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a *Grace Notes* course

## **Life of Christ 300**

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### **Lesson 308**

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**Life of Christ 308**

**Contents**

**The Commissioning of the Twelve.....1**

## The Commissioning of the Twelve

Matthew 10:1-42

Mark 6:7-11

Luke 9:1-5

Outline.

The Disciples and Their Mission.

The summons, the organization, the empowerment, and the purpose. "And after calling together His twelve disciples He began to send them out two by two and He gave to them power and authority over unclean spirits so as to cast them out and to heal every disease and every malady. And He sent them to preach the Kingdom of God and heal the weak."

The personnel. "Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first Simon the one named Peter and Andrew his brother, and James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector, James the son of Alphaeus and Thaddeus, Simon the Cananean and Judas the Iscariot who also betrayed Him."

The Personal Instructions for the Mission.

Instructions for the way.

The objective people of the mission. "Jesus sent the twelve out after He gave them personal instruction, saying, 'Do not go out into the way of the Gentiles and do not go into the city of the Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'"

The content of the message. "And as you are going, preach, saying, 'Near is the Kingdom of Heaven.'"

The empowerment of the message. "Heal the weak, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely you received, give freely."

The demand of grace on the recipients of the message. "Do not acquire gold nor silver nor copper for your money belts, nor a bag for the way nor two coats nor sandals nor an [extra] staff, for worthy is the worker of his wages."

The general procedure in the villages. "And into whichever ever city or village you enter, find out

who in it is worthy, and remain there until you depart. And while entering the house, greet it. And if indeed the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whoever does not receive you nor listen to your words, while exiting the house or that city shake the dust out of your feet as a testimony against them. Truly I say to you, it will be better for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city."

The Hazards of the Mission, and their Remedies.

The hazard of the disciples' naivete'. "Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; therefore become intelligent as the serpents and innocent as doves. And pay close attention to men; For they will betray you to the courts and they will scourge you in their synagogues."

The weakness of the disciples' words. "And you will be led before governors and even kings for My sake to testify to them and to the Gentiles. But whenever they give you over, do not care how or what you might speak; For it will be given to you in that hour what you might speak; for you are not the ones speaking but the Spirit of your Father Who speaks in you."

The hazard of betrayal from within the family. "And a brother will betray a brother unto death and a father a child, and children will rise up against parents and kill them. And you will be hated by all because of My name; but the one who remains until the end, this one will be saved."

Divine guidance through persecution. "And whenever they persecute you in this city, flee into the next; for truly I say to you, you will not complete the cities of Israel until the Son of man comes."

Preparation for persecution. "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor is a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher and the slave like his master. If they have called the ruler of the house Beelzebub, how much worse they will call the household members!"

Words of encouragement and assurance of vindication.

The assurance of eternal vindication. “Therefore do not fear them; for there is nothing having been concealed that will not be revealed and hidden which will not be made known.

The encouragement toward forthrightness. “What I say to you in the dark you say in the light, and what you hear [whispered] in the ear, you preach upon the housetops.”

The distinctions regarding temporal and eternal loss. “And do not fear from the ones who kill the body, but who does not have the power to kill the soul; but fear rather the one who has power to kill both the soul and the body in Gehenna. Aren’t two sparrows sold for a cent? Yet one of them does not fall upon the ground apart from your Father. And indeed every hair of your head is numbered. Therefore do not fear; you yourselves are much different from sparrows.”

The reassurance of eternal vindication. “Therefore everyone who confesses in me before men, I will confess also in them before My Father Who is in heaven; And whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father Who is in heaven.”

The divisive nature of the Kingdom of God. “Do not think that I came to cast peace upon the earth; I did not come to cast peace but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man’s enemies are his household-members.”

The results of the priorities according to the divisions. “The one who love his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and the one who loves a son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me; and who does not take his cross and follow after Me, he is not worthy of Me. The one who find his soul destroys it, and the one who destroys his soul in my behalf finds it.”

