one day feast and would for some precede the days of Unleavened Bread (usually the Galileans) and for other such as the Pharisees, follow.

This was accepted even in Jerusalem during the Passover and days of Unleavened Bread since there were so many people in the city there would just not be enough rooms for them to all eat the Passover meal on the same day.

The Passover celebration was not only the first feast of the Jewish calendar but also of all the feasts it most directly pointed towards the coming of the Messiah.

The feast was one that was celebrated with family and friends and included the eating of the Pascal lamb, fresh fruits and vegetables and the new or unfermented wine.

The feast looked back to the birth of the nation of Israel as they were released from the bondage of Egypt in 1440 BC after their death angel has slain the first born of every house on which was not placed the blood of the innocent lamb.

As every other Passover looked back to the birth of Israel, this Passover would look ahead to the birth of the church.

Luke 22:8

And He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.

Something Luke does not include but it included in Matthew's account of this event is that Peter and John came to Jesus wanting to prepare the Passover for Him and then asking for His instructions.

Matthew 26:17, Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?

At this point we see for the first time the disciples wanting to serve Jesus rather than wanting Him to server them.

That is remarkable!

It is like they are finally getting what the spiritual life is all about.

Three important principles

Prior to this time the disciples were more concerned with how Jesus could serve them and help them. Now, after three years of ministry, they desire to serve Jesus Christ.

Serving Christ was going to require some work.

Yet they desired to do the work.

Now this is a very simple point but important.

If someone just walked up to you, some casual friend, and said I want you to spend a whole day preparing a fantastic feast for me, your would no doubt find an excuse to be busy that day.

But if there was someone you loved you might even invite them to a fantastic feast that you had spent the whole day preparing and have great joy when they sat at your table and envied the meal.

And here is where we make a dramatic distinction of true spiritual life of grace and faith with the pervasive thinking in Christianity today.

Christians today want and pastor teach and churches enforce a life of service based on obedience rather than love.

But they have it backwards, it is growing closer to Christ through faith and trusting His Word, resulting in friendship and love, that we then serve Him as a result, never a means.

Remember what Jesus said in **Matthew 11:28-30**

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.

Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls.

For My yoke is easy, and My load is light.

And that is exactly where Peter and John are right now, wanting to do something, that would require a lot of work, but to do that work for the one they loved.

Principle

The light burden of the Christ Centered Life.

When you love someone that love motivates you to want to do things for them.

In doing things for the one you love the labor is not heavy but light, joyful, exciting.

It is only when you try to do a part from love that the burden becomes heavy.

All they needed was to be told where.

Luke 22:9-12

And they said to Him, Where do You want us to prepare it?

And He said to them, Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house that he enters.

And you shall say to the owner of the house, The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?

And he will show you a large, furnished, upper room; prepare it there.

Do you see what is so fantastic here?

They wanted to do this and out of their love and faith they came to Him, wanting to serve Him, expressing this, being willing, and they find that Jesus had already made all the arrangements.

All they would have to do is go into the city and find the man, presumably John-Mark's father, and they would find that the room is ready to be prepared.

They are told to go, they are given the command of the Lord, and the Lord would be there with them when they arrive at their goal.

There are times in our journey when the Lord will be right there with us and there will be other times when we may seem to be very alone, but at the end of the journey the Lord will be there waiting for us.

All we are to do is what Paul would later state in 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.

Luke 22:13

And they departed and found everything just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

We find that he has already made the provision.

The disciples anticipated a very hectic and busy day and in crowded Jerusalem finding a place would have been the major task

But they wanted to do this because of their maturity and love for the Lord

But Jesus had already made the provision of the place and the food

The heavy burden of a busy day, became very light.

How often do the tasks we tackle seem to be so complex, so difficult, so heavy, only to find that our Savior, our Friend Jesus Christ has made them light.

For us today, the heavy burdens of life became very light because of the provision and the power of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Over the next three weeks we are going to examine the events of the last Supper.

As we do we are going to make four observations.

First, the events described in Luke 22 verses 1-7 and verse 31 remind us of the treacherous work and agenda of Satan to hinder the plan of God.

Second, these events, serve as a warning and a reminder of what mankind and the world system are really like. They warn us that the very nature of man and life in all of its hustle and bustle, its agitations and aspirations, its events and activities, all tend to distract, distort, and disorient us from the Lord Jesus as the means of our life.

Third, they serve to emphasize the absolute necessity of that which the Lord's Supper stands for, namely, life by means of Christ's person, death, resurrection, and life. It reminds us of the sufficiency of Christ as the very source, force, and course of life.

Fourth and finally, these events surrounding the institution of the Lord's Supper warn us that when we come together for worship we can actually come together not for the better, but for the worse.

Paul would have to deal with this in I Corinthians 11 as those Christians were coming together for the Lord's Supper but for many wrong reasons.

In Luke's account of the Last Supper we see competing agendas.

When we looked at the opening verses of this chapter a few weeks ago we noted that Judas has an agenda and had already, even prior to this evening meal, started to work to see his plan to force the hand of Jesus in revealing Himself as King of the Jews come about.

Satan of course has an agenda and for him it has come down to win or lose, survive or perish.

Satan will do everything he can to keep Jesus from the Cross.

We will see the disciples have an agenda and that is to see who is the most important among them.

But over and above all this, God has an agenda.

And that agenda is to offer His Son, Jesus Christ, who is willing and able, to go the Cross and die for the sins of the human race.

Within that agenda we see Jesus Christ who has spent three years with this group of men called disciples now wanting to be with them and as John wrote in John 13, loving these men and loving them to the end.

Luke 22:14

And when the hour had come He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him.

Some try to read a conflict into this in that this is clearly said by Luke and John to be the Passover Supper and even implied to be so by Mark and Matthew.

But that seems to contradict the statement of John 19:14 that indicates that Jesus was crucified on the day prior to the Passover.

The apparent contradiction is resolved when it is realized that different groups of people who came to Jerusalem for the feast of unleavened bread would take the Passover meal at different times.

Luke 22:15,16

And He said to them, I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;

for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

We see here what we might call the earthly desire of Jesus Christ.

He wanted to be with His disciples, the apostles, during this final Passover and prior to His suffering.

I am sure this is not because of their keen understanding and support of what Jesus is about to face.

Even prior to this night they disciples argued with the Lord when He mentioned His impending death.

Even this night they will argue about their crowns while the Lord is preparing to go to His Cross.

His desire was to be with them to the end, because of His love for them.

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 this night will be the night of the last Passover.

The old is coming to a close.

A new dispensation is about to break forth.

All that was predicted by the prophets and foreseen in The sacrifices and the feasts is about to come about as Jesus goes to the Cross.

Luke 22:17

And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, Take this and share it among yourselves;

This would have been the first cup, as the meal began the Lord told them this would be the final Passover.

Now there were Four Cups that were taken during the Passover Meal.

The Passover Liturgy related to the meal as it was observed in the days of our Lord has been preserved.

The Preliminary Course. The head of the household pronounced the prayer of sanctification (*qiddus*), comprising the benediction for the festival and the **first** cup (the *qiddus* cup). The

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preliminary course (*karpas*), consisting of green herbs, bitter herbs and a sauce of fruit juice was eaten without bread. The meal was brought in but not yet eaten, the **second** cup was mixed with water and placed on the table, but not yet drunk.

The Passover Liturgy. The Passover service, in which the head of the household explained the special features of the Passover meal (Exod. 12:26) and proclaimed the outline of the story, the *haggadah*; the first part of the Passover *Hallel* (Psa. 113f.) was sung and the **second** cup (*haggadah* cup) was drunk.

The Main Meal. The head of the household pronounced a benediction over the unleavened bread, which was distributed and the meal eaten which consisted of the Passover Lamb, *mazzoth*, bitter herbs (Exod. 12:8) and wine (optional). After grace the **third** cup (cup of blessing) was drunk.

The Conclusion. The second part of the *Hallel* (Psalm. 115-118) was sung and a benediction pronounced over the **fourth** cup (*Hallel* cup)

Luke 22:18

for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes.

The Kingdom, while still future, was certain to be established, because Jesus, the Messiah, at His first advent, had laid its foundation by His sacrificial death (Isaiah 52:13-53:12). Jesus tells his disciples that when He once again takes up the cup, it will be in His Kingdom (verses 16,18).

This is a tremendous promise.

A promise that comes from the very lips of our Lord and is a promise not just to those who are there at that Last Supper but even to us.

The Lord will, one day, with us, in heaven, drink of that cup.

With that cup we have the terminating of the Passover Supper and now we have the Lord instituting the Lord's Supper.

Luke 22:19,20

And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.

And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.

We see two things established at this point.

First, Remembrance.

The Lord told them *do this in remembrance of Me.*

This act of worship is to be done in remembrance of Christ, but why? Because in His absence, Christ desires all believers to continually remember Him in the fullness of the benefits of His death and life because He and He alone is to be the source of our spiritual lives.

The Lord's Supper it is to be a time in which we remember Him so that we personally relate to the Savior with the goal of living in greater dependence on Him for every aspect of life.

A.W. Tozer has written something which is certainly applicable here:

"Many of us Christians have become extremely skillful in arranging our lives so as to admit the truth of Christianity without being embarrassed by its implications. We arrange things so that we can get on well enough without divine aid, while at the same time ostensibly seeking it. We boast in the Lord but watch carefully that we never get caught depending on Him. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?* Pseudo faith always arranges a way out to serve in case God fails it. Real faith knows only one way and gladly allows itself to be stripped of any second way or makeshift substitutes. For true faith, it is either God or total collapse."

It is not religion but a relationship and even with His disciples, they were to no longer look back to redemptive shadows and types, or depend on themselves as the source of their spiritual lives.

From now on they were to remember Him as the perfect and final sacrifice for sin.

From now on they were to remember Him as the means of their life both for the present and the future. But why is that?

Because from now on they were to remember Him as the greatest manifestation in history of the power and kingdom of God, greater than even creation itself. Jesus Christ becomes the new

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standard for the power of God in human history both for the present and for the future.

The reason is because in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone does man find God's solution to sin and death, to an abundant life, a life that pleases God, and to life eternal.

They were observing this with Him and they were to observe this in the future with one another.

The Lord took the lead at this last supper.

He was reclining at the table, He was the teacher, the One who the others looked to and listened too.

They were to be focused on Him.

As we are to be focused on Him in our fellowship with Him.

And although reclining at the table was the custom of the day, it also pictures for every culture rest, fellowship, relaxation, and our comfort in His presence.

And that is what we have with Him and with one another in our fellowship.

Now our lord's agenda was clear, He was bringing to an end the Passover Supper, promising future fellowship with His friends, and establishing a ritual by which we can remember Him and fellowship with Him and one another.

Now we will have more to say about the Lord's supper as we progress through this chapter but lets look now at the agenda that Satan had in all this.

Luke 22:21

But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Me on the table.

For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!

Who is behind this?

No one other than Satan himself.

We even saw earlier in our study of this passage that *Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve* (v 3).

So what is Satan's agenda then and now?

Satan's Agenda is to Dominate: As we see in the life of Judas, Satan works to dominate the lives of men to keep them from coming under the saving

power, authority, and control of the life of the Lord Jesus.

Satan's Agenda is to Delude: As seen in the life of Judas, Satan works overtime to delude people into the pursuit of life by means of the substitutes of the world. The delusion is that they can find happiness and security in things like wealth, position, and power. Judas was seeking his security in material wealth.

Satan's Agenda is to Destroy: As seen in his control of the religious leaders who were seeking a means to put Christ to death, Satan's agenda is to destroy the truth regarding the person of Christ.

Satan's Agenda is to Distract and Divide: This is evident later on in this chapter in the attitudes of the disciples who were arguing over who was the greatest. Clearly, Satan's agenda is to distract and divide our allegiance and focus on the person of Christ.

Satan's Agenda is ALWAYS to Distort the plan of God: Christ's plan or agenda, as so clearly seen in His own example, is that we might live as servants (Luke 22:24-27).

And at this last Supper Satan is going to seek to fulfill his evil agenda by using Judas, by getting the disciples involved in a petty competitive argument, and by personally attacking Peter the leader of the disciples.

And it will seem that he is almost getting his way, that he is going to succeed in his evil plans but here is when we must remember one very important thing - God is always in control.

Look again at verse

Luke 22:22

For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!

Nothing will happen that is out outside of God's control.

Jesus was to be betrayed.

This was part of the plan of God for our salvation and as horrible as we may consider this betrayal to be there is a hidden gem in the Greek text at this point.

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The word betrayed is παραδίδωμι and while here it is the passive voice in I Corinthians 11:23 it is a middle voice and that is very very unusual - you see the middle voice is the voice of benefit and who would ever be benefited by being betrayed?

Unless all is working together for God's greater and perfect plan.

And in that, regardless of the hidden and conflicting agendas, we can take great comfort.

Luke 22:23

And they began to discuss among themselves which one of them it might be who was going to do this thing.

Some comments from Scripture:

Mark 14:19, They began to be grieved and to say to Him one by one, Surely not I?

Mark 14:29-31, But Peter said to Him, Even though all may fall away, yet I will not. And Jesus said to him, Truly I say to you, that you yourself this very night, before a cock crows twice, shall three times deny Me.

But Peter kept saying insistently, Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You! And they all were saying the same thing, too.

Yet before the night was past all these who boasted of their loyalty and faithfulness ran away and Peter denied the Lord three times.

Boasting of what we will or will not do means very little.

It is when the pressure is on that we will see what we really are.

Luke 22:24

And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest.

Notice the word ALSO, this is the simple conjunction *kai* and yet used here it means that something other than what has been mentioned previously also occurred and in a similar way.

It can be translated in addition to, along with, besides and as well.

So that little word is used to show that this dispute is another dispute.

There was a dispute about who would betray the Lord and now they are in a dispute about who will be the greatest.

It is the Greek word φιλονεικία, (fil-on-e-kia) *love of strife*.

Found only here in the NT, a dispute.

There were really getting into this argument to the point where they were loving the points they were making, the arguments they thought they were winning.

So now follow with me what is happening - they have been told that this is the last time they will be with the Lord Jesus as they had been for the last three years.

They have been told of his impending arrest and death.

They have been told that one of them will betray Him - and yet they are arguing about which one of them was the greatest.

Jesus was about to descend into the deepest humiliation, sorrow and shame – the greatest agony and death. Yet among the disciples, there was strife as to which of them would be the greatest.

Luke 9:46-48, And an argument arose among them as to which of them might be the greatest.

But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side, and said to them, Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for he who is least among you, this is the one who is great.

Listen to what Professor Albert Barnes says of this dispute: *Nothing can be more humiliating than that the disciples should have had such contentions, and in such a time and place. That just as Jesus was contemplating his own death, and laboring to prepare them for it, they should strive and contend about office and rank, shows how deeply seated is the love of power; how ambition will find its way into the most secret and sacred places; and how even the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus are sometimes actuated by this most base and wicked feeling.*

This should be a warning to us that we can fall into this kind of arguments and contention and

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strife and dispute and division ever so easily and do so in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ who humbled Himself to be our Savior, to die on the Cross for us.

Luke 22:25

And He said to them, The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called Benefactors.

Kings of the Gentiles is a general designation but the use of the word Benefactors is specific.

This word in the Greek which is *εὐεργεταί* (ev-er-getai) was actually the surname of a powerful family of the Ptolemies of Egypt who had had influence and control of vast lands in Israel since the days following Alexander the Great (Cleopatra was a Ptolemy).

And this family was known for the centuries long disputes they had regarding their land holdings.

Even with Roman conquest the Romans would distribute land to wealthy families and the Ev-er-getai's were a wealthy family, to control.

So this reference is to those who argue argue and argue about land.

In contrast look at what the lord says.

Luke 22:26

But not so with you, but let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant.

Value and importance in the family of God is not measured by being the greatest but by being one who serves.

This is a contradiction to human thinking but not to divine thinking, Luke 13:30

And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last.

And then we see that the Lord Himself is an example of this.

Luke 22:27,28

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.

And you are those who have stood by Me in My trials;

This has been the case, they have, in the past, stood with Him.

But on this night they will run away, hiding, even denying Him.

Luke 22:29,30

and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant (this is grace) you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Two weeks ago we noted that the Last Supper ended the Jewish Passover and began the Lord's Supper, our communion service.