The reward of the faithful. “The one who receives you receives Me, and the one who receives Me receives the one who sent Me. The one who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive the profit of a prophet, and the one who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man will receive the reward of a

righteous man. And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water, truly I say to you, he will certainly not lose his reward!”

## II. Exposition.

### The Disciples and Their Mission.

The summons, the organization, the empowerment, and the purpose. “And after calling together His twelve disciples He began to send them out two by two and He gave to them power and authority over unclean spirits so as to cast them out and to heal every disease and every malady. And He sent them to preach the Kingdom of God and heal the weak.”

As you may recall, Christ and the twelve are embarked on a circuit of the towns of Galilee. At one of the stops along the way, He summons them together, which is portrayed by the verb PROSKALEO.

His strategy was to send them out two by two. This detail we gain in Mark’s gospel, where it says DUO. When you come back to Matthew’s gospel and examine the list of disciples there, you will notice right away that they are listed in pairs.

- (1) These are the operational pairs of this new gospel ministry. Christ intended to send them out like a reverse ark, two by two into the world.
- (2) This convention of Christ’s sets up a system of responsibility and support for each pair. They may rely on one another for many things in the course of their travels, but it would mostly be encouragement to carry out the mission.

Christ equipped each man with power and authority to cast out demons and heal every disease and every malady.

- (1) This was the same power which Christ had, and which came ultimately from God the Holy Spirit.
- (2) Notice the coupling of power and authority that comes from Luke’s gospel. Luke thought it important to reinforce the principle of authority in the wielding of power.
- (3) Paul had this to say about authority in Romans 13:1-2: “(1) Let every soul subordinate himself to the ruling authorities. For there is no legitimate

authority except through God, and the present authorities have been established through God. (2) Therefore the one who disobeys legitimate authority opposes what God has delegated, and those who oppose will bring judgement on themselves.”

- (a) EXOUSIA occurs here as ‘legitimate authority.’ It is a word that denotes individual rights, and the liberty to decide for oneself.
- (b) It also describes the ability to exercise power and authority. In this use there is the connotation of skill and even Divine right.
- (c) Finally, it indicates legitimate authority, which is given within the framework of the laws of Divine establishment.
- (4) This would function just the same as it did in the ministry of Christ - to validate and illustrate.
- (a) As validation, these powers would clearly point out that they were from God, and therefore validate their kingdom message.
- (b) As illustration, they would point to the purpose of the first advent of the Messiah, which was to heal the great ailment of mankind, total depravity in sin.

And then Luke weighs in again with an important detail - that He sent them out to preach the kingdom and heal the weak.

- (1) Now in Luke’s gospel, there already exists a mention of the healing ministry, and so it seem a little redundant to mention it again in the very next sentence. But Luke is not the redundant type.
- (2) The word for weak is ASTHENEIA, which may have three different meanings, depending on the context.
- (a) Physical weakness. Usually this is due to some physical ailment.
- (b) Sickness or illness. This is a pretty common use of the word.
- (c) The weakness or helplessness of the sinful state, divided into two categories:
- The weakness of total depravity prior to salvation.
  - The weakness of being out of fellowship after salvation.

(3) Here ASTHENEIA focuses on total depravity, and so Christ had an evangelistic purpose for this mission to go alongside the kingdom purpose. The ultimate purpose was the kingdom purpose.

The personnel. “Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first Simon the one named Peter and Andrew his brother, and James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector, James the son of Alphaeus and Thaddeus, Simon the Cananean and Judas the Iscariot who also betrayed Him.”

See the doctrine of the twelve disciples.

There is not much to say about these pairings other than was is readily apparent from observation.

It is in Matthew’s gospel that we would expect to find the most insight on the life of Thomas, because they were ministry partners for this period.

Christ also exercises wisdom in pairing the brothers Peter and Andrew, and James and John. Since they all had been in business together, working together in evangelism would have been natural.

Philip and Bartholomew would also have been an interesting combination, since both these men had Gentile names, and there was a strong possibility at least for Bartholomew to be a Gentile. And now they were missionaries to the wayward Jews. There is more than a little irony in this possibility.

The Personal Instructions for the Mission.

Instructions for the way.

The objective people of the mission. “Jesus sent the twelve out after He gave them personal instruction, saying, ‘Do not go out into the way of the Gentiles and do not go into the city of the Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’”

- (1) Christ has a fair set of instructions for His disciples; He knows that they are embarked on something new, and it will be a great challenge for them.
- (2) For nearly two years they have had the opportunity to observe Christ in action in

everything that they are about to do. They have had the perfect example of a gospel ministry set before them almost every day. There is not one thing in this set of commands that Christ has not lived every day for the past two years.

(3) And now they receive His personal instruction. The verb is PARAGGELLO in the Greek, and it actually draws meaning from the military realm. Literally, it is, 'to send from beside you.' So it has the idea of giving orders and then sending them out to execute those orders.

(4) But here along with those orders is some excellent communication on what to expect. Christ does not simply give orders and expect them to obey in rote fashion.

(5) By communicating clearly Christ gives them flexibility, and more importantly, the courage that they need to fulfill their mission.

(6) There are three racial categories here: the Gentiles, the half-Jewish Samaritans, and the full sons of Abraham, the Jews.

(a) God never makes an issue out of race, and Christ never meant to imply that those other groups were unworthy of the gospel.

(b) If you recall, Christ has already participated in giving the gospel to the Samaritan woman of John chapter four, and He did indeed do the same thing when He healed the Gentile centurion's servant in Matthew 8.

(7) There is no prejudice here whatsoever. But it is Christ's objective to bring the lost sheep of Israel back into the fold. The people have gone astray.

(8) The people of Israel are called the sheep in Psalm 100:3, "Know that the Lord Himself is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture."

(9) The very last verse of the 119th Psalm contains the lost sheep metaphor: "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant, for I do not forget Your commandments."

(10) Jeremiah 23:1-6 is especially compelling, because it is the prophecy of this action: "(1) 'Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and

scattering the sheep of My pasture!' declares the Lord. (2) Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel concerning the shepherds who are tending My people: 'You have scattered My flock and driven them away, and have not attended to them; behold, I am about to attend to you for the evil of your deeds,' declares the Lord. (3) 'Then I Myself will gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and bring them back to their pasture, and they will be fruitful and multiply. (4) I will also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing,' declares the Lord. (5) 'Behold, the days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and he will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land. (6) In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely; and this is His name by which He will be called, 'The Lord our righteousness.'" Jeremiah 50:6-7, 17, 44 say a few of the same things.

(a) God places responsibility squarely on the heads of the shepherds of the land. This is the religious leadership of the time.

(b) Jeremiah was the prophet of the destruction of Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel. He witnessed their final discipline at the hands of Babylon.

(c) Verses five and six look at the Messiah of Israel. He is the one who will bring together the scattered flock and lost sheep of Israel. Here then is more messianic identification by Christ.

(d) There is a spiritual prerequisite for the restoration of Israel; this is what the Jews of Christ's time refused to realize.

(e) The sheep of Christ's time are scattered and lost because of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Their religious and moral degeneracy has caused the flock, the common people of Israel to go astray.

(f) Christ aims His disciples at the lost sheep of Israel so that they will be gathered once again under His shepherding Messiahship.

(g) This will ultimately occur at the second advent, and careful study of verses three and four

will reveal the regathering of Israel as the second advent, and the rule of the shepherds as the millennium.

(h) Currently, God is raising up shepherds in the form of mature church age believers. We will be the undershepherds of Christ's millennial rule. That these undershepherds would be Gentiles was not a decided issue at the time of the prophecy.