We also observed that this was a time of remembrance and a time of fellowship.

Now this morning as we prepare to celebrate the Lord's Supper we are going to look at the emblems and what they represent but also we are going to examine a third element of the Lords' Supper.

But let's first review what the Lord did that night.

Now this is the last time he would be with his disciples prior to the Cross.

From John 13:1 we see that he desired to be with them because He loved them.

His agenda was to enjoy their fellowship and to encourage them.

The Fathers agenda was to prepare His Son for sacrifice.

Judas's agenda was to force the hand of Jesus to proclaim Himself as the king.

And he thought he could get Jesus to do this by betraying Him to the Jewish leaders.

If this happened as planned Judas would also be in a position close to Jesus and therefore close to power.

Satan's agenda was to destroy the Savior and while causing His death by stoning, prevent Him from going to the Cross.

The disciples had an agenda also, they wanted to promote themselves and see which of them was the greatest disciples.

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But Jesus is here, in humility and as a servant, and He will give these disciples something they do not deserve, nor do we.

He will give them a way that they might remember Him and fellowship with Him.

While visiting the ocean one day, the famous English art critic Duveen was unable to persuade his little daughter to join him in the chilly water.

So he built a fire, heated a teakettle of water, and with a great flourish poured the steaming liquid into the ocean.

Then the child ran gleefully into the water without further hesitation. This father's trick, while harmless, is an illustration of how Satan often works.

He mixes a small amount of truth into an ocean of falsehood, and people wade into it, not realizing how they are being deceived.

Luke 22:31-34

Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat;

but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.

And he said to Him, Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!

And He said, I say to you, Peter, the cock will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me.

We begin our study then with four principles.

Satan hates you and has a plan for your spiritual demise

Satan is constantly attacking the Christian and the Church.

This is a spiritual battle and an invisible war.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6, For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience (in ourselves), whenever your obedience is complete.

Since the battle is invisible we must rely upon one who can see the invisible and that one is the Holy Spirit.

This battle is fought in three theaters of operation.

In heaven

In our environment.

The World, our nation, our government, our church, our relationships, our families.

In the soul of the individual believer, and here is where we will see the attack that Satan wages against Peter

The only way we can ever withstand Satan's attacks is through dependence upon the power of God.

This power was demonstrated in the incarnation of Jesus Christ and is now ours.

Jesus Christ won the strategic victory at the Cross but Satan still attacks and will win tactical victories whenever the believer or the church relies upon the power of the flesh rather than the power of God.

We are most vulnerable to Satan's attack when we are putting ourselves up.

When pride over takes us.

When we get arrogant in our Spiritual life we lose humility, and when we lose humility we lose the faith dependence we must have in all the power and provision of the person of God.

Throughout history we see that there are times when Satan has made a demand on God to attack and test a believer.

One thing we must understand is that the child of God in every dispensations is protected by the Father.

Any attack of Satan can only come by way of God's permission.

Now why would God allow this?

Three reasons

To prove to us that we can depend upon God in even the most adverse circumstances.

As Jesus said to Peter - *that your faith no may not fail.*

Secondly, that we can be a witness to others of the power of God's deliverance.

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That others will see that we all can depend upon God by faith

And thirdly, to prove to Satan that man will fail but man will also return to his Creator, something Satan refused to do.

So to continue the resolve of the Angelic Conflict.

And we see Satan calling the name of one of God's own through out the Bible.

It began in the garden when Satan, as the serpent, came against the Woman and enticed and tempted her to disobey God.

But the most vivid account of Satan calling the name of a child of God is found in the book of Job.

Comments from the Book of Job

Job 1:6,7, Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

And the LORD said to Satan, From where do you come? Then Satan answered the LORD and said, From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.

Compare:

1 Peter 5: 8, Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Job 1:8,9, And the LORD said to Satan, Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.

Then Satan answered the LORD, Does Job fear God for nothing?

Satan really put forth the case of legalism.

That Job obeys God because of what his obedience can get from God.

Job 1:10-12, Hast Thou not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

But put forth Thy hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse Thee to Thy face.

Then the LORD said to Satan, Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put

forth your hand on him. So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.

So Satan wages the attack.

The Sabeans attack and kill Job's servants and livestock

Fire from heaven came and destroyed more servants and the flocks of sheep

The Chaldeans attacked in three waves and killed more servants and the camels

Then a wind came and destroyed the house with all of Job's seven sons and three daughters

Job's Reaction.

Job 1:20-22, Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped.

And he said, Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.

Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

But Satan Demands More.

Job 2:3-6, And the LORD said to Satan, Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to ruin him without cause.

And Satan answered the LORD and said, Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life.

However, put forth Thy hand, now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse Thee to Thy face.

So the LORD said to Satan, Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.

Satan's Second Attack.

Satan attacked Job's body, boils, open wounds from head to foot

Ended up at the ash heap since that was a place that was sterile

His wife tells him to *curse God and die.*

Job's Reaction:

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Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

We often think that the attacks of Satan ended there, but they did not. They continued as Job's three friends came to him to supposedly comfort him.

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar: And with friends like these you do not need enemies

Each one of these friends set up a **sylogism**.

All suffering is punishment for sin

Job is suffering

Job must have sinned

But the premise is wrong, all suffering is not punishment for sin, the innocent do suffer, there is undeserved suffering.

One thing very interesting, they never address Job by name - Satan did, in heaven before God but they never do.

Their professed friendship is fake.

IN JOB 25 we find a summary of the comfort these friends have to give.

Job 25:1-6, Then Bildad the Shuhite answered,

Dominion and awe belong to Him Who establishes peace in His heights.

Is there any number to His troops? And upon whom does His light not rise?

How then can a man be just with God? Or how can he be clean who is born of woman?

If even the moon has no brightness And the stars are not pure in His sight,

How much less man, that maggot, And the son of man, that worm!

But I am a worm, and not a man, A reproach of men, and despised by the people.

WELL EVENTUALLY THE PRESSURE is too much for Job and he lets out with his innermost feelings and here we see that while the suffering had nothing to do with him, he does like all men have sin in his life and the sin is pride.

And Elihu really hits the theological nail on the head with the hammer of truth in

Job 35:1-7

Then Elihu continued and said,

Do you think this is according to justice? Do you say, My righteousness is more than God's?

For you say, What advantage will it be to You? What profit shall I have, more than if I had sinned?

I will answer you, And your friends with you.

Look at the heavens and see; And behold the clouds-- they are higher than you.

If you have sinned, what do you accomplish against Him? And if your transgressions are many, what do you do to Him?

If you are righteous, what do you give to Him? Or what does He receive from your hand?

And then without even missing a beat, at Chapter 38 God begins to speak.

And the basic message is Job, who are you?

Where were you when God created all things and where are you now as He holds the universe in place?

Look at Job 40:2

Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it.

And here is the good news.

Job gets the point!

Read Job 42:1-6

And Job is now someplace he has never been before, he is humbly before God trusting him.

Now all is restored to Job, he gets back double everything except his children since he has seven sons and three daughters who are with the Lord in Paradise.

Job has gained far more than more sheep, camels, and cattle.

He has gained a life of faith.

Again reading Luke 22:31-34

Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat;

but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.

And he said to Him, Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!

And He said, I say to you, Peter, the cock will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me.

These were unsettling words, especially for Peter who thought himself to be far more loyal than any of the other disciples.

We see five things in the Lord's statement.

It was a word of warning.

Satan had requested (perhaps for a long time) permission to test the disciples and to attempt to destroy their faith.

These verses contain a specific prophecy.

Verse 32 does not say that Peter may fail or may be tempted to deny the Lord but that he will fail.

We see a prayer for Peter in this prophecy.

The Lord prays that when this does happen that Peter's faith will not fail.

He does not pray that he not fail.

That is going to happen but the prayer is for what happens when he fails, when Peter is out of fellowship through sin.

These verses also contain a promise.

While the sin was inevitable (not excusable nor unavoidable) because of Peter's pride, the sin was not the issue.

The forgiveness and restoration were the critical points.

So the promise is that if (conditional) his faith not fail he will be restored.

These verse also contain a prediction of service.

Notice the Lord's words, that *when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.*

We often think that the one returning from failure is the one who needs to be strengthened but here Peter is told that he will have a ministry among the disciples.

Notice also: He is not told he will have to do penance, or wait until he serves or ministers again.

Restoration is grace and grace is complete and grace overcomes the shame and the guilt and it is

God who put the believer who has failed back into to service.

A Threefold Description of Peter's Failure.

It was not just an individual act of denial.

In Matthew 26:31 we have observed that all the disciples were to fail that night, the night of the arrest of Jesus. All would run away.

Peter's denial was no mere act of cowardice.

While all the disciples ran away, Peter (the oldest) and John (the youngest) turned back and at a distance followed the temple guard and Jesus to the house of Annas the political boss of Jerusalem.

So up to a point Peter is showing great bravery.

Peter's denial evidenced a temporary failure of his faith, but not a denial of his faith.

Peter's sin of denying the Lord was a sin that resulted from a lack of faith.

If we trace all sin back to its source we would have to lay the blame for sin at the door of our own failure to trust God in all things.

Faith can falter, faith can fail, but we can renew our faith.

And notice how important that is.

So important that in the midst of Peter's failure the Lord prays for him, prays that his faith not fail.

Notice again v 32

but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.

The greatest tragedy in this would be that Peter's faith fail and he never recover.

That Peter would sin, fall, fail, was inevitable.

But even in the worse failure there is recovery - turned again is **ἐπιστρέφω** and is a synonym of repentance.

1 Thess. 1:9, How you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God.

Principle

When we sin we fail in our faith but failure does not need to be collapse.

Once out of fellowship the only thing we can do is to trust God.

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When out of fellowship we would not even desire to get back into fellowship without the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit.

As the Holy Spirit convicts we must recognize or admit our sins.

If we do not this is resisting the Holy Spirit.

When out of fellowship the only thing we can do is that which is totally non-meritorious and the only thing we can do that is not based on our ability, merit, or knowledge is to trust God, that is faith.

Faith at that point looks to the Cross for the recognition of forgiveness and also looks to God with faith, knowing that He desire you to be back in fellowship with Him.

For faith to fail would me that there would be no coming back, no return.

That is why the Lord prayed that Peter's faith not fail.

And the good news is that Peter did return to fellowship.

He failed, he ran, he hid, but on resurrection morning he was running to the tomb to see that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

Now how did God use Peter's Failure.

How does He use our failure?

The Christian's failure is never purposed for his destruction, but for his development. This is clearly stated in the Word of God,

Psalm 37:23-24, The steps of a man are established by the Lord; and He delights in his way. When he falls, he shall not be hurled headlong; because the Lord is the One who holds his hand

Psalm 145:14, The Lord sustains all who fall, and raises up all who are bowed down

Proverbs 24:16, For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, but the wicked stumble in time of calamity

This is why Satan can achieve God's purposes without knowing what he is doing. Satan thinks that causing a Christian to sin brings about his destruction. God allows Satan to promote sin and failure, purposing it as a means of our development and strengthening.

What did Peter learn from his failure?

Peter learned he could not trust himself.

When Peter denied the Lord three times he learned that God's work cannot be accomplished by resolution, determination or self-effort – not even by a positive mental attitude. God's work can only be done in God's way – by distrusting in self, trusting in Him, and depending upon His enablement.

Peter's fall was a death blow to his pride and arrogance.

Proverbs 29:23, A man's pride will bring him low, but a humble spirit will obtain honor.

James 4:6, God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble

There is no cure for pride quite so effective as that humiliation of failure. And there is no quality more necessary for leadership than that of humility.

Peter gained a deeper appreciation of the depths of the grace of God.

Human failure opens wide the door through which grace alone can enter. In the midst of shameful failure, Peter found forgiveness and restoration. God's favor was not granted as a reward for faithfulness, but because of failure. Here is grace greater than all our sins.

Finally, Peter's failure enabled him to be much more understanding and gentle with those under his authority who would fail also.

It is difficult to be hard on those who have the same weaknesses with which we struggle.

In short, Peter's sin did not impair his ministry; it prepared him for ministry, by teaching him not to trust in self, but in God. It gave him even greater motivation for service.

This passage is undergirded by a number of principles pertaining to sin and failure.

Our every step, even our stumbling and sin, is included in the purpose and plan of God for our lives. While our motives may be wrong, and our actions displeasing to God, nevertheless God has included them in His plan to display His glory and to bring about what is for our ultimate good (Genesis 50:20; Psalm 37:23-24; Romans 8:28).

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Sin, for the Christian, is inevitable in that we will never in this life completely overcome it (Romans 7; 1 John 1:8-10; 2:1-2, etc.).

While sin is, in a sense, inevitable, it is always avoidable and it is never excusable. God never makes us sin (James 1:13). Satan cannot make us sin, though he may tempt us (Luke 22:31-32). Neither do circumstances compel us to sin (1 Corinthians 10:13). We are always morally responsible for sin.

For the Christian, all sins are forgiven, but there are still painful consequences (2 Samuel 11-12; Luke 22:61, etc.).

Sin, while painful can also be profitable.

God causes all things (even our sin) to work together for good to those who love God ... (Romans 8:28). No man's sin has ever kept God from realizing His purposes for that man's life (cf. Jonah, Abraham, David, Peter, etc.).

Two things to remember, in life it is not the things you remember that count but the things you can never forget.

First, we should expect failure.

We are sinner, howbeit, saved sinners, still sinners and sinners are really only good at doing one thing, sinning.

Sin in life is inevitable but the failure of sin need not result in the collapse of our lives.

Second, we must learn to view failure as God does.

All sin is an abomination to God and yet sin was the focal point of the Cross.

For you all sins are forgiven, past, present, and future.

You need not fear God nor fear the penalty of sin, you are forgiven.

Sin, although a failure of faith, can work in you to draw you closer to the One who sent His Son to die for your sins.

We are all sinners and we are all forgiven by the work of the grace of God.

Luke 22:39

And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him.

We see in the Gospels many times that the Lord retreated to pray, this was his custom, or εθoς, or habit

Mathew 14:23, Mark 1:35, 6:46, Luke 5:16, 6:12, 9:18, 9:28, 11:1

The mount of Olives is directly east of the Jerusalem and the Temple Mount [[See Map](#)]

Luke 22:40,41

And when He arrived at the place, He said to them, Pray that you may not enter into temptation.

And He withdrew from them about a stones throw, and He knelt down and began to pray,

We see three things in these two verse, first the Lord tells His disciples to pray, secondly He gives them a reason to pray and thirdly, He himself goes off alone to pray.

We see that there is the mandate to pray, that there are reasons to pray, and that even the Lord, God who came in the flesh, prayed.

So lets first add to this mandate to pray and ask ourselves **why should we pray?**

Jesus said *Men ought always to pray* (Luke 18:1).

In I Thess 5:17 the mandate is to Pray *without ceasing*.

So we pray because the Lord tells us to pray.

Because we are asked to Pray by others

Because our Lord and the Holy Spirit prays for us.

John 17:9, 15, and 20, Romans 8:26

Because others pray for us.

1 Thess. 3:10, And if others are earnestly praying for us should we also not pray for ourselves.

Prayer is the way to receive the good things God has for you and wants to give you.

Things you would otherwise not receive.

You too often have not because you ask not.

There is great joy, inner happiness and peace, with prayer.

Prayer can unlock the treasures of God's wisdom.

James 1:5-6

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Prayer can save you from troubles and temptations.

Prayer is how we tap into the omnipotent power of God: Jeremiah 33:3

Prayer is a way to avoid worry and other M.A. sins.

Philippians 4:6, Worry about nothing; but in every thing by prayer

We pray because we love others and want the very best for them.

Prayer is an expression of our love for others.

We pray because we know that in praying we delight the Lord our God.

Proverbs 15:8, The prayer of the upright is his delight.

We pray because it is a sin not to pray.

1 Samuel 12:23, (Samuel) far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray

We pray because Jesus, while on earth in his humanity, often prayed to the Father.

And if Jesus needed to pray, then we should pray without ceasing.

But now of course that looks at the reasons to pray.

As the Lord said to the disciples, *pray that enter not into temptation.*

But then we have to ask what do we ask?

In James 4:3 we find that.

You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

So we can ask amiss -

But is every prayer that is not exactly according to God's specific and perfect will a prayer in which we have asked amiss?

Look again to our passage in Luke 22, verse 42

Luke 22:42

saying, Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done.

Lets just take the heart of that prayer - remove this cup from Me.

I think that even with our limited theological understanding of soteriology (the doctrine of salvation) we can see that this is a request that is not in keeping with God's will.

And of course dependence upon the will of God is included as a prelude and a postlude to the actual request.

But why did Jesus even pray this prayer?

Why did He even make this request?

That is pretty much why we have these sixty-six books of the Bible isn't it, to teach us something.

And here is what we are being taught.

That not all prayers are going to be answered, regardless of who prays them.

Why prayers are not answered (That is in the way we wanted them to be answered)

First we must recognize that when we talk about answers to prayer we are talking about prayers that ask for something either for others or ourselves.

Luke 22:43-46

Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.

And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

And when He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow,

and said to them, Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

There was small town in which there were no liquor stores or bars.

Eventually, however, a bar was opened right on Main Street.

Members of one of the churches in the area were so disturbed that they conducted several all night prayer meetings, and asked the Lord to burn down that den of iniquity. Lightning struck the tavern a short time later, and it was completely destroyed by fire.

The owner, knowing how the church people had prayed, sued them for the damages. His attorney claimed that their prayers had caused the loss. The

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congregation, on the other hand, hired a lawyer and fought the charges saying their prayers did not do this.

After much deliberation the judge found in favor of the bar owner and in his findings declared,

It's the opinion of the court that wherever the guilt may lie, the tavern keeper is the one who really believes in prayer while the church members do not!

In our passage we are studying the Lord Jesus, the night prior to the crucifixion.

He is in the garden and he is in prayer.

Luke 22:40-44

And when He arrived at the place, He said to them, Pray that you may not enter into temptation.

And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray,

saying, Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done.

Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.

And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

The Lord tells His disciples to pray. He gives them a reason to pray. The Lord himself prays.

As we examined how the Lord prayed we found that He made a request that included a petition and a desire.

The petition was not answered and yet the desire was - to be a part of the Father's perfect plan and perfect will.

And we can see this same pattern in our own prayers.

There are times when both the petition and desire are answered, when petition is answered and the desire is not, when neither the petition or the desire are answered and then, as here with the Lord in the garden, when the petition is not answered and yet the desire is.

Of course I hope that this study will motivate and encourage you to pray more but for many, the

question that is in your soul is *why are my prayers not being answered?*

And I would not doubt that you have put yourself against these reasons I have just given and you still are wondering - *why are my prayers not being answered?*

So let's look at what I might call the advanced doctrine of why prayers are not answered - three reasons.

First, God has **something far far better for you** and that better thing would be precluded if He gave you that which you were praying for.

Our lives are a tapestry that we see from the inside out, or the from the back.

And just like a tapestry we more often than not do see what the final outcome will be.

We may question why a particular color thread is being used or why the pattern look like it does.

The back of a tapestry looks like nothing more than a lot of random colors and a lot of knots.

When we look at our lives we see them like the back of a tapestry and all those knots are like God's answers to some of our prayers - not.

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.

Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.

Too often we think we know what we need, what is best, and do not understand why the Lord tells us to wait.

You may laugh at this but often our prayers are not answered because we are not praying.

We may say we pray, we may give a moment's attention to the prayer, but then we are distracted.

And there are two problems in this.

First, I believe our prayers take shape as we pray.

We are spending time with the Lord in prayer, our initial request may even be rather self-centered.

It may not be looking ahead to God's plan.

But as we pray our prayers come more and more in line with God's plan.

In 2 Corinthians 12 Paul got hit with the thorn in the flesh and in v 8 we read.

Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

Now I do not believe that Paul just reiterated the same prayer over and over again but rather prayed in such a way that his prayer came into line with God's will.

Lord take it away --- I don't like this do something --- Lord, you will be done

Another aspect of not praying is that when we do pray the Holy Spirit prays for us and in like manner, when we do not pray, He does not pray for us.

Lets turn to Romans 8:26

And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;

and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

The spirit also *HELPS*: The word *HELP* is a triple compound.

συν + αντι + λαμβανω and is used only twice in the NT, here and in Luke 10:40 where Martha asks for help in the kitchen from Mary.

The word means to come to the aid of another, helping them bear a load but not taking the load from them. Means to help but not to take over or eliminate.

But why not just forget about prayer since ours our done out of ignorance anyway?

Christians need to pray as part of the process of progressive sanctification (our spiritual growth).

Our prayers express our faith in Him and in His will.

In God's sovereignty He has conditioned many of His actions on human asking.

He will wait upon us to pray with faith so that when Divine Action does occur we recognize it as from Him.

The Holy Spirit only prays for us as a helper, and thus, only when we pray.

If we do not pray, He does not intercede for us.

His prays are the course corrections to our requests.

We may not know if what we are praying is what God wants.

But we have the assurance the the Holy Spirit takes our prayers and through His sovereignty and omniscience, brings them into line with God's eternal and perfect will.

And if you do not pray the Holy Spirit is not praying for you.

Now there is also a third advanced reason our prayers are not answered.

Remember how I mentioned God is weaving our life like a weaver weaves a tapestry?

Well sometimes our prayers, often our prayers!, deal with another person's tapestry.

You see we may be praying about something and without even knowing it our prayer may so strongly involve someone else for whom God's plan is being perfected that He says no to us, to say yes to his greater plan for them.

In other words, His saying no to us has nothing to do with us.

A seventeenth-century Roman Catholic Frenchman named Francois Fenelon wrote about prayer in the following way and although written centuries ago, it has an undeniable ring of relevance:

"Tell God all that is in your heart, as one unloads one's heart, its pleasures and its pains, to a dear friend.

Tell Him your troubles, that He may comfort you; tell Him your joys, that He may sober them; tell Him your longings, that He may purify them; tell Him your dislikes, that He may help you to conquer them, talk to Him of your temptations, that He may shield you from them; show Him the wounds of your heart, that He may heal them; lay bare your indifference to good, your depraved tastes for evil, your instability.

"Tell Him how self- love makes you unjust to others, how vanity tempts you to be insincere, how pride disguises you to yourself and to others.

"If you thus pour out all your weaknesses, needs, troubles, there will be no lack of what to say.

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"You will never exhaust the subject. It is continually being renewed.

"People who have no secrets from each other never want for subjects of conversation. They do not weigh their words, for there is nothing to be held back, neither do they seek for something to say.

"They talk out of the abundance of the heart, without consideration they say just what they think.

"Blessed are they who attain to such familiar, unreserved intercourse with God."

I once saw a neat little sign in a principal's office that stated, *In the event of nuclear attack, fire, or earthquake, the ban on school prayer is temporarily lifted.*

Hebrews 5:7, In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.

God heard the prayers of the Lord Jesus Christ and yet at the end, in the garden the Father had to say no to the Son.

The cup of the cross of man's sins could not pass from him.

So lets look at what I might call the advanced doctrine of why prayers are not answered - three reasons.

First, God has **something far far better for you** and that better thing would be precluded if He gave you that which you were praying for.

Our lives are a tapestry that we see from the inside out, or the from the back.

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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.

Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.

Too often we think we know what we need, what is best, and do not understand why the Lord tells us to wait.

Luke 22:43

Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.

Here we see what God did for His Son, His only begotten Son, His beloved Son when He had to say *no* to His prayer.

He sent an angel to strengthen Him.

ενισχυσω (en-is-ke-uō) and is only found here and in Acts where Paul was strengthened by food.

So this was a physical strengthening.

As Jesus faced the Cross He was given divine strength through an angel to endure.

Principle

Even when God says *NO* He still gives - Because He love you.

There are times we pray contrary to God's will. A young woman on her wedding day prayed.

Dear God.

I can hardly believe that this is my wedding day. I know I haven't been able to spend much time with You lately, with all the rush of getting ready for today, and I'm sorry.

I guess, too, that I feel a little guilty when I try to pray about all this, since Larry still isn't a Christian.

But oh, Father, I love him so much, what else can I do?

I just couldn't give him up.

Oh, You must save him, some way, somehow.

You know how much I've prayed for him, and the way we've discussed the gospel together.

I've tried not to appear too religious, I know, but that's because I didn't want to scare him off.

Yet he isn't antagonistic and I can't understand why he hasn't responded.

Oh, if he only were a Christian.

Dear Father, please bless our marriage.

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I don't want to disobey You, but I do love him and I want to be his wife, so please be with us and please don't spoil my wedding day.

That sounds like a sincere, earnest prayer, does it not?

But if it is stripped of its fine, pious language, it is really saying something like this:

Dear Father, I don't want to disobey You, but I must have my own way at all costs.

For I love what You do not love, and I want what You do not want.

So please be a good God and deny Yourself, and move off Your throne, and let me take over.

If You don't like this, then all I ask is that You bite Your tongue and say or do nothing that will spoil my plans, but let me enjoy myself.

On a gloomy day in 1857 a man in New York City by the name of Jeremiah Lantheir scanned the morning newspaper as he rode to his office.

He was distressed to read that the depression gripping the nation was causing fear and panic among the people. Factories were stopping production and thousands were unemployed. Although Lantheir was not a big industrialist, but only a clerk, he had one important distinction.

He was a man who had great faith in God!

Concerned with the grim economic situation, he sent a note to all his business acquaintances, telling them that each day at noon a prayer meeting would be held in his office.

With high hopes he arranged 20 chairs in a circle, but the first day no one came.

All alone he prayed fervently that God would bring about a great change in him and in America.

The second day he was encouraged, for a few friends joined him.

A short time later a similar gathering was started on Wall Street, another on Williams Street, and finally a fourth on Broadway.

Then like wildfire the movement spread to all parts of the country.

The moral tone of the nation was affected, and there was a great upsurge in the spiritual life of the people.

Some historians say that this effort of united prayer and faith was what allowed us as a nation to survive what most nations do not survive, a Civil War which started in 1860.

Luke 22:43

Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.

Last week we noted that God never says *no* to the prayers of His children without supplying something else.

Here His dearly beloved Son prayed for some other way, other than the Cross, to fulfill the Father's plan of salvation.

God had to say *no* but in saying *no* gave the Lord an angel to στρενυτηεν Him.

The word for strength here is only found in this passage and in Acts 9:19 and means to strengthen physically.

In Acts with food and here by the angel who I believe stayed with the humanity of Christ up to and through the Cross.

Luke 22:44

And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

With the saying of *no*, there was agony.

Even when God does what is best for His plan and best for us, the doing of it may not be easy.

This form of the word *agony* is a word found only here in the NT.

It is αγωνια which is the same as our word.

It means to struggle from deep emotions.

The humanity of Jesus Christ accepted His destiny to go to go to the Cross but He continued to pray and this was a struggle.

He prayed *very fervently* - an adjective to show intensity and then an adverb of intensity.

Very strong statement.

Then we have a description of the intensity.

His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

This statement gives rise to two possibilities.

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This could be a cause of what is medically called thrombosis which is taken from the Greek word for drops.

A Dr. Mead who has done a great deal of medical research regarding the death Christ died states the following.

Cases sometimes happen in which, through mental pressure, the pores may be so dilated that the blood may issue from them; so that there may be a bloody sweat.

He gives an instance from Thuanus (De Thou) of an Italian gentleman being so distressed with the fear of death that his body was covered with a bloody sweat.

And so it is possible that blood mingled with the perspiration and fell from His brow.

Another possibility is that the sweat fell heavily from His brow as would an open wound.

The word like is the Greek adverb ὡσει and means *similar, about, as though or as it were.*

So perhaps the comparison Luke is making is that the sweat dropped from His brow in the same manner drops of blood would fall from His brow.

I perhaps favor this position more.

But most commentaries spend so much time discussing and defending one of these positions that they miss a more important part of this.

Jesus in His humanity was about to do His work - the work of going to the Cross and dying for man's sins.

He must do this because of the fall, so the cause of this work goes back to Genesis chapter three.

So consider this, it is His humanity that must do this work and in Genesis 3:19, as part of the curse on man for sin, man would do his work by the sweat of his brow.

I believe Luke, under the inspiration of the HS, includes this to show us that this is the humanity of Christ preparing to do the work that only the humanity of Christ can do.

And He will do it by the sweat of His brow.

Luke 22:45

And when He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow,

At the first of this verse we see the Lord rose from prayer - He has prayed, He has been strengthened by God, and it is now the time to do His work.

The grammar of the word indicates that He was caused to stand, and this would show us that His time for prayer has ended and now it is time for action.

Principle

Proper prayer precedes proper action.

In verse 40 the Lord has asked his disciples to pray.

Pray that you may not enter into temptation.

He now returns to them and finds them not praying but sleeping.

And we are told that they are sleeping from sorrow.

The proposition *from* is ἀπο and means because of or as a result of.

So their sorrow cause them to sleep rather than to pray.

And yet earlier that evening the Lord warned them that they would have this sorrow and yet also gave them a promised that should have comforted them to the point of seeing that this sorrow was not necessary.

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.

You can sleep for many reasons.

The best of course is because you are tired, but people also sleep out of apathy, out of indifference, and out of depression.

And that is what we see here, a sleeping out of depression, out of sorrow.

The word sorrow is a Greek word we are familiar with λυπης. Plato used this word for distress, depression, especially when facing a sad circumstance.

In II Corinthians 2:7 it is used as it is here, to despair to the point of giving up and that is what we see here, the disciples have given up.

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They failed in their faith, in their lack of faith there was fear, and in their fear there is sorrow, and from sorrow sleep.

They were depressed at the thought of the Lord leaving them and they did not believe the promise of the Lord had given them so instead of praying away their sorrow they were trying to sleep it off.

And the Lord tells them what He previously told them.

Luke 22:46

and said to them, Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

There was no reason for sleep, there is great reason for prayer.

That they enter not into temptation.

As they would face the leaving of Jesus Christ, their friend - as they would face His arrest, His trials, and as they would face His death on a Roman Cross the potential for temptation was great.

And we know already that Peter would fall to the temptation to deny His Lord and that all the disciples would fall to the temptations of fear and run away.

Pray that you not enter into temptation -
NOW WHAT KIND OF A prayer is that?

It is a prayer of faith.

In Mark 14:38 we have some additional words from Christ at this time.

Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

So this is a prayer that is offered at a time of strong spirit and it anticipates a time of weak flesh.

We all know that there will be temptations that will come our way and we also know those things to which we are especially vulnerable.

When we are strong in the Lord, that is walking by faith, by the Spirit, and by truth, we should pray anticipating those times of weakness.

These disciples were with the Lord but soon as we will see, He will be taken away from them and then they will face temptations - they needed to

ask God for continued strength that they might endure and ask now.

Isn't there a saying about when you are in alligators up to your neck it is not the time to think about how to drain the swamp?

In the same way, when we are faced with temptations that attack our weaknesses it is not the time to pray for strength, we should be aware of our weakness and praying prior to the the problem of temptation.

Now as we draw our study on prayer to a close, at least for now, let's look at some short principles regarding prayer.

We are going to look at the actions of two men and the response to those actions by our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is indeed the tale of two men, Judas and Peter.

Two men who were afraid.

Dr. Edward Weeks put our attitude regarding fear this way.

To live with fear and not be afraid is the final test of maturity.

Luke 22:47,48

While He was still speaking, behold, a multitude came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him.

But Jesus said to him, Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?

A number of observations can be made from these verses.

Judas had betrayed Jesus to the religious leaders who were able to enlist the aid of the Temple guard in the arrest.

John 18:3 tells us that this multitude was made up of the officers of the chief priests, called the servants of the court, and a band of soldiers who would have been the Temple guard, who would have been Levites.

Some suppose as many as 300 armed soldiers came to arrest Christ and if the religious leaders feared the people this number may not be exaggerated.

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They came well armed expecting to have to take Jesus by force, but the Scriptures predicted, more than 700 years before this night that the Messiah was.

Isaiah 53:7, 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.

The signal that Judas arranged to identify Jesus was a kiss.

A common old practice and even in European countries today.

A man kissing a man on the cheek as a form of greeting.

This was an expression of hospitality, welcome, appreciation, and friendship.

But here, this warm and friendly greeting, was twisted and perverted and made into a covert signal to expose the alleged criminal, Jesus.

Principle

Evil has no boundaries in its working of evil, there is no restraint, no common courtesy, no integrity or valor.

Evil will use anything, twist even that which is beautiful, to achieve its sinister ends.