(11) Ezekiel chapter thirty-four is a prophecy against the shepherds of Israel, the religious leadership of Israel which had failed their flock. This failed leadership was again and again the reason for the lost sheep.

(12) There is an echo here from Isaiah 53:6, "All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him."

(13) Zechariah 10:2-4 is very much like the Jeremiah 23 passage: "(2) For the teraphim speak iniquity, and the diviners see lying visions and tell false dreams; they comfort in vain. Therefore the people wander like sheep, they are afflicted, because there is no shepherd. (3) My anger is kindled against the shepherds, and I will punish the male goats; for the Lord the hosts has visited His flock, the house of Judah, and will make them like His majestic horse in battle. (4) From them will come the cornerstone, from them the tent peg, from them the bow of battle, from them every ruler, all of them together."

The content of the message. "And as you are going, preach, saying, 'Near is the Kingdom of Heaven.'"

(1) This is a truly honest statement, because there is the potential of having the two advents of Christ separated only by about seven years. The tribulation and second advents are still an option for God because the volition of Israel has not completely rejected Christ.

(2) So the kingdom of heaven is truly near in a chronological sense to the nation of Israel. Israel has a real opportunity to live in the kingdom during their lifetimes.

(3) In a secondary sense the kingdom is near even today. It is near for all individuals because of the

imminence of death, and because of the imminence of the rapture.

(4) And Matthew wanted his Jewish readers to understand this with clarity. He employs the adverb of time EGGIKEN to do so.

(5) This has a remarkable similarity to a more famous passage in the 28th chapter of Matthew. It is worth placing here. Matthew 28:18-20: "All authority was given to me in heaven and on earth. Therefore after going instruct all the Gentiles, baptizing them into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all which I commanded you. And behold I myself am with you all the days until the conclusion of the age [dispensation]."

(a) This passage contains one command - that the disciples should disciple all the Gentiles. The Greek word MATHETEUSATE (disciple) is the only one in the true imperative mood in the passage. This verb means to instruct, or teach someone.

(b) This command is directed to Christ's disciples alone, but it extends well to every church age believer.

(c) The command to instruct is based on the authority of Christ. All authority was given to Him in heaven and on earth. The passive voice of DIDOMI indicates that Christ did not act on his own divine authority, but took that which was given to him by the father.

(d) This was the authority to offer the millennial kingdom to the Jews. Now this authority is transferred to the Gentiles. So the realm of authority is knowledge and instruction. It is important to note that the disciples were not given the authority to bring in the kingdom by themselves. The beginning of the kingdom is not dependent on human agency.

(e) The command to instruct has a certain quality of lifestyle. The aorist participle POREUTHENTES shows that this action precedes the command to instruct. It is similar but not identical to our passage in Matthew 10.

(f) There is no command to go. It is assumed that these disciples will go out into the world. With regard to geography, God leads and you end up

there. With regard to methodology, God commands.

(g) The command to instruct is more fully explained by two present participles. The action of a present participle occurs at the same time as the main verb of the sentence. No matter what else you understand from the two participles, understand that they are simply giving a full explanation of the way in which the instruction is to take place.

- The first participle is BAPTIZONTES, which is from BAPTIZO 'really baptize'.

- This is not the literal water baptism, but a 'change by immersion,' which is closer to the original meaning of the word. The change is inward, and it has to do with character.

- The phrase 'into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit' describes the kind of change that is to take place.

- The Greek word ONOMA is our English name. In the ancient way of thinking, a 'name' represented the true nature of its bearer. It was not just a label or designation without meaning, used to separate one from all others.

- In the Hebrew way of thinking a person's name revealed his character, personality, and even destiny.

- The preposition EIS denotes change. Usually it shows movement from one place to another, but here it reveals movement from human, worldly character to the divine.

- The change in the believer is brought about by immersion into the divine character. This can only take place by faith perception - the MATHETEUS command already mentioned.