A kiss of greeting becomes a prelude to death.

Judas also calls the Lord RABBI (Mark 14:45), which means *My Master*, a term of respect and yet there is not respect or honor given in this betrayal.

There is only gross contempt.

These two last observations demonstrate two principles.

FIRST: In his hardness of heart, with the soul covered over with scar tissue, there was nothing that Judas would not do or use to achieve his evil goal.

When scar tissue takes over the soul, sensitivity is gone, love is perverted, anger becomes the impetus of life - and common values and common courtesy, respect, honor, and orientation to authority is gone.

We are later told by Paul to watch out for the person whose soul is damaged by the scars of sins.

Romans 16:17, Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those [mark them] who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

SECOND: The actions and words of Judas appeared to be cordial, warm, friendly, but behind them is a sinister plot to betray Christ.

The principle is that attitude, what is going on in the mind, is far more real than the words and works that we may see.

The facade of friendliness, this mask of manner, was there to hide the attitude of anger and hostility that led Judas to betray the Lord Jesus.

SO JUDAS had an attitude, an attitude that convinced him that what he was doing in betraying Christ was right.

In looking back history recognizes that Judas was thinking and doing evil in His betrayal of Christ.

BUT I WANT YOU TO KEEP ONE THING in mind over the next couple of weeks in our study of Luke - Judas, in the garden, in his kiss of betrayal did testify that he knew the Lord Jesus Christ.

He admitted that he knew Him and had been one of the disciples.

Luke 22:49

And when those who were around Him saw what was going to happen, they said, Lord, shall we strike with the sword?

Luke indicates that the eleven disciples were there with perhaps a few others.

I think young John-Mark was present that night.

They asked the Lord if they should attack with the sword - remember back in v 38 they told the Lord that they had two swords.

Here they are willing to use them against the army that came to arrest Christ.

This would have been a suicide mission if they had chosen to attack.

And before the Lord could even answer one of them did.

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Luke 22:50

And a certain one of them struck the slave (Malcus) of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

In John 18:10 we see that this disciple was Peter. Notice that he does not attack one of the soldiers or guards, but a slave.

Also note, I do not think he was trying to cut off an ear, but in missing the head, hit the ear.

Remember Peter was the disciple who was so bold in his proclaiming of his loyalty to the Lord.

And here is the first to strike out against overwhelming odds in defending the One who needed no defense.

But here we see Peter doing a number of things wrong, things very similar to what we do today. 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.

Peter was protecting one who needed no protection.

The Lord would potent Peter, not the other way around.

Peter was depending on the Sword rather than depending upon the Lord.

What do we depend upon other than the Lord?

What kind of sword have we hidden under our cloak that we rely upon, depend upon, rather than depending upon the Lord our God?

Peter did not understand God's will.

So he got out ahead of the plan of God.

He was wrong in attitude and in actions.

Luke 22:51

But Jesus answered and said, Stop! No more of this. And He touched his ear and healed him.

The first thing we need to see is that the Lord righted the wrong.

Peter's actions were wrong, wrong motive, wrong attitude, wrong action.

They resulted in the injury of another person.

A man who was nothing more than a slave.

An innocent so to speak.

And yet Jesus healed the man and restored his ear.

How many times in life do we do things that are - well, just stupid.

Maybe a reaction, maybe something into which goes little or no thought.

But we end up in the wrong and wronging others around us.

But here is the difference for you and for me - the Lord, our Lord is a great corrector of the stupid things that we do.

He can put the ears back on that we cut off.

Now back to Peter.

In many ways 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.

Judas' actions were cowardly, Peter's actions were courageous.

Both were wrong.

We so often look at what is done and ignore the reason behind it, the attitude that becomes the impetus for action.

For both these men, these disciples, there is the underlying motive of fear.

Judas feared what would become of him if Jesus did not proclaim Himself as the King of the Jews and Peter feared that he might deny, as the Lord predicted he would, his Savior and friend Jesus.

And how were they dealing with their fear? Not by faith, faith dispels fear, not by dependence upon the Lord, His Word, the work of the Holy Spirit.

We see in these examples the attempts we too use 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.

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We are living in the PRESENCE OF GOD and when we realize that we will become acutely aware of our weaknesses.

DAVID IN THE PSALMS even prayed for this.

**Psalm 139:23-24, Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts;
And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.**

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 12:10 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.

2 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?

The same thing that happened to Peter will happen to us.

Things will go from bad to worse and we could even end up denying the Lord we moments earlier were willing to defend with our very lives.

We will see as the passage continues, how courageous Peter quickly becomes a coward who denies that he ever even knew the Lord.

Satan put the pressure on Judas, he betrayed the Lord Jesus.

Satan put the pressure on Peter, he defended the Lord who did not need to be defended.

While we might see Peter's actions as noble and Judas' actions as cowardly, but both were wrong.

Satan had not won just one victory but two and another victory is just around the corner.

Both victories for Satan came because both Judas and Peter thought they had a better idea, a better plan.

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.

Luke 22:52

And Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come against Him, Have you come out with swords and clubs as against a robber?

While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power of darkness are yours.

Jesus notes how well armed they are and then ask if they thought they were coming to arrest a robber.

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The word ROBBER is was a word used for a zealot or political, revolutionary, criminal.

Now if they coming to arrest a Zealot then such a well armed force may be necessary, but He is a teacher, a Rabbi.

He then reminds them that for the past number of days he was with them daily in the Temple, why did they not arrest Him then.

We could add that every night during His stay in Jerusalem he was a Bethany, just a short distance away.

But they had no jurisdiction in Bethany.

So lack of jurisdiction, and fear of a public arrest, resulted in this secret, covert action.

Principle

When you have to start going to great lengths to cover yourself and what you do, just maybe something might be wrong!

Maybe the difficulty you might have in pulling something off is God's way of slowing you down so you can think and think and think in terms of God's word.

The Lord Jesus was making their evil scheme so apparent.

He was giving them the truth, something the religious leaders had a hard time swallowing.

But that is what the truth does!

It exposes the error, the sin, the evil, and just as the words of Christ did that night of His arrest, they continue to do so today.

They expose that which is false.

These two verses give us a very simple principle.

The Word of God will reveal the sin of man.

Luke 22:54

And having arrested Him, they led Him away, and brought Him to the house of the high priest (Annas who was the political boss); but Peter was following at a distance.

I think that little phrase,

But Peter was following Him at a distance,
is a description of many Christians today.

Indeed they follow Christ, their Lord, their Savior, but there is always a distance.

Not wanting to get too close, not wanting to be identified in such close association with Him.

But their fate is the same fate that would soon meet Peter.

He was put to the test and when questioned as to whether or not he knew this Jesus of Nazareth, he denied His Lord.

And what of the child of God today who follows but only at a distant, when the test comes he will run, he will hide, he will deny.

There is no need to keep your distance from the Lord who loves you so much.

Peter's denial of Christ did not occur in a vacuum.

It was not the impetus of others actions but rather the result of something else.

When we read of the denials we see that which is on the surface.

The overt, verbal sin of denial.

But as with all sin there is much that is not seen.

Like the iceberg in which only a minor part is visible above the surface, sin is the visible part of problems in the life of the believer.

Below the surface of Peter's sin we see the motives of sin.

A lack of security, a lack of faith in God, in God's plan and the promises of Christ, a lack of dependence upon the Savior who would die for sin - all resulting in FEAR.

Legalism would be content with eliminating the actions of sin without dealing with the attitudes that lie beneath the surface.

But controlling or containing action, even eliminating action does not reflect a changed life, only a controlled life.

It does not represent a life that has been conformed to the image of Christ but merely a life that conforms to acceptable limits of society and morality.

This incident, the denial of the Lord by Peter is found in all four Gospels.

The reason is not to humiliate Peter but to show us how the grace of God restores even we when we fail to the point of rejection of Jesus Christ.

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God forgives, restores, and cleanses and puts back to use.

Luke 22:54-58

And having arrested Him, they led Him away, and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance.

And after they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them.

And a certain servant-girl (she worked for the high priest), seeing him as he sat in the firelight, and looking intently at him, said, This man was with Him too.

But he denied it, saying, Woman, I do not know Him.

And a little later, another saw him and said, You are one of them too! But Peter said, Man, I am not!

Secondly he denied being a follower of Jesus, denial of ministry

Luke 22:59,60

And after about an hour had passed, another man began to insist, saying, Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too.

But Peter said, Man, I do not know what you are talking about.

Thirdly he denied he was ever with Jesus, denial relationship

So Peter denies his knowledge, his ministry, his personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

How did this happen?

How did this disciple who just a few hours earlier was sitting at the last supper telling Jesus that He would die with

Him, that all others may fall away but he would never do such a thing.

How is it that this disciple who stood with sword in hand against the multitude of the Temple guard to defend his Lord would now, just a brief time after that, deny any knowledge of knowing the one who would die for him?

We see this as a crisis.

I see these verses as being a communication of crisis.

First, the crisis of faith.

Peter's fear replacing what was once a strong faith that proclaimed it would never deny, and would even die for the Savior.

Secondly, there is the crisis of denial.

The failure of Peter, the strongest disciple, denying His Lord.

Thirdly, a crisis of conscience.

Peter, going from the courtyard, weeping bitterly, knowing that he had denied the one who would never deny Him.

Fourthly, it is a crisis of fear.

The fear that overwhelmed Peter was not the problem, the problem was that fear lead to failure rather than dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we look at this passage as a communication of crisis we have to consider what was the basis for the crisis.

And what we see as we look below the action to the motivation is fear.

Luke 22:61

And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, Before a cock crows today, you will deny Me three times.

He remembered - he remembered that this was a process that landed him into denial.

Luke 22:33

At the Supper that evening.

And he (Peter) said to Him, Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!

And then in the Garden.

Luke 22:50

And a certain one of them (Peter) struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

But remember something between the two.

The Lord asked His disciples to pray and yet we find in **Luke 22:45** that, *when He rose from prayer,*

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He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow.

And Peter, brave confident loyal Peter would have been one of those asleep.

And then as the Lord is arrested.

Luke 22:54 we that *Peter was following at a distance.*

And then the courtyard, the denials, the shame.

QUESTION.

WHERE DID ALL THIS fear begin?

Turn in your Bible to Genesis, Chapter three.

Gen. 3:6-10, When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, Where are you?

And he said, I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.

Principle

Fear began with the Fall

As soon as man fell through sin, fear became a core emotion of life.

Prior to the fall, in the presence of Christ, there was no fear.

There was no sin, there was no fear.

Man was on friendly terms with God.

Man knew he was secure in Christ and significant in his environment.

After Adam and the woman sinned they quickly adjusted to there new condition and there was still no fear.

But then the Lord came into the garden, and Adam was afraid - he experienced something that was unknown prior to that moment: FEAR

This new emotion occurred when Adam, in the presence of the Lord, recognized that he was nay-
ked.

But remember, he wasn't physically naked, that would be the Hebrew word AROM (he was wearing fig leaves) but here we have EROM which refers to a figurative or spiritual nakedness.

Man in his sinful condition, is afraid at the presence of the Lord.

But here is where it gets interesting - in our saved condition, the presence of the Lord dispels fear.

We can only imagine the feeling that attended Adam's emotion of fear.

He had broken a promise, he was disloyal, he had rejected God's provision, he was going die, he was embarrassed, he was shamed, his security was shattered, he was sure God would be angry, and yet he did not even know anger - he was sure the Lord would reject him.

And it is those same feeling that overwhelm us whenever we are afraid.

And that fear comes when we as believers are not in the presence of the Lord.

That is why is Genesis 26:24, Deuteronomy 31:6, I Chronicles 28:20, Isaiah 43:5, and Jeremiah 46:28 the Lord repeatedly tells his people.

Be not afraid, for I am with thee.

But Adam being our prototype in the flesh, in sin, and the power of the sin nature., which was pretty new to Adam, did not know that he need not fear.

So fear became the core motive of his actions.

And we are told what Adam did, he hid himself from the presence of the Lord.

He feared rejection so he ran.

Ultimately man's greatest fear comes at thought of rejection by God, but we also attach fear to those more tangible who might reject us.

Once fear consumes us we will be motivated by fear.

Fear is like a cancer cell that that intensifies and multiples.

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Soon we are consumed by fear and fear becomes a lifestyle.

When we have the core emotion of fear and that is not dispelled, the motive of fear will develop a core strategy to deal with the fear.

There are three basic strategies in dealing with fear.

We hide, we lie, we cry.

We can just give up and **cry**, often on the inside, allowing our emotions to run and ruin our lives.

Nehemiah, chapter 8.

The wall was built and the people went to Ezra wanting Bible class. And as he taught of their sins and the sins of their fathers, remember what they did - they wept at the revelation that God had rejected them.

But Nehemiah and the elders told them not to wept and mourn their failure, but celebrate the grace of God.

Adam **hid** in fear, so did Elijah, he ran and hid in a cave because he was afraid.

We may be able to run and hide from the people whom we fear but we can never hide from the omnipresence of the Lord

And then we **lie** - like Peter did in the courtyard of the high priest when a servant girl asked if he knew this Jesus who was on trial.

But what is the antidote to fear?

Faith, trusting in the Father!

Luke 22:62

And he went out and wept bitterly.

For most people this would be the end of the story.

In two ways.

If they were the ones having sinned so greatly they would run and never return to the spiritual life.

Their shame would keep them always from Jesus Christ.

In also today if most Christian saw a brother fall in such a way or even heard a faint rumor that one did, they would try to exclude him from the spiritual life.

But exclusion, rejection, separation is not the point of this story.

That is not the reason we read of Peter's failure in all of the Gospels.

The point is acceptance.

On that glorious day, the day of the Resurrection, only a few days following these dark hours of denial we read in Luke 24:34 that the Lord is risen and has appeared to Peter.

In I Corinthians 15:5 we read

that on that day the Lord appeared to Peter.

The Lord was there in this very private meeting of which we have no scripture telling us what was said - but do we really need it?

Don't we already know that the one who told the story of the Prodigal Son and how the Father of that young man meet his returning son at the gate with arms outstretched would have held Peter in His arms and told Him he was forgiven, he was accepted,

This is the same Lord who gives us the promise, *I will never leave you nor forsake you.*

We live in a world and in a society where justice is held in high regard.

That is not unlike the world in which our Lord came to, to minister and die for our sins.

The Jewish and Roman systems of jurisprudence were considered the most advanced the world had to offer in their day.

However, justice then as today is so often not just.

Six hundred before the time of our Lord's earthly ministry the prophet Habakkuk stood on the walls of Jerusalem, looking over the city and declared that.

Habakkuk 1:4, The law is ignored and justice is never upheld. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore, [when justice does go forth] justice comes out perverted.

Never in the history of the human race was that statement more true than when our Lord was dragged before the Jewish and Roman courts and then sentenced to die for crimes of which he was innocent.

A facade of justice went forth, but it went forth perverted.

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Luke 22:63

And the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking Him, and beating Him,

Immediately we begin to see the illegal nature of these trials.

It was totally forbidden to beat or strike a convicted man prior to a determination of guilt.

Here the official trial had not even started and they beating Jesus.

Now since Caiaphas is in charge we can assume that most of the council was present but since it was at night this trial could not be considered an official meeting of judgment of the Sanhedrin.

So it was extraordinary - and here with the extraordinary nature of this trial at night, the illegal beating that Jesus was given that we start to see how far these leaders of Israel will go in silencing Jesus and getting their own way.

Luke 22:64

and they blindfolded Him and were asking Him, saying, Prophecy, who is the one who hit You?

Notice in this what they know about Jesus.

They know what He has said and what He has done and that He is a prophet.

But they certainly do not understand the nature of the prophet and his gift.

They wanted a parlor trick, who is it who had hit you.

They reduced the great prophecies of God that foretold of Israel's future and the coming of the Messiah down to nothing more than a guessing game.

We see in this that they knew Jesus claimed to be a prophet yet they did not believe nor accept.

But what they are doing is no different than what the Jews had been doing for centuries.

Luke 13:34, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!

Later Stephen would remind the religious leaders of this in:

Acts 7:52, Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they

killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become;

They knew Jesus was a prophet but they failed to believe so instead they mocked and abused.

The next verse is interesting too.

Luke 22:65

And they were saying many other things against Him, blaspheming.

At this second trial they were blaspheming Him and yet this is the charge they will eventually bring against Him.

But not before they try to convict Him of another more serious crime.

Luke 22:66

And when it was day, the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council chamber, saying,

Now it is daylight so they decide to have a legal meeting of the council to rubber stamp what they had been trying to do that night

Luke spends more time with the third trial before the entire council, the Sanhedrin, than with any of the other trials.

But even here, as we compare this account to the other Gospels, he jumps to the conclusion, the end of the trial.

But Matthew deals with the first part of this trial and tells us of the initial charge that is brought against Christ, a more serious charge of temple desecration which was a capital crime for both the Jews and the Romans.

Matthew 26:59, Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, in order that they might put Him to death;

We see clearly here the hidden agenda held by these religious leaders.

They sought testimony, even false testimony, what ever could fulfill their agenda, to put Jesus to death.

Here is where we begin to see some of the illegal aspects of this show trail.

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The council, the Sanhedrin, was like a jury, they were to hear accusations of illegal action.

Under Jewish Law the accusers were the prosecutors, the accusers brought the matter to the council, the jury of judges.

The jury, then as now, was to be impartial.

They were not the ones who would bring a charge or accusation.

How would you like to walk into a court room where you are the accused and find the jury box filled with the people who have accused you of a crime.

Justice goes forth but it goes forth perverted.

The subject of the sentence is very clear.

It was the chief priests and the council who were trying to obtain testimony against Him, they were the real accusers behind the witnesses for the prosecution.

But their efforts were proving to be rather vain, they could not find any consistent testimony against Jesus.

Matthew 26:60, and they did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward.

Much was said, a barrage of words, lies, accusations, all directed against the Lord Jesus Christ.

Can you imagine being in the midst of your enemies, everyone around you hating you, telling lies about you, accusing you of capital crimes.

And you know you are innocent of any wrong doing.

What would you do, how would you react?

Where would you turn?

Whose mercy could you throw yourself upon?

Certainly no one there but Jesus although alone was not alone.

Just as we are never alone - I will never leave you nor forsake you saith the Lord.

A thousand years before this David was in a similar situation.

Psalm 56:4-6, In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?

All day long they distort my words; All their thoughts are against me for evil.

They attack, they lurk, They watch my steps, As they have waited to take my life.

And today, 2000 years later, we may find ourselves in similar situations, were are enemies, our adversaries, our accusers, are mounted up against us and yet we can turn to the God of David, the Father of our Savior, our God who will never leave us nor forsake us.

Old Testament Law demanded that two witnesses agree for an accusation to be considered and with all the verbal garbage that was spun forth, no two did agree.

With all the other accusations, blasphemy, braking the Sabbath laws, sorcery, on and on, there was no agreement.

And while here we seem to have two who come with an accusation, in agreement, we do not - because Jesus is never found guilty of this crime.

The Attempted Temple or Shrine Desecration.

A capital crime in both Jewish and Roman Law.

The key word in the accusation is **DESTROY**, the **Greek word καταλω** and here, in the accusation, it is an aorist, active, infinitive.

NOW LETS look at this testimony in the Gospel of Mark.

Mark 14:57-59, And some stood up and began to give false testimony against Him, saying, We heard Him say, I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands. And not even in this respect was their testimony consistent.

Now here in **Mark** the word **καταλω** is a future, active, indicative.

And we have the further statement that their testimony was not consistent.

BUT NOW notice what Jesus ACTUALLY said about the Temple in **Matthew 24:2**

And He answered and said to them, Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here shall be left upon another, which will not be torn down.

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The same word, καταλυω is used but here it is a future, passive, indicative,

Jesus made the statement regarding His body, the Temple, and His resurrection.

It was a certain thing to come and so He used a future tense.

And a FUTURE tense and PASSIVE voice indicates a true potential future event and with the passive voice removes Jesus as the one who was doing the tearing down.

Jesus is stating a prophetic fact, not saying he would tear it down.

The accusers, here in Matthew and in Mark, worded it as a threat to the people, to the nation, to the Temple and so they used verb form that indicated that Jesus would do this but even they were not consistent in the use of the verb.

You may be saying so what?

But the *so what* is that the testimony was not in agreement with the facts by just one little word, not even a word, the grammatical usage of that one little word.

And on this the accusation, and Satan's whole plan to have Jesus convicted of a capital crime under both Jewish and Roman Law, fell apart.

He was tearing out his horns!!

It is most likely that had the Sanhedrin been able to bring a sure conviction against Jesus of this crime and take this to Pilate, who was to enforce Roman Law and this was a crime under Roman Law also, that Pilate would have allowed the Jews to put Jesus in the pit and stone Him to death.

And that was Satan's plan - but who?

WHO Is in control?

GOD!

Satan had put together quite a plan up to this point.

But God is in control, and all the control that God needed to exercise was over one little verb - And Satan was tearing his hair out because his pawns, the accusers, could not get it right.

Principle

The intent to destroy the Temple would have been a capital crime in both Jewish and Roman Law.

If proven the Romans would have allowed the Jews to stone Jesus which was Satan's intent.

Satan did not want Christ to be crucified.

He knew enough prophecy to know that crucifixion could be the altar for the once and for all atonement for sins.

Satan wanted the Jews, Jesus' own people, to cast the stones that would bring an end to the ministry of grace and truth.

But one Greek word, put in the wrong tense, voice, and mood, foiled his evil plan.

Principle

God is in control of even the verbs, the smallest word, the apparent insignificant aspects of our lives.

And yet His phenomenal control preserved the plan for His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

WE SO OFTEN WANT to see God work in big way, spectacular ways.

Indeed today Christians, very well meaning, are seeking the spectacular.

But how did God work to save Jesus His son from Satan's plan, from the pit of stoning?

God did not use the spectacular but the seemingly small insignificant parsing of a verb.

Can you think back over your life, perhaps as recently as this past week and see small things that God did to deliver you, to direct you, to lead you on to His very highest and best, to complete in you another part of His perfect plan?

Was it luck?

NO - Was it chance?

NO - It is the small things of God that make a difference in our lives.

It was a small thing of God that delivered Jesus from evil men, directed by the powerful prince of evil, and an evil plan to destroy the Savior and our so great salvation.

Job 15:11, Are the consolations of God too small for you, Even the word spoken gently with you?

Zechariah 4:6, Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.

Zechariah 4:10, For who has despised the day of small things?

What does it take for God to control our circumstances, our destiny, our fate - sometimes just one small thing, one little word spoken in one little way.

No wonder we call Him, Abba, our Father!

Now where did this leave Caiaphas?

He was only left with attempting to get Jesus to incriminate Himself and to charge Him with blasphemy.

Luke 22:67-70

If You are the Christ, tell us. But He said to them, If I tell you, you will not believe;

and if I ask a question, you will not answer.

But from now on THE SON OF MAN WILL BE SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND of the power OF GOD.

And they all said, Are You the Son of God, then? And He said to them, Yes, I am.

The fact that the question is so specific reflects the knowledge that Caiaphas had and the way he had influenced the council.

They had and knowledge is a dangerous thing if not applied.

And Caiaphas did not believe nor apply the truth he had.

He knew - yet he rejected

He had knowledge.

but chose ignorance

He had the mandate - but he disobeyed

He could have believed - but instead he attacked

Based upon what he knew of the Scriptures, the Savior, the Son of God, and this man Jesus who was standing before him and His service and sacrifice - Caiaphas should have been on his knees in the presents of Jesus.

But instead he schemed and plotted to accuse and destroy.

To whom much is given, much is required, and this man had much, and is now sealing his fate in the hardness of his heart.

While Jesus is on trial in this earthly court, Caiaphas is on trial in a greater court, the eternal supreme court of heaven and his accusations, in the face of what he knew and in the face of the one standing before him, is a conviction of eternal spiritual death.

Luke 22:71

And they said, What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.

They heard but they did not believe.

Instead they continued to work their scheme, seek the ends that they thought would justify their means, to complete their hidden agenda to destroy the Son of God.

We have seen in this chapter of Luke's Gospel, Jesus on His knees in the Garden, weak before His Father.

We have seen Jesus abused by His enemies, weak before man.

But in the midst of this weakness, God is there, He is His strength - And the Father works at times in small ways to do great things.

2 Corinthians 13:4-5, 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. Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!

How can this be a warning to us?

The Holy Spirit does not lead us in these ways of subterfuge.

He leads us on a straight path.

When we see ourselves having to go to extraordinary means to achieve our ends, when we see ourselves having to do that which is wrong to get to what we think is right, when we find ourselves going beyond the lengths and depths of truth, we know something is wrong.

We can know that this is not how God works and that all our efforts are nothing more than the actions of one who is refusing to trust God and from that faith-trust, obey Him.

Test yourselves to see if you are living by faith.

Chapter 23

Lord Acton of England is credited with the statement.

Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Thomas Jefferson said of power that he: *Had never been able to conceive how any rational being could propose happiness to himself from the execution of power over others.*

And Eric Fromm said.

The lust for power is not rooted in strength but in weakness.

In this chapter of Luke we are going to be introduced to a man who wanted power, who sought power at any price, who abuse the power he had, and used his power to order the execution of the Lord Jesus Christ - Pontius Pilate.

Luke 23:1,2

Then the whole body of them arose and brought Him before Pilate.

And they began to accuse Him, saying, We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.

The word misleading is the Greek word διαστρεφοντα, Which means to stirring up to disaffection and rebellion.

Notice they say to Pilate, *our* nation, they number themselves with the Romans.

Here we are introduced to Pilate, whose name is long remembered in history as the man who gave the order to send Jesus to His death.

Along with Judas, the very hearing of the name of Pontius Pilate has brought reaction and revulsion to Christians through the centuries.

And what we have in this fourth trial of Christ, now the morning of the crucifixion, is two very powerful men whose power comes from two very different sources, standing face to face.

Now we know Jesus Christ, but who is this powerful man Pontius Pilate?

WHO IS PONTIUS PILATE?

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.

He was born into the Roman middle class, the Equestrians, and apparently inherited some money that allowed him to qualify for his diplomatic position.

Little is known of him prior to coming to Jerusalem but much of his activities there and his subsequent career is recorded by Josephus, Pilo of Alexandria, and later Eusebius.

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.

When Pilate governed Judea and Samaria he was a comparatively young man.

Historians of the time gauge him to be in his late twenties or early thirties.

So very close in age to the humanity of Jesus Christ.

Eusebius recorded that after Judea, Pilate was reduced in position and served in Gaul (France) where he committed suicide.

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, Claudia, who had a dream about Jesus,

became a Christian following the crucifixion.

From v 2 we see that the Jews had a weak case against Jesus so they tried to make up in quantity what they lacked in quality of indictment.

They accused him of three crimes, perverting the nation, failing to pay taxes, and claiming to be a king. Pilate was not interested in the first two

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since these were Jewish matters, but the third charge did concern him because the king, in Pilate's thinking would be no king but Caesar.

Luke 23:3

And Pilate asked Him, saying, Are You the King of the Jews? And He answered him and said, It is as you say.

Roman law was very specific regarding this type of trial.

It was a referral trial from the local, indigenous rulers who were granted limited powers.

This type of trial had to take place in the early part of the day so the Roman authorities could attend to matters of state in the afternoons.

The Sanhedrin would have bound Jesus and lead him to the palace of Herod, where Pilate resided and worked when in Jerusalem.

The trial would have begun with the verbal or written accusation against the accused.

This resulted in an interrogation of the accused by the chief magistrate, in this case the only magistrate, Pilate.

So he asks.

Are you the king of the Jews.

This rightly assumes that the Sanhedrin charged Jesus before Pilate with treason, claiming to be a king.

But look back to Luke 22:70-71.

What is the charge there?

Blasphemy.

But the Romans could not have cared less about blasphemy.

So the Sanhedrin came up with a new indictment, treason.

This Jesus is claiming to be king.

So Pilate begins with the question.

Are you the king of the Jews?

Had Jesus given a direct affirmation of the question, and said YES, the proceedings would have ended, and Pilate would have had the legal right to sentence Him to die.

But Jesus did not really give a affirmative answer, He said - *It is, as you say.*

Matthew 10:16 Jesus told his disciples to be - *be shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves*

Now we might expand that to be.

You are saying so, so it must be true, at least according to your frame of reference.

Pilate did not accept this as a YES answer, as a matter of court record he states that he finds no fault in Jesus.

Luke 23:4,5

And Pilate said to the chief priests and the multitudes, I find no guilt in this man.

But they kept on insisting, saying, He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee, even as far as this place.

The Jewish leaders begin to accuse even more.

Now adding that he stirs up the people from Galilee to Judea even to Jerusalem.

But they error in bringing up Galilee because this now gives Pilate a legal way out of the situation and the the responsibility.

Luke 23:6,7

But when Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man was a Galilean.

And when he learned that He belonged to Herods jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was in Jerusalem at that time.

Herod just happened to be in Jerusalem, presumably for Passover.

So Pilate passes the buck to him

Luke 23:8

Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him.

Herod had heard of Jesus for some time now and wanted to see Him but only as a curiosity.

Herod wanted Jesus to perform for him, to do some signs or minor miracles that would entertain him.

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But the power of God is not to be mere entertainment, it is the power to save, the power to deliver, and the power to gain the victory.

Luke 23:9

And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing.

Remember that this is the same man who put John the Baptist to death.

He had silenced the voice of God and now God is silent towards him

Luke 23:10

And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing Him vehemently.

Here is another slip-up by the religious leaders.

If they had kept quiet Herod would have had to make a decision of judgment based upon what Pilate related to him.

But as soon as the chief priests and scribes (lawyers of Jerusalem) spoke up with accusations, this gave Herod an out to pass the case back to Pilate who had jurisdiction over Jerusalem.

Luke 23:11

And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate.

As was often the case with the Romans, they treated the accused with contempt and mocked Jesus and then dressed Him in a gorgeous robe.

Now the word gorgeous is the Greek word

λαμπρος

and it can also mean brilliant or white.

So most likely this was a white robe.

Now the color of the robes for Roman nobility and kings was red or purple.

But the color of the robes of the kings over the Jews was white.

So Herod dressed Jesus in a white robe because he knows from Pilate that this man claims to be the King of the Jews.

While this is done to mock Jesus it also shows that there is no violation of Roman Law.

He claims to be a king but only a king of the Jews and in John's Gospel the Lord even tells Pilate that His kingdom is not of this world and thus, in Pilate's thinking, not a threat.

Notice one outcome of all this -

Luke 23:12

Now Herod and Pilate became friends with one another that very day; for before they had been at enmity with each other.

The conflict between them may have arisen out of the way Pilate had treated the Jews including the Jews of Galilee who had been in Jerusalem.

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.

Since some of the Jews Pilate killed were Herod's subject, there was a conflict between them but that now ends.

They face a common problem and a common enemy.

In this case it is not Jesus but the religious leaders of Jerusalem.

In Jewish historical literature the Rabbis comment on this, not as part of the New Testament but as a historical point.

Rabbi Tanchum says, *this may be likened to two contending dogs, who, when the wolf comes, join together to destroy him; each knowing that, if he do not, the wolf will kill both in succession: whereas, by their union, they may now kill or baffle him*

Luke 23:13-16

And Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said to them, 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.

I will therefore punish Him and release Him.

Now that is a pretty definite statement isn't it?

Pilate states that neither he nor Herod find anything in the accusations against Jesus that would warrant His death.

He wants to punish Him and release Him and we might think that would be the end of the matter.

But God is carefully directing Jesus to the Cross and God is in control.

In the three religious trials of Jesus Christ the Jewish leaders were not able to convict Jesus of a capital offense.

Now in these three political trials of Jesus Christ the Roman leaders were not able nor willing to charge Jesus with a capital offense.

Jesus has spent the night and the early morning hours in the midst of powerful men.

Now we know the outcome, as powerful as Pilate may be he will not be able to wash his hands of the matter.

So when we examine this we come to the question: *Who really has the power?*

Pilate by way of his position, his schemes to gain and hold power?

Or Jesus Christ in His Silent Strength?

Human observations would see Pilate as the man with the power, but that is all it is, human observation, human view point.

God looked on Pilate and saw a man consumed with power, desperate to hold onto that which he would never have.

Here we see Pilate a man in a powerful position, a man of power, and yet a man whose power and position has been achieved through force, manipulation, and human means.