- The second participle is DIDASKONTES, which means to teach with authority. This more properly describes both the MATHETEUS and the BAPTIZONTES. These two participles are not separate commands, but explanations of one command. They both depend on that command.

(h) The first part of the explanation tells us that the discipleship is to be a change by immersion into the divine character. The second part tells us

how that immersion is to take place - teaching with authority.

(i) The Gentiles are to be taught to keep all that Christ had commanded the disciples. They are to be taught how to be obedient to the commands of Christ.

(j) Note that teaching precedes obedience. You cannot be obedient without the truth. Obedience cannot logically precede faith perception, because faith perception is the prerequisite for any obedience.

(k) Christ then gives a final word of encouragement. "and behold I myself am with you all the days until the conclusion of the age."

The empowerment of the message. "Heal the weak, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely you received, give freely."

(1) So along with the power and authority comes a command to use it.

(2) Key to this command is the rationale - grace overflows. If you received freely, that is, if you had grace orientation as the recipient of grace, then there is a compulsion to give as freely as you have given.

(3) There is a little insight to be gained by observing the Greek adverb which is translated 'freely' here. It is DOREAN, which comes from the noun 'gift.'

(4) A gift is something that you give free charge, no strings attached.

(5) Christ has invested the disciples with great power; spectacular power. They could easily convert this into many forms of personal advantage: money-making, womanizing, political advantage - you name it.

(6) But no price is ever to be attached to the gospel; no price in any way.

(7) There are many applications in the modern world, even after the temporary spiritual gifts have ceased.

(a) Any kind of church ministry cannot charge money in exchange for anything that includes the gospel or is associated with their ministry.



(b) Christian music is especially criminal today; any concert or musical media that places a price on its product is wrong! It is anti-grace to set a price on what God has freely given.

(c) I am quite sure that our Lord would consider today's Christian music industry one with the moneychangers of the temple. He would clear them out! Every one of them is going to be accountable to the judgment seat of Christ for their mixture of the gospel with money.

(d) Music is a very powerful medium for the gospel, and its power is not too far distant from the power of the temporary spiritual gifts.

(e) In similar fashion, the permanent spiritual gifts of pastor-teacher and evangelism carry with them power and authority, and can be used to personal advantage in every category. And yet no exchange is to be associate with them.

(8) Acts chapter eight records Peter's response to a solicitation to exchange money for the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:9-24 has the record, "(9) Now there was a man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; (10) and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, 'This man is what is called the Great Power of God.' (11) And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts. (12) But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. (13) Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed. (14) Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, (15) who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. (16) For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (17) Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. (18) Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them

money, (19) saying, 'Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.' (20) But Peter said to him, 'May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! (21) You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. (22) Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. (23) For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity.' (24) But Simon answered and said, 'Pray to the Lord for me yourselves, so that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.'"

(a) It is apparent that Simon the Magician had the lust pattern of approbation. As an unbeliever, he wanted to be known as someone great; but he was a charlatan - his magic was not real.

(b) Then one day Christian men give the gospel to his audience, and they believe. Magicians are skeptics, and they are experts on what is truth and what is a lie. That Simon the Magician believes in Jesus Christ is one of the greatest testimonies in the New Testament. After living a lie all his life, Simon sees his crowds follow the gospel, and he knows the real deal. He has an honest moment, and is saved forever.

(c) And then something even greater happens, the Holy Spirit comes upon them, and Simon the skeptical magician sees something truly supernatural for the first time in his life. And he responds in an entirely cosmic manner - he wants the approbation that will go with this kind of power.

(d) He does not really want money. That was not his area of weakness.

(e) So he offers money for the power of the Spirit, and here is where Peter steps in with strong words and complete integrity. He will not allow this trespass on God's power. That power does not exist to further man's ambition, and it is not ever for sale.

(f) Those who desire to further God's kingdom with pure motives never have to buy the power,

and those who have the information to do so never want to sell it.

(g) Only a man who was apart from grace orientation would want to buy what was freely given.

(9) John 2:13-16 reinforces this idea. The incident of the cleansing of the temple occurred at the very beginning of Christ's ministry.

(a) Verse 13, "And the Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up into Jerusalem"

- The Passover had to be a rather poignant time for Christ. On His mind would rest the burden of the sins of the world, for He knew that He would have to pay for them in the not too distant future.

- He was expecting to go into the temple and worship God, and remember His role in saving mankind.

(b) Verse 14, "And He found in the temple the ones who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the ones who were seated, the money changers."

- The temple had become the very center of an extremely corrupt system. It was the ultimate monopoly, and the evil priests manipulated that monopoly into a money-making machine.

- The Law proscribed that only sacrifices without spot or blemish were worthy for sacrifice in the temple.

- The chief priests manipulated this by making sure that no one had a worthy animal. They sent their inspectors to school for months so that they could identify the defects of any given animal. Actually this just became an excuse for disqualifying the animals brought by the heads of households.

- They also came to charge the people for the inspection of their animals. This evil led many to just give up and buy the animals that the temple provided, without even trying to bring their own.

- This was wrong, wrong, wrong. The whole point of the sacrifice was that it would come from the family; that the man would know the animal personally; that he would see the cost of sin, and greatness of God's sacrifice in sending His own Son.

- Of course the prices on these animals was greatly inflated, and the chiefs priests made a great profit from them.

- Furthermore, the chief priests and officials made it so that the animals could only be bought with the official temple currency, and the exchange rates were quite exorbitant. Thus, the moneychangers.

- With the clinking of coins and the mutter of exchange and the baa-ahing of sheep and the cooing of pigeons and the mooing of cattle you could hardly hear yourself think in the house of worship. There was record of more than three thousand head of sheep in the temple at one time. What cacophony! What corruption!

- So, Christ walks into His Father's house, the house designed for learning about His sacrifice, and He finds the worst kind of corruption. What follows is not an act of anger, but justice.

(c) Verse 15, "And He made a scourge from ropes and He cast all of them out from the temple and the sheep and the oxen, and He poured out the coins of the money-changers and He overturned the tables."

- Physical wreckage is much preferred over spiritual corruption.

- There were a bunch of money-changers, and only one Christ, but they did not attempt to stop Him.

- Was Christ an imposing figure, or were they so shocked by this action that they did not respond?

- The scourge of ropes could have been a fearful weapon, when wielded by one with skill. How did our peaceful Lord acquire such experience?

- Christ had been a carpenter by trade. It is likely that He had great strength in His hands and arms, because the profession was even more rigorous then than it is now.

- John rather humorously adds the driving out of the sheep and oxen; he makes a funny because you already expected them to be driven out. Christ drives out the wimpy bankers and money-changers and inspectors, and even the oxen and sheep. He drives them like the stupid cattle they are.

· By pouring out the coins and overturning the tables, Christ made it impossible for them to determine whose money belonged to whom. He effectively destroyed their profits.

(d) Verse 16, “And to those who were selling doves, He said, ‘Remove these things from here [in any direction], do not make the house of My Father a house of merchandise.’”

(e) This decisive action of Christ’s demonstrates His total belief in the grace system. It is clear that the Pharisees were attempting to take advantage of the people in order to make a profit.

(f) Christ considers this heinous enough to take violent action against. Even when the people of Nazareth or the Pharisees come against Him to kill Him, Christ does not react in violence. But here He does.

The demand of grace on the recipients of the message. “Do not acquire gold nor silver nor copper for your money belts, nor a bag for the way nor two coats nor sandals nor an [extra] staff, for worthy is the worker of his food.”

(1) Now here is the other half of the equation. The gospel worker is not to allow the villages to take advantage of him. He is to take only what is absolutely necessary for the journey, and nothing else.