A man who must continue to play people against his own agenda - and a man who cannot see truth when it is before his very eyes.

And then we see our Lord.

Also a powerful man, but one in whom power resides by the will of God.

A power that is dependant on no one else except His heavenly Father.

And then se see ourselves.

Will we seek the power that Pilate had, a power that must be achieved, and then a power that must be secured in our own power - or the power that Jesus had, a power not earned or deserved, a power we can have because we have believed in Him and we have a heavenly Father who gives to us His strength, His power?

What is true power for you?

Weakness.

Paul learned this through the thorn in the flesh in **II Corinthians 12:9**, As he told of what God said to him.

My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

2 Corinthians 4:6-7, For God, who said, Light shall shine out of darkness, is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves;

2 Corinthians 13:4-5, 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. Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith;

Jesus Christ chose the greater power, the power of God.

What will we choose?

Early in the ministry of Mother Theresa in India she wanted to build an orphanage, but she had only three shillings. Someone jeeringly said to her, What can you do to build an orphanage with only three shillings?

She answered by saying,

Me with three shillings can do nothing, but with three shillings and with God's power there is nothing that cannot be done.

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Luke 23:17-25 [Discussion missing for this passage. wd]

What price would salvation for man bring, what would be its cost, can it even be valued in human terms, and then if it can be, what coin would pay for the purchase?

When we consider what happened in Jerusalem nearly 2000 years ago we must stop and realize that the greatest price ever paid for anything was laid on the counter of heaven for you and for me.

As we observe Good Friday and as we prepare to take the communion elements which so specifically remind us of the person and work of Christ, of the one who paid a debt he did not owe for those who owed a debt they could not pay - we are going to look at the Cross.

We are not going to end this night on a very happy note.

We are going to end it where the disciples ended it, where the women of Galilee who were so very loyal to Jesus ended it.

We are going to end it with sorrow and shame - but as I heard a Black Preacher once say - as bad as that Good Friday was, Sunday is a coming!

Luke 23:26

And when they led Him away, they laid hold of one Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus.

Six trials, found innocent of any capital offense, the people given an opportunity to set Him free and yet they chose Barabbas, the religious leaders determined that He must die, pressing the issue to the point where Pilate was left with nothing else to do but to kill an innocent man.

We know from the other Gospels that he is whipped, beaten, humiliated, mocked, weakened physically, and now taken out of the guard house, the cross beam of cross lashed to his shoulders, and made to walk through the streets of Jerusalem.

John 19:17 states that Jesus carried His own Cross so the way this is reconciled in that He did carry His cross out of the city but then with the weight pressing Him down, the guards enlisted Simon to carry it on the Golgotha.

THE STORY OF SIMON OF CYRENE.

The crucifixion procession was led by a centurion, followed by two soldiers, then Christ then the others including the two thieves, then two more soldiers, and last the skilled executioners.

This procession was heading out of the city as Simon was coming into the city.

The soldiers compelled or pressed into service: He was pressed into service to carry the Cross which became God's official message of hope, glory, and eternal salvation.

And placed on him the cross.

This is a subjunctive verb, he had a choice.

And this reminds us that everyone who meets Christ has a choice.

He was a Cyrenian, from an area outside of Alexandria, Egypt.

He had not been in Judea and had not heard what the religious leaders had said about Christ.

Thus he was objective.

So here is a businessman, in town for the holidays, and all of a sudden he is being strongly asked to carry the cross of a convicted felon.

WHY DID HE DO IT?

Because he watched, he reasoned, he was objective, he chose, he believed.

Here is an amazing man.

He believed, he returned to North Africa, witnessed to his others who also believed.

WHY.

Because he was objective.

I cannot read this passage without thinking of something Jesus said to His disciples while they were still in Galilee.

Mark 8:34 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.

Principle

Jesus never calls us to do what He has not already done.

He carried His Cross - but here is where we see the amazing grace of God.

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He carried His Cross to a point, to a point when He could no longer bear up under the burden and then, at the precise right moment, God provided help in His time of need.

The women of Jerusalem.

Here in Luke's Gospel we have an account of something that happened on the way to the Cross that is only recorded here.

The women who followed and the response of Jesus.

While each of the Gospels tell us of the women who were there at the Cross, only Luke tells us of what the Lord said to them.

Luke 23:27

And there were following Him a great multitude of the people, and of women who were mourning and lamenting Him.

We encounter two groups of women at the crucifixion.

Those women who had been disciples of in Galilee and had traveled with Him to Jerusalem.

They are the ones standing afar off at this time but would be at the Cross.

Here we find the women of Jerusalem whose habit it was to follow any Jew who had been condemned to death through the streets of Jerusalem.

They would in typical Jewish fashion loudly mourn and lament the condemned man's impending death.

Luke 23:28

But Jesus turning to them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

But Jesus turning to them, this would not have been possible had He still been carrying the Cross

Rather than accept the mourning, Jesus in His compassion for Jerusalem, ministers to the one who were attempting to minister to Him.

And here is an interesting principle - what can we add to the Son of God?

Really nothing.

But He will take every opportunity that in which we may be moved to give to Him to give back to us even more.

In His compassion He warns these who mourn that they must stop weeping for Him but instead weep for themselves and for their children.

Jesus knows that within forty years the city of Jerusalem will be destroyed.

He knows that many of those who are there will witness this and if not them, then their children.

He knows the discipline that the people of Israel will face so even in the most terrible of moments, beaten, bloodied, exhausted, so abused that He was physically unable to carry His cross, He still ministers to others, warning them of the impending discipline.

Luke 23:29

For behold, the days are coming when they will say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.

For behold, or listen carefully, days are coming.

This is the language of prophecy.

He has previously told of the destruction of Jerusalem and now warns those who will face that terrible discipline.

Luke 21:23,24, Woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land, and wrath to this people, and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

The siege and destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD will be so horrible that, that which was normally considered a curse, barrenness would be considered a blessing.

History is filled with accounts of that siege and destruction in which thousands of people died including many mothers and children.

Yes indeed O' Jerusalem, do not weep for the one who is to die but weep for yourselves and what

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will come from the rejection of the one who came to deliver His people.

Luke 23:30

Then they will begin TO SAY TO THE MOUNTAINS, FALL ON US, AND TO THE HILLS, COVER US.

We have two responses here to the disciple of the Lord.

There will be those who in their rejection of Christ would rather die than face the Savior.

These are mentioned in Hosea 10:8 and in Revelation 6:16.

Then there are also those who will head for the hills, who will flee Jerusalem and seek safety in the hills.

These are mentioned in Isaiah 2:19

In the presence of God and even in the presence of His wrath there will forever be those who will flee from Him and those who will cling to Him.

Even today, the mention of the Savior invokes either hatred of Him or the desire to know Him.

Luke 23:31

For if they do these things in the green tree, what will happen in the dry?

Now at verse 28 the Lord addressed those who were weeping for Him in the first person.

But then the warnings of vv 29-31 are given in the second person.

So this statement is about those who have rejected.

Now we can pretty much understand this idiom.

The Green Tree would refer to times of prosperity and the dry would refer to times of adversity.

If there are those who reject the Savior and even put Him to death during the good times, how much more will their evil increase during the times of God's wrath.

But there is something more here that we in our culture and thinking miss: This is a very caustic remark that we miss in the English.

In the Old Testament under the Green Tree was a place of pagan sacrifices and idol worship.

In conquering the land, God told Israel (Deuteronomy 12:2)

You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.

2 Kings 16:4, And he (Ahaz) sacrificed and burned incense on the high places and on the hills and under every green tree.

But we also find that God in Judgment will turn the green tree into a dry withered tree, Ezekiel 17:24

And all the trees of the field will know that I am the LORD; I bring down the high tree, exalt the low tree, dry up the green tree, and make the dry tree flourish. I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will perform it.

Luke 21:29-31, And He told them a parable.

Behold the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they put forth leaves, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near. Even so you, too, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near.

So what the Lord is saying is that now, under the green tree, Jerusalem has chosen to reject the Messiah and in do so worship that which is false and this is paramount to Idolatry.

So God will judge and the green tree will turn dry.

Luke 23:32,33

And two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with Him.

And when they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.

Isaiah 53:12, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.

Here again we will see how two people in the same place, exposed to the same truth and one will reject and the other accept.

More on these two on Sunday morning.

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Luke 23:34

But Jesus was saying, Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.

The greatest statement of Grace you will ever find in the Scriptures.

Rejected, betrayed, arrested, false accused and horribly abused.

A victim of the corrupt leadership of Israel.

And yet He has the grace to ask the Father to forgive them.

And He can make this request because He is about to die for their sins even the sins of those who sought His death.

Luke 23:35

And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One.

They have it backwards don't they.

He is not there to save himself but them.

He is there to be the sacrifice for the sin, the price paid for the debt of sin which is death.

In their hardness of heart they did not see the need for salvation.

Not only did the Jewish leaders and many lay people reject Jesus but also the Gentiles, the Romans rejected Him.

Luke 23:36

And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine,

That wine mixed with gall was given to those who were crucified as a pain killer.

At the end of His time on the Cross, Jesus would say *I thirst* and be given something to drink but here we are told in Matthew 27:34

they gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall; and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink.

He did not take anything that would have dulled his senses even if it would have eased the pain.

Dying for man's sins would require His full attention and His full sacrifice.

Luke 23:37

and saying, If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!

Again we see that the Romans did not see their need to be saved.

Luke 23:38

Now there was also an inscription above Him, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

It was the custom of the Romans to display the offense of the person being crucified so that all could see.

The irony is that in indicating this as His offense, they stated the truth, This is the King of the Jews!

And there in that place they crucified him (v 33).

Luke is very brief in his description of what was done to our Savior.

What is a crucifixion?

A medical doctor provides a physical description:

The cross is placed on the ground and the exhausted man is quickly thrown backwards with his shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square wrought iron nail through the wrist deep into the wood. Quickly he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some for some flexing and movement.

The cross is then lifted into place. The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees flexed.

The victim is now crucified. As he slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating fiery pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain - the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As he pushes himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, he places the full weight on the nail through his feet.

Again he feels the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the bones of his feet. As the arms fatigue, cramps sweep through his muscles, knotting them with deep

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relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push himself upward to breathe.

Air can be drawn into the lungs, but not exhaled. He fights to raise himself in order to get even one small breath.

Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream, and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically, he is able to push himself upward to exhale and bring in life-giving oxygen. Hours of limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint wrenching cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from his lacerated back as he moves up and down against the rough timber.

Then another agony begins: a deep, crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart. It is now almost over - the loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level - the compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues - the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. He can feel the chill of death creeping through his tissues.

Finally, he can allow his body to die... All of this the Bible records with the simple words, "and they crucified Him" (Mark 15:24).

Two Thieves.

While Matthew also mentions the two thieves only Luke records the conversations between them and the Lord Jesus.

The two who were crucified to the side of the Lord were able at one point to read this inscription.

They had also been in the same prison as Barabbas.

They had heard about Jesus Christ and who He claimed to be.

One would reject and one would believe.

We might observe in Luke's Gospel that unlike the other evangelists, Luke does not make any mention of the things that occurred being a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

His intention with his mostly Gentile readers is to portray Christ as the one who even in the midst of great suffering is able to have compassion and is able to forgive.

Since that is his purpose it is understandable that he would not only write of how Jesus kept on saying *Father Forgive them* but also be the one who would tell of the salvation of the one thief.

Luke 23:39

And one of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!

The word for criminal which is ka-kour-gos means one who does evil (kakos) or one who has been convicted of a crime.

The nature of the crime is not known.

Some assume they were zealots, revolutionaries but more likely they were thieves, robbers.

And had now been caught perhaps too many times and were sentenced to die.

The one thief was hurling abuse at Christ.

He was imitating the crowd and saying the same thing they were saying.

Certainly not very original and certainly very ironic.

Here is a man sentenced to die, nailed to a cross, insulting someone else who is under the same condemnation and suffering.

While he does mimic the crowd he adds one thing to his abuse - save us too.

Historical biblical debate has questioned whether or not he believed Jesus could save them but it is more likely that this is just part of the mocking, part of the insults, part of what Luke even describes as abuse, the Greek word *blaspheme*.

Psalm 22:7, All who see me sneer at me; They separate with the lip, they wag the head

Luke 23:40,41

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.

There is much said by this one thief.

He rebukes and he repents.

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He rejects the abuse of the one who was his colleague in crime and identifies himself with Jesus, under the same condemnation.

He accepts responsibility for the crimes he committed.

He sees his punishment of being just and deserved.

And most importantly, he sees Jesus as innocent.

We see in this man's dying words a great deal about salvation.

He sees himself guilty, he accepts the responsibility of that guilt.

He sees a need that he had that he cannot fulfill

He is helpless, he can do nothing about his present condition

He recognizes the innocents of Jesus Christ

And then he asks.

Luke 23:42

And he was saying, Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!

Remember is a bit stronger than just to recall but to be mindful of, to consider.

And then notice what He knows about this one who is on the Cross, He has a kingdom, and even though the Romans kill Him, He will live.

The dying thief asks remember me and the dying Savior said to him.

Luke 23:43

And He said to him, Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.

Paradise, also called Abraham's Bosom, is where Jesus will go and proclaim victory to all the Old Testament saints.

And then at His ascension He will empty paradise and take captivity captive (Ephesians 4:8) and be seated at the right hand of the Father.

This statement emphasizes several facts concerning salvation.

That salvation is offered to anyone, anywhere. Are deathbed conversions valid? They are indeed, for here is one. But we must also note.

There is *one* deathbed conversion in the Bible, so no dying man will despair.

There is *only* one, so no living man will presume. D. L. Moody once said.

Did ever the new birth take place in so strange a cradle?

Observe the contrast here.

In the morning the thief was nailed to a cross. In the evening he was wearing a crown.

In the morning he was an enemy of Caesar. In the evening he was a friend of God.

In the morning he was spurned by men. In the evening he was fellowshiping with angels.

In the morning he died as a criminal on earth. In the evening he lived as a citizen of heaven.

This teaches us that salvation is by grace through faith alone.

The salvation of this thief teaches us that the only thing we can do, must do, for salvation is to believe in Christ.

Faith alone in Christ alone - nothing more, nothing less.

We see in Luke's account of the Cross that **all classes of humanity** were represented in the presents of the dying Savior.

There were the indifferent (*the people stood by looking on*, Luke 23:35)

the religious (*the rulers mocked him*, Luke 23:35)

the materialistic (*the soldiers divided his raiment and cast lots*, Luke 23:34)

and the ones who would be saved (*Lord, remember me...* Luke 23:42)

The cross is indeed the judgment of this world.

With the two thieves and Jesus we see three men.

One was dying

for sin (the Savior)

One was dying

from sin (the repentant thief)

One was dying

in sin (the lost thief)

The Spiritual Death of Christ.

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Luke 23:44

**And it was now about the sixth hour,
and darkness fell over the whole land
until the ninth hour,**

In in our manner of keeping time, from noon until 3:00 pm.

Darkness fell over the whole land.

Notice the next statement in the first part of v 45 *the sun being obscured.*

The word obscured is $\epsilon\kappa-\lambda\epsilon\iota-\pi\omega$ and means to fail, come to an end, and used in this sense would mean that this darkness was total.

And it fell not just over Golgatha but over the whole land, a term used for all of Israel.

So for three hours an impregnable darkness covered Israel and no one would see what was happening at the Cross as Jesus died for our sins.

The other Gospels record the cry of Jesus, *My God, My God, why has thou forsaken me?*

Luke 23:45

At the end of these hours of darkness.

and the veil of the temple was torn in two.

Darkness is the first symbol of sacrifice that Luke mentions and then we have the second symbol, the symbol of victory

The tearing in two of the curtain of the temple which separated the holy of holies from the rest of the temple.

The curtain divided people from the place where God had localized His presence

The tearing from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51) symbolized the fact that now, because of Jesus' death, people had open access to God

They no longer had to go through the sacrificial system (cf. Rom. 5:2; Eph. 2:18; 3:12).

Jesus was the only Sacrifice needed to enable people to have a proper relationship with God.

The Physical Death of Christ.

Luke 23:46

**And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice,
said, Father, INTO THY HANDS I
COMMIT MY SPIRIT. And having said
this, He breathed His last.**

Of all who have ever lived on the face of the earth, of all mankind, only Jesus was granted power over his own life.