(2) The idea is that God will motivate logistics through grace-oriented believers, so that they have enough to live.

(3) This is apparently a proverb of the day that Christ employs for the benefit of His disciples.

(4) The key phrase is AXIOS HO ERGATES TES TROPHESES AUTOU.

(a) The ERGATES was the agricultural laborer of the day. It was acceptable for the agricultural worker to eat from the plants which he harvested, and to provide food logistics for his family in this manner.

(b) TROPHESES is food, the logistical supply of the worker. It is worth it for the land owner to allow this to occur, because he benefits from the work of the harvester.

(c) So the worker is AXIOS, ‘worthy’ of his food.

(5) In the same way the gospel worker is worth his logistics. The people of the towns and villages of Galilee will so benefit from the ministry of the disciples that they will gladly supply simple logistics.

(6) There is one issue of harmony that needs to be resolved. Matthew and Luke both have Christ telling the disciples that they should not even acquire a walking staff for their journey, while Mark says the staff is the only exception.

(a) There is no linguistic resolution to this problem. The gospel of Mark is very clear in its language regarding the staff exception.

(b) But Christ gave directions on more than one occasion, and in Mark’s case, Christ decided it would be better at the time to take a single staff. On another occasion, He told them to take no staff at all.

(c) Another possible solution comes through two figures of speech, the hyperbole and the epanorthosis.

· With the hyperbole, Christ tells His disciples they are to take nothing at all save the clothes on their back. He goes to an extreme by saying ‘not even a staff.’

· Then for the sake of clarity He goes with the correction, or epanorthosis. Mark’s gospel is the correction: a single staff.

The general procedure in the villages. “And into whichever ever city or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and remain there until you depart. And while entering the house, greet it. And if indeed the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whoever does not receive you nor listen to your words, while exiting the house or that city shake the dust out of your feet as a testimony against them. Truly I say to you, it will be better for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.”

(1) Part one: find kingdom believers, and stay with them.

(a) EXETASATE means to inquire, or examine. The disciples are to go into villages and ask

around, verbally inquire as to who is AXIOS, worthy.

(b) AXIOS is pretty generic. But Christ does define worthiness in Matthew 10:37-38. "(37) The one who love his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and the one who loves a son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me; (38) and who does not take his cross and follow after Me, he is not worthy of Me."

- So worthiness means that the person has Jesus Christ as his top priority - above family, above everything.

- So we can define these as kingdom believers with momentum of spiritual growth.

(c) And you can see that this is quite wise. The kingdom believers can provide logistical support and spiritual encouragement. They may even become active team members in the evangelistic efforts.

(d) Meetings may be held at their houses; they will be perfect for follow-up on the new believers, supporting them and so on.

(2) Part two: testing procedures.

(a) The disciples are to go into a house, and give a greeting.

(b) Although the substance of the greeting is not specified, it is to be one which enables the owner of the house to identify himself as a kingdom believer.

(c) Any number of greetings may serve. Even just being straightforward and saying, "Hi. Do you believe that Jesus is the Messiah?" would be sufficient.

(d) In any event, there will be either a positive or a negative response.

- With the positive response, the peace of the disciples is to come upon the house.

- In the negative case, the peace is to return to the disciples.

- Whatever this peace may be, it is something that the disciples can give or take back. It is genuinely up to them.

- The imperative of entreaty has Christ giving them a polite command regarding the going and

returning of peace. ELTHATO and EPISTRAPHETO are the two imperative mood verbs here.

- Because of the imperative mood, you can see that the disciples have the volitional power to bring this peace.

- Luke 7:50 and 8:48 give clues as to the true nature of this peace. In each case, Christ tells someone He has just healed to go into peace. They are to enter into the inner peace that comes with a good relationship with God.

- The peace is going to be just like what the Greek word SUNANAPAUSOMAI portrays in these verses:

- Romans 15:32, "...so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company."