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.

The Victory Begins.

As soon as the sacrifice is completed, there are those who believe.

Luke 23:47

Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, Certainly this man was innocent. And all the multitudes who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts.

Billy Graham in his book *World Aflame*, tells the story about Auguste Comte, the French philosopher, and Thomas Carlyle, the Scottish essayist. Comte said he was going to start a new religion that would supplant the religion of Christ.

It was to have no mysteries and was to be as plain as the multiplication table; its name was to be positivism. *Very good, Mr. Comte*, Carlyle replied, *very good.*

All you will need to do will be to speak as never a man spake, and live as never a man lived, and be crucified, and rise again the third day, and get the world to believe that you are still alive.

Then your religion will have a chance to get a start.

Christianity rests on only the resurrection!

Luke 23:49-51

And all His acquaintances and the women who accompanied Him from Galilee, were standing at a distance, seeing these things.

And behold, a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man

(he had not consented to their plan and action), a man from Arimathea, a city of

the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God;

Although a member of the Sanhedrin, Joseph did not consent to the railroading of Jesus.

He had believed him to be the Messiah.

In Matthew 27:57 and John 19:38 he is said to have been up to now a secret disciple.

Luke 23:52,53

this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain.

This by the way would have rendered him ceremonially unclean and thus unable to celebrate Passover.

Luke 23:54,55

And it was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

Now the women who had come with Him out of Galilee followed after, and saw the tomb and how His body was laid.

Do you know why we have this verse here?

Because God knew that centuries later some would try to say that what happened was that on Sunday morning, these women went to the wrong tomb, an empty tomb, and started a rumor that Jesus had been resurrected.

Not so, these women of Galilee went to the tomb on the later afternoon of the crucifixion with Joseph and they knew where the tomb was.

Luke 23:56

And they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. And on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

The account of Jesus death ends with a beautiful description of His burial.

So roughly treated and abused in His death, the Savior's body is now in the hands of those who loved him.

Seven hundred years before this Isaiah spoke of this in Isaiah 53:9

His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.

Chapter 24

Luke 24:1-9

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared.

And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb,

but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

And it happened that while they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling apparel;

and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, Why do you seek the living One among the dead?

He is not here, but He has risen.

Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee,

saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

And they remembered His words, and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.

Order of events on resurrection day.

Jesus is resurrected before sunrise

Before sunrise the women leave Bethany and come to the tomb, it is empty

Mary Magdalene leaves to tell the disciples

The other women remain at the tomb and see the two angels then leave

Peter, John, and Mary arrive at the tomb

Peter and John leave and Mary remains and see Jesus (the first resurrection appearance)

The other women return and see Jesus (the second resurrection appearance)

The guards tell the religious leaders and are bribed into silence

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Jesus appears privately to Peter (no record of where or what was said)

Jesus appears to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus

That night Jesus appears to the ten disciples (Thomas is not present)

Luke 24:10,11

Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles.

But then we read v 11

And these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them.

So it is not the disciples that the Lord first appears to.

From the other Gospels we know that He first appears to Mary Magdalene and the other women, then to Peter and then to these two disciples, only one of whom we know his name.

And here to two men, disciples but not part of the twelve but of the wider circle of disciples, who are walking home to Emmaus after the terrible events in Jerusalem that has occurred over the past few days.

Have you ever wondered what it was like in Jerusalem from the time of the crucifixion to the morning of the resurrection?

It was a time of rejoicing for the religious leaders, they had gotten rid of this Jesus and now could blame everything on him.

No, it was not a very pleasant weekend for those who believed in Jesus.

Luke 24:13,14

And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem.

And they were conversing with each other about all these things which had taken place.

They were talking about what had happened because what had happened caused so much confusion.

There is in the story of these two men a tension between fear and hope that no doubt was sensed by all the followers of Christ on that day.

And in many ways is sensed by the child of God today.

We have a sure hope but in so many things we also have fear.

Jesus is the one who dispels the fear.

Luke 24:15-20

And it came about that while they were conversing and discussing, Jesus Himself approached, and began traveling with them.

But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.

And He said to them, What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking? And they stood still, looking sad.

And one of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?

And He said to them, What things? And they said to Him, The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him up to the sentence of death, and crucified Him.

Jesus uses the same method of teaching that He so often used in His earthly ministry. He asked questions and waited for answers to be given.

What are you talking about and then what are these things you refer to?

Luke 24:21

But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened.

They had believed that Jesus was the Messiah, the promised One.

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They had put their faith in Him for salvation but also hoped for more - that He would redeem all of Israel.

And of course they wondered how could he do this now that He has been dead for three days?

But then their sadness and fear is laced with hope.

Luke 24:22-24

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.

The tomb is empty this we know but what does this mean?

Luke 24:25-27

And He said to them, O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

The first Bible Class of the post resurrection age, and it dealt with the Old Testament prophecies of the incarnation of Jesus Christ - taught by Christ himself!

And they learned from the Scriptures that everything that happened to their Lord happened in complete accord with the prophetic record of the entire Old Testament.

I would assume that the content of this class dealt heavily with dispensational truth.

Luke 24:28-30

And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He would go farther. And they urged Him, saying, Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and

the day is now nearly over. And He went in to stay with them.

And it came about that when He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them.

This was the first sign that something was not as it should be.

In a Jewish home it was always the head of the house, the father, the grandfather, the eldest brother who prayed over the food, bless the table and break the bread.

Jesus just preempted this established order and took the bread himself and blessed it and began breaking it and giving it to them.

Perhaps at the very moment they were going to object to this, we read v 31

Luke 24:31-35

And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight.

And they said to one another, Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?

And they arose that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, saying, The Lord has really risen, and has appeared to Simon.

And they began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

Years later the Apostle Paul would give evidence of the irrefutable fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8, For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;
then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;
and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

Christ as our companion.

Let's consider some of the reasons for the appearances of the risen Christ.

Certainly one of the Lord's reasons for appearing to men after the resurrection was to show Himself alive to give evidence of His accomplished victory as the resurrected and glorified Savior.

But these various appearances did more than that. Through these appearances Lord taught his disciples and us a great deal about Himself and His relationship and ministry to all believers during His physical absence from the church.

Christ's appearances also teach us the truth of His availability and companionship and how that works in and for us even though physically absent.

Christ's appearances also teach us about ourselves, our needs, and tendencies. Here He shows us our need of His fellowship for an understanding of Scripture, for faithfulness as His disciples, and for the ability to handle the pressures of life.

Luke 24:14

And they were conversing with each other about all these things which had taken place.

Application: But let's note a couple of things because this is so much like all of us.

Their conversation was woefully inadequate and their deliberations impotent because, as the passage will show in the verses that follow, they had been indifferent to the Word and as a result, they were ignorant of its truth. Their deliberations and discussions were not founded on the Scripture or on the what the Lord had taught them.

Aren't we often just like this? We can get together and reason and discuss, but *just being together* to

talk, share our experiences and ideas for the purpose of comforting one another cannot truly answer the main problems and questions of life or give us peace.

We need something more, much more. We often hear about support groups, and they can be helpful, but they will always be inadequate and without God's answers unless founded on the Word of God and fellowship with the Savior.

As a result of their encounter with Christ their companion they were transformed and now take a *Stand* for Christ.

The choice of verbs here and the nature of their action teach us this encounter with Christ and the Savior's instruction in the Word left its impact upon these two disciples in a number of significant ways.

Restoration (v. 33a) "They arose" points to a decisive act which demonstrated their restored spiritual condition. Remember Psalm 19:7, "The Law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul."

Association (v. 33b) "and found gathered together the eleven." They returned and began to relate, minister, and enjoy the fellowship of other believers. This is such an important ingredient of our life as believers for support, growth, encouragement, direction, and motivation.

Attestation (v. 34) These men with the others began giving testimony to the risen Savior.

Explanation (v. 35) They were explaining what had happened to them and what He had taught them – passing on the good news and the Word for the benefit of others. They were able to build up and encourage one another because they had been with the risen Christ and listening to the Word. They were no longer simply throwing words about in the expression of their own opinions

Application: So, how about it? Are we open to the Word and God's plan for learning and interacting with the living Christ? Are we allowing Bible study to be a personal encounter with the living Savior?

The distressing thing about our text is that the disciples, at the beginning of our passage, more closely characterize the church today than the disciples, at the end. The disciples' initial response to the death of Christ was total devastation. Their

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response to the reports and evidence pointing to His resurrection was disbelief – hard core, persistent unbelief (cf. Mark 16:14-15). The disciples are almost invisible in the text. They are hiding behind closed doors, or silently grieving in the safety of their own quarters (cf. Luke 24:12). At the end of our text, the disciples' fear has turned to boldness; their confusion to conviction; their troubled spirits to joy; their wallowing in self-pity and disappointment to worship.

It was Frank Tillipauagh, in his excellent book, *The Church Unleashed*, who referred to the “fortress mentality” of the church. I fear that he is right, that the church is more concerned about nurturing itself than it is with reaching a lost world with the gospel. We are more concerned with our own self-image than we are with the salvation of the lost. We seem to be more caught up in safety and security than in faith and obedience. We persist in constructing programs which protect us from the pagan world in which we live, rather than to penetrate it with the good news of the gospel. In the name of edification, the home and the family, we have preoccupied ourselves with ourselves. We are, I suspect, very much like the disciples, at the time of their unbelief.

If this is so, it is not a hopeless or incurable malady. The troubled and doubting disciples were transformed in our text, to men and women of joy, of boldness, and of worship. Soon, they will be characterized by their witness as well. Whatever it was that hindered these disciples is curable. And whatever the cure, it is just as available and as applicable today as it was 2,000 years ago. Let us consider our text, first to learn what transformed these almost invisible (the eleven disciples hardly appear in the gospels after the death of Christ) disciples to an invincible force that turned the world of that day upside-down. Let us then learn the same lesson for ourselves.

The Structure of the Passage

The structure of the text is quite simple. Verses 36-43 depict the unbelief of the disciples and emphasize the “physical evidence” for the physical, literal, resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Verses 44-49 deal with the “biblical evidence” for what has taken place, and for what is yet to happen. Verses 50-53 describe the ascension of our Lord, and the dramatic difference

which all these things had on the disciples. Summarized, the structure of the passage is as follows.

- (1) Verses 36-43 – Exhibit 1: The Physical Evidence
- (2) Verses 44-49 – Exhibit 2: The Biblical Evidence
- (3) Verses 50-53 – Exhibit 3: The Difference in the Disciples

Background

Before we consider these three sections, their meaning, and their relevance, let us make a few observations about the passage in general.

First, the time which is spanned in these verses is 40 days. We know this from Luke's words in Acts chapter 1, where he wrote,

To these [apostles] He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3).

We might gain the impression that these three paragraphs describe incidents all occurring on the same day, if it were not for these words in Acts 1, along with the parallel accounts of Matthew, Mark, and John. Luke's purpose is not to tell us all that happened in those 40 days, nor even to indicate a change in location, as much as to sum up the way in which Jesus convinced His disciples that He was raised from the dead, according to the Scriptures. We may, therefore, suspect that a change in time and place might be found, for example, in verses 44 and 50. We do know at least that the ascension of our Lord took place 40 days after His resurrection, and thus more than a month after His first appearance to the disciples, as described in verses 36-43.

Second, Luke's account of the last days of our Lord on the earth may be more thorough than the account given by Matthew, but his account in the first chapter of Acts is even more detailed.

Luke's purpose, like that of the other gospel writers, was not to tell us everything, but to tell us a few important things, and thus they are selective in what they choose to relate. They have much more to tell us than what they have written (cf. John 20:30-31).

Third, Luke's emphasis in his account of the post-resurrection appearances of Christ is on what took place in Jerusalem, not so much on what happened in Galilee (as, for example, Matthew recorded (28:16-17). There are many appearances, some of which are described in one or more gospel, and others of which may be described by another. There were probably a number of appearances which were not even mentioned. We should not expect to be able to neatly harmonize all of the accounts, for there is simply too much that is not said. If all the facts were known, the details would perfectly harmonize.

Fourth, while Jesus referred to the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures, Luke did not include any references for us in his account. Furthermore, Jesus' teaching is not really recorded, but only the most general thrust of it. We will discover some of the central passages when we come to our study in the book of Acts, but the passages are not listed here. I think that the Spirit of God is challenging us to read and study the Old Testament and to find them for ourselves. We should look for prophecies pertaining to Christ in the Old Testament, indeed, in every part of it. Luke's report of Jesus' words tells us what to look for, and where, but the searching is still our task.

Exhibit One: Physical Evidence of Jesus' Resurrection (24:36-42)

The two disciples whom Jesus intercepted on the road to Emmaus could not wait to return to tell the good news to their brethren at Jerusalem. Immediately after they recognized Jesus and He disappeared, they rushed back to Jerusalem, and to the disciples. They were not even able to get their words out because Jesus had already appeared to Peter, who told them Jesus was indeed alive. Thus, the two disciples first heard of the certainty of Jesus' resurrection from their peers. The best they could do was simply to add their own testimony to the same truth. Jesus was really risen from the dead, and they believed it.

Or so it seemed, but when Jesus actually appeared, it was clear that their "belief" in His resurrection was insufficient. Jesus' first words to this group were, "Peace be with you" (verse 36). That was not their response, however. They were

"startled" and "troubled," Luke tells us (verse 37). Why? Why were they not overjoyed? Why were they frightened and upset? The word "startled" suggests that the disciples were "caught off guard," as though they never expected to see Jesus. If He was really alive, as they professed, why would His appearance be such a shock? If Jesus had greeted with a pronouncement of "peace," why were they troubled, the very opposite of peace?

The answer is that they thought Jesus to be only a ghost, a spirit, and they were frightened of ghosts. The disciples believed in ghosts, and, at the moment, they believed Jesus was a ghost. This is, to some degree, understandable. John's gospel informs us that the room in which the disciples were gathered had a "locked door" (John 20:19). Jesus' appearance was, therefore, not a normal one. How could Jesus have entered the room in a normal body? The ghost explanation made sense to them. It was their first (and seemingly unanimous) conclusion.

The fact was, it was easier for the disciples to believe in a "ghostly" Jesus, than in a Jesus who was literally and physically present. The issue really comes down to "belief" or "unbelief." The disciples thought they really believed. They said that they believed (Luke 24:34). But they did not really believe it. In Mark's account, he tells us that Jesus later appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen (Mark 16:14).

Belief, we know, is not just a matter of our professions, but of our practice (cf. James 1:19-2:26). In the book of Acts we are told of the vision which Peter received, convincing him that he was no longer to avoid contact with Gentiles (Acts 10:9-16). This was to pave the way for Peter to go to the house of Cornelius, and to preach the gospel. Peter did so, and these Gentiles came to faith. But the Jewish leaders of the church in Jerusalem called Peter on the carpet for his actions. After he gave a very thorough explanation, they had to acknowledge,

"Well, then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life" (Acts 11:18b).

In spite of this profession, their practice lagged behind, for in the very next verse we are told,

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So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone (Acts 11:19, NASB, emphasis mine).

If our belief and our behavior do not match, it is often our belief that is inadequate. So it was for the disciples. And so it is, I might add, for most of us as well.

It is noteworthy to observe that the “insufficient belief” of the disciples at the appearance of our Lord is very similar to the “insufficient belief” of many today, when it comes to the resurrection of our Lord. They would hastily admit that Jesus is, in some sense, alive today. He is alive in spirit, alive in our hearts, not unlike the way in which the memory of those who have died lives within us. But He is not viewed to be physically raised from the dead and present with His people today. Such unbelief is like that of the disciples. And this unbelief Jesus was determined to change to genuine faith.

The thrust of verses 36-43 is our Lord’s gracious provision of ample physical evidence for His physical resurrection. The first evidence was the Lord, standing before them. He was not, as they supposed, a ghost. He encouraged them to touch Him, and to see that He had flesh and bones (verse 40). He also encouraged them to look at His hands and His feet (verse 40). The inference is clear that both His hands and His feet bore the nail prints which He had from the cross. In this sense, at least, His body was “like” the body He had before His death. The body of our Lord was not like the former body in that it was not corruptible, and it was somehow capable of appearing and disappearing, as was evident in His appearance in the room where they met, with the door locked. Finally, Jesus ate some of the fish which they were eating, the final proof that His body was, indeed, a real one – one which may not require food for life, but which did assimilate it. How else would Jesus be able to share a banquet with His disciples in heaven, and to drink the cup and eat the bread anew in the kingdom (cf. Luke 22:15-18)?

The evidence was compelling. The disciples were convinced. This is most apparent by the change in their disposition. There are three sets of

descriptions given to us in verses 36-37. Pause for a moment to note them.

- (1) Startled and Frightened (verse 37)
- (2) Troubled and Doubting (verse 38)
- (3) Joy and Amazement (verse 41)

The disciples’ first response to Jesus’ appearance was that they were “startled and frightened” (verse 37). Jesus pressed past these symptoms, to the deeper roots, which was that their spirits were troubled and doubting (verse 38). Once the evidence was grasped by the disciples, their “troubled spirits” turned to “joyfulness” (which I think includes the “peace” of which our Lord spoke in His greeting), and their “doubt” turned to amazement. The former “doubt” was that of unbelief, the latter “amazement” was due to joy, equivalent to, “I can’t believe this is happening to me!” or “It’s too good to be true!”

We should not leave these verses behind without suggesting that Lord’s use of the term “peace” is more than just the usual form of greeting, which it seems to be. The term “peace” should have been a pregnant one, first of all from its Old Testament roots. Very often (e.g. Lev. 26:1-13; Num. 6:22-26; Judges. 6:11-24; Isa. 9:1-7; 48:17-18; 59:1-8; 60:17-20; Ezek. 37:24-28; Micah 5:5; Hag. 2:3-9) the peace of God is closely associated with His presence. Conversely, the absence of peace is associated with His absence or withdrawal. Second, Jesus’ words to His disciples, recorded by John in the upper room discourse (John 14-17) contained the word “peace” several times. The “peace” of which our Lord spoke there had to do with the future, when His presence with His disciples was manifested through His Spirit, who was yet to come. The peace of God and the presence of God are virtually inseparable. It is not surprising, then, that Jesus would show His disciples that He was physically present, and also speak to them about peace.

Exhibit Two: Exegetical Evidence (24:44-49)

With the two disciples who were on the road to Emmaus, Jesus began with the exegetical (biblical) evidence concerning His rejection, suffering, death, and resurrection. He then existentially (experientially) was revealed to them, only to immediately disappear. Here, the order is

reversed, but both the existential and the exegetical elements are present.

The first thing that catches my attention in these verses is that there is nothing “new” here, either concerning what has happened to the Lord Jesus, or concerning what was to take place in and through the disciples. All of it has been prophesied in the Scriptures, and also foretold by the Lord Jesus. There are three specific areas of focus here: (1) the rejection, suffering, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; (2) the proclamation of the gospel to all nations; and, (3) the promise of the Holy Spirit, coming on the disciples to endue them with power.

The first of these three will come as no surprise to us. The rejection, death, and resurrection of Messiah was one of the prominent (albeit perplexing, cf. 1 Peter 1:10-12) prophetic themes of the Old Testament. The rejection and suffering of the Lord Jesus was alluded to by Simeon (Luke 2:34-35). It was hinted at by the treatment of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus. It was anticipated by the rejection of Jesus on the occasion of His first (recorded) public presentation of Himself as Messiah in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:14-30). As Jesus’ ministry and message became more widespread, the opposition of the Jewish religious leaders became more intense and organized. On several occasions or Lord told His disciples that this would be His divinely determined destiny (cf. Luke 9:21-23; 9:44-45; 18:31-34). While the disciples did not grasp this truth, and even resisted what they knew of it, they needed only to be reminded that this is what He had told them.

The rejection, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus was not only something which He had told them previously, on a number of occasions, it was also that concerning which the Old Testament prophets had foretold, beginning with the Law of Moses, and including the Prophets and the Psalms. These three – the Law of Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets – are not just references to general witnesses to the suffering and Messiah; they are the three main categories or divisions into which the entire Old Testament was sub-divided. Thus, Jesus was reminding His disciples that the entire Old Testament, in all of its three major divisions, bore witness to His suffering and death.

All of the Old Testament, beginning with the Law of Moses, looked ahead to the coming of Jesus as the Messiah. And all of the Old Testament spoke of His rejection, suffering, death, and resurrection, either by direct statement or by inference. Thus it was the Jesus could say, as recorded in John’s gospel, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad” (John 8:56).

Twice now, in the last chapter of Luke’s gospel, Jesus had made reference to the prophecies of the Old Testament referring to His rejection, suffering, death, and resurrection. At least in His conversation with the two men on the road to Emmaus (24:27), Jesus specifically referred to a number of Old Testament texts and explained them in the light of their fulfillment in Him. But we are not given so much as one reference here. Why did Jesus spell out to His disciples the Old Testament prophecies which referred to Him, but Luke does not enumerate them for us? I suspect that there are at least two reasons. First, we will see what some of the key prophecies are when we get to the Book of Acts. In Acts chapter two, for example, Peter will refer to some Old Testament texts to prove that Jesus had to suffer, die, and be raised from the dead. Luke is simply waiting for a better time. Second, however, I think that God may have intended for us to search out these texts for ourselves. He chose not to give us a concordance or a topical reference set to this subject. He expects us to read our Old Testament with an eye for those prophecies pertaining to Messiah. God does not do all our homework for us.

Verse 45 is crucial, I believe, for it indicates to us that while there was an unbelief of which the disciples were guilty, and for which they were rebuked (e.g. Mark 16:14), there was also a natural inability to understand the Scriptures, which had to be divinely removed. In verse 45, Luke informs us that Jesus removed that veil, enabling the disciples to understand, for the first time, the Old Testament Scriptures pertaining to Him as Messiah, especially as related to His rejection, suffering, and death. This is consistent with what Paul will later write in his first epistle to the Corinthians.

But we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before

the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for it they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written,

“THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED INTO 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. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 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, 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. 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. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE SHOULD INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:7-16).

From this text we can see that all men, unaided by the Spirit of God, are incapable of understanding the things of God because God, His ways, and His means, are vastly beyond our ability to comprehend. In addition to this barrier, there is an additional “veil” which must be removed from the eyes of the Jews. Of this Paul also wrote in his second epistle to the Corinthians.

But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; BUT WHENEVER A MAN TURNS TO THE LORD, THE VEIL IS TAKEN AWAY. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit (2 Corinthians 2:14-18).

It was not until after His resurrection that the eyes of the disciples were opened to understand all that the prophets had spoken pertaining to the ministry of the Messiah, and especially of His

rejection, suffering, death, and resurrection. That veil was now removed. From this point on the disciples will turn to the Old Testament prophecies to prove the Jesus was the promised Messiah, and that all that happened to Him was a prophetic necessity.

The second facet of Old Testament prophecy to which Jesus pointed the disciples was the proclamation of the gospel to all nations, and not just to Israel.

Luke 24:46-48

He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things (Luke 24:46-48).

Notice the “and,” the only thing between the first facet and the second. There is no disjunction here, but conjunction. It was written that the “Christ must suffer and rise on the third day,” and it was also written that “repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations.” Here was a truth just as difficult to grasp as the first. How the Jews resisted this aspect of Christ’s Messiahship, as He clearly indicated it must be at the very outset of His ministry (Luke 4:24-27). And this was not the first time that the salvation of the Gentiles would be spoken of in Luke. At the birth of the Lord Jesus, the angel told the shepherds that the “good news of great joy” which he was bringing to them was “for all the people” (2:10). The universality of the gospel—the fact that the Messiah would die for the sins of all who would believe, Jew or Gentile—was one of the greatest irritations for the Jews, especially for those who did not see themselves as “sinners.”

The Abrahamic Covenant, which was made with Abraham, is usually viewed as focusing on the blessings which will come to Israel, but the blessings God promised Abraham were those which would extend to all nations.

“And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:3, NASB).

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The later prophets will affirm this same promise of salvation and blessing for the Gentiles. We see, for example, these prophecies.

28 “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. 29 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. 30 I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. 31 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. 32 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the survivors whom the Lord calls (Joel 2:28-32, NASB, emphasis mine).

3 ‘Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing? 4 But now be strong, O Zerubbabel,’ declares the Lord. ‘Be strong, O Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,’ declares the Lord, ‘and work. For I am with you,’ declares the Lord Almighty. 5 ‘This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.’ 6 “This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. 7 I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the Lord Almighty. 8 ‘The silver is mine and the gold is mine,’ declares the Lord Almighty. 9 ‘The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,’ says the Lord Almighty. ‘And in this place I will grant peace,’ declares the Lord Almighty” (Haggai 2:3-9, NASB, emphasis mine).

“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations (Isaiah 42:1, NASB, emphasis mine).

In the light of the fact that the salvation which Messiah came to bring was for all nations, the Great Commission comes as no new revelation, but as an outflow, both of the work of Christ on the cross of Calvary, and of the Old Testament prophecies which foretold of the salvation of men

of every nation. Notice that Luke (both here and in Acts 1:8) records the Great Commission, not so much as a command as a promise, a certainty.

In order for the gospel to be proclaimed to men of every nation, beginning at Jerusalem, the disciples must be endued with power, the promised power of the Holy Spirit, which would turn hearts of stone to hearts of flesh, which would convict and convert some of the very ones who, only a little more than a month before, had called out for the murder of Messiah. This promise of the Holy Spirit was, like the two previous areas of prophecy, something of which Jesus spoke to His disciples, and which the Old Testament prophets had foretold. Let us look briefly at some of these references to the Holy Spirit’s coming.

The coming of the Holy Spirit was a “clothing with power from on high,” as Jesus said (verse 49). It was also that which the Father had promised. This “promise of the Father” (cf. Acts 1:4) must have its roots in the Old Testament prophets, and so it does. Once again, however, if Jesus told the disciples what the specific prophetic texts were, Luke did not record them. We know from Acts chapter 2 that Joel chapter 2 will be one of those texts. But let us look at several other texts which promise the coming of the Spirit in a greater way than Israel had experienced to that point in time.

12 Beat your breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vines 13 and for the land of my people, a land overgrown with thorns and briars—yes, mourn for all houses of merriment and for this city of revelry. 14 The fortress will be abandoned, the noisy city deserted; citadel and watchtower will become a wasteland forever, the delight of donkeys, a pasture for flocks, 15 till the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the desert becomes a fertile field, and the fertile field seems like a forest. 16 Justice will dwell in the desert and righteousness live in the fertile field. 17 The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever. 18 My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest. 19 Though hail flattens the forest and the city is leveled completely, 20 how blessed you will be, sowing your seed by every stream,

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and letting your cattle and donkeys range free (Isaiah 32:12-20).

1 “But now listen, O Jacob, my servant, Israel, whom I have chosen. 2 This is what the Lord says – he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. 3 For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. 4 They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams. 5 One will say, ‘I belong to the Lord’; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; still another will write on his hand, ‘The Lord’s,’ and will take the name Israel (Isaiah 44:1-5).

20 “The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,” declares the Lord. 21 “As for me, this is my covenant with them,” says the Lord. “My Spirit, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of their descendants from this time on and forever,” says the Lord (Isaiah 59:20-21).

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” ... Then he said to me: “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’ Therefore prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord’” (Ezekiel 37:1-3a,11-14).

I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord” (Ezekiel 39:29).

10 “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. 11 On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be great, like the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. 12 The land will mourn, each clan by itself, with their wives by themselves: the clan of the house of David and their wives, the clan of the house of Nathan and their wives, 13 the clan of the house of Levi and their wives, the clan of Shimei and their wives, 14 and all the rest of the clans and their wives (Zechariah 12:10-14).

The “promise of the Father” was reiterated by John the Baptist, who contrasted his baptism with that of the Messiah who would come after him (cf. Luke 3:16). Jesus also spoke of the coming of the Holy Spirit in Luke 11:5-13. When the disciples were drug off and put on trial for their faith, they were told not to prepare their defense in advance, but that in that hour the Holy Spirit would give them the words to speak (Luke 12:12; Mark 13:11; Matthew 10:20). It the Gospel of John primary source of our Lord’s teaching on the Holy Spirit. Jesus offered the Holy Spirit to all who thirsted (John 7:37-39), and He especially promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples in His absence (John 14-16).

The nature of the ministry of the Holy Spirit will be taken up in our study of the Book of Acts, but suffice it to say that Jesus commanded His disciples not to go forth with their witness to the things which had happened apart from the power which He would provide through His Spirit. He who commanded the disciples to be His witnesses also commanded them only to witness in the power that He would provide. He who commands is He who enables.

The Ascension and the Disciples’ Boldness in Worship (24:50-53)

Forty days have passed, as Luke will make clear in Acts 1:3. The disciples are now led to the outskirts of Jerusalem, a “Sabbath day’s journey” for that city, to the mount called Olivet (Acts 1:12). As He lifted His hands in blessing, He was taken up from them. A slightly more detailed account will follow in Acts. Luke jumps ahead to those days which

will follow (I think that these are after Pentecost). These disciples who were so distraught and disarmed by the death of Jesus are now described as transformed.

Notice the change that Luke describes here. These once despondent disciples are now characterized by praise. And these followers of Jesus who only days before were cowering behind locked doors, hidden from the Jewish religious leaders who crucified their Lord, are now persistently, publicly praising God – in the temple, the very headquarters of Judaism. The change is briefly described. The transformation will be depicted in much greater detail in the Book of Acts, the sequel volume, which perhaps is already under way.

Conclusion

The last chapter of Luke serves as a kind of conclusion, as we would expect. But in reality it is hardly a conclusion. There is but one verse, the very last verse, which gives us any sense of conclusion, and that is incredibly brief. The reason should be obvious. The Gospel of Luke cannot provide us with an ending. It is a gospel, and as such, it can tell us of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, but it cannot tell us the whole story. This is precisely why Luke found it necessary to write another volume, a sequel to the gospel. In this book, Luke will continue the story of the work of Christ in the world through His church, empowered by His Spirit.

As I read the Gospel of Luke and then the Book of Acts, I can rather easily understand why the disciples felt and acted as they did in the Gospel of Luke. I can even somewhat grasp how their feelings and actions changed in the Book of Acts. But what troubles me is that the church today seems to act more like the disciples in Luke than they do the apostles in Acts. Is it possible that we need to undergo the same change of heart, mind, and action that the disciples did? Are we so much like they were then? I think so.

How, then, must we change, to be more like the apostles in Acts than to continue to be like the disciples in Luke? What must change? First of all, I think that we believe, far more than the disciples did, that Jesus had to be rejected, put to death, and rise again. I don't think our problem is understanding what the Old Testament taught about Jesus. To take this a step further, I don't

think that we have a great problem understanding what the gospels teach, concerning the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. I think our problem is that in spite of all that we know about Jesus, we don't really believe it. Our "profession" (our creed – what we say we believe) may be post-Pentecost, but our practice, our conduct is pre-Pentecost. We live more like the disciples lived in Luke than like they lived in Acts. The facts we know, but do we really believe them. The power we profess, but do we really practice it?

In short, I see the problem exposed here in Luke, but the solution is yet to be worked out. It is solved in Acts. While a believe in the resurrection of Christ is vital, there is yet more that is needed. What is it? Let us press on to Acts to see what it is. On to volume 2!

Not quite so fast. Before we press on, let me give you a hint. The disciples had come to believe that Jesus had not only died, but had risen again. The nature of the resurrection, as the disciples grasped it, was inadequate – they thought of it only as a "spiritual" resurrection. They did not really believe Jesus was present with them. That was the truth that was so hard to grasp. Jesus was not only alive. Jesus was with them, in their very midst. He would be even more present with them, and in them, through His Spirit, but this was the promise of what was still to come. The resurrection of Christ is so much sweeter when we come to realize that Him whom God raised from the dead is not only alive, but present, by means of His Spirit. May we come to grasp His presence in us, individually and corporately. Herein in joy and power. As Paul will later put it,

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 8:11).

The greatest reality of the resurrection that can be seen today is the reality that a body which is incapable of living in a way that pleases God and fulfills His commandments, which is subject to the power of sin, can be given life by the same Spirit that raised the dead body of our Lord to life. The Spirit who raised Christ from the dead can give life to our dead bodies. Here is a reality of the resurrection which the disciples were soon to experience. May we experience it as well.