- 1 Corinthians 16:18, "For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men."

- 2 Timothy 1:16, "The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains..."

- Philemon 7, "...because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother."

- The peace is the refreshment that the disciples can bring to the hearts of those with whom they stay. They eat meals and talk about Christ and the Kingdom; they sit around at night before bedtime and do the same. They share their enthusiasm as they relate their memories of two years on the road with the Messiah.

- And of course it is a peaceful refreshment to these kingdom believers. It is as close as many of them will get to the Messiah.

(3) Part three: testify against the unworthy.

(a) There is an act that is to symbolize an attitude toward the negative people of Galilee.

(b) If they do not receive or listen to the kingdom ministry then some action is to take place.

(c) The action is either to take place at the doorstep if the house is negative, or at the edge of the village if the village is negative.

(d) They are to shake the dust from their sandals, so that those people understand that the disciples do not want to have the least bit to do with them. They even want to forget the dust that came from that house or village.

(e) There is a completeness to this that is similar to the cremation practice of the Old Testament. Cremation was authorized only to forget a capital felon, and there was no burial, no monument, and no body.

(f) So people who reject the kingdom plan are to be totally forgotten. The disciples are no longer to have anything to do with them at all.

(g) The verb EKTINAXATE is aorist. It portrays a simple action in the past. The simplicity of that is the simplicity of forgetfulness.

(h) But there is more here than a vengeful shaking of dust. The focus on forgetfulness also prevents the holding of grudges.

(i) Because negative people can become ugly, and do ugly things to those who bring them the good news of the gospel.

(j) To be able to forget the abuse of the ungodly has also a purpose in avoiding discouragement. By forgetting completely the people of the last town, there is a new focus on the next. Maybe there will be positive people in the next.

(k) The final comment, "Truly I say to you, it will be better for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city." harkens back to a similar saying that Christ put out against the cities of northeastern Galilee, Chorazin and Bethsaida. This occurred in Matthew 11:20-24: "(20) Then He began to denounce the cities in which the most of His miracles appeared, because they did not repent: (21) 'Woe to you, Chorazin, woe to you, Bethsaida; because if in Tyre and Sidon the miracles which occurred appeared among you, they would have long ago repented in sackcloth and ashes. (22) Therefore I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and for Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. (23) And you Capernaum, You will you be lifted as far as heaven, will you? You will fall down as far as Hades... because if in Sodom there appeared the miracles which appeared in you, it would have

remained until this day. (24) Therefore I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the ground of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

(l) Since Sodom and Gomorrah were the extreme worst towns in Old Testament times, it will be terrible for them in the days of judgment. Just thinking of their earthly eradication as a preview for their eternal judgment makes one quiver at the thought.

(m) And it will be worse for the villages that reject Christ.

The Hazards of the Mission, and their Remedies.

The hazard of the disciples' naivete'. "Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; therefore become intelligent as the serpents and innocent as doves. And pay close attention to men; For they will betray you to the courts and they will scourge you in their synagogues."

(1) The disciples are sheep, PROBATA. This focuses on their naivete, their ignorance to the ways of the world. Even though they have been with Christ for two years, and they have witnessed how awful people can be to the Christian who is witnessing on behalf of his Savior, Christ has been a buffer, protecting them from the worst.

(2) There are wolves in the world, LUKON. Lycanthrope, the werewolf, has its origins in this world. There are people who are motivated to destroy professing Christians.

(3) There are various expressions of the wolf:

(a) The motivation of the wolf is hatred for God. There can be a million reasons for this in the mind of the wolf, but all are wrong. The wolf is always deluded.

(b) There are those who are simply murderous; they desire to kill Christians like the Neros of the world. These are the ones who lust for power, and live in a lawless atmosphere.

(c) There are those who are slanderous; they love to lie and to destroy the reputations of Christians. This can be done through mass media, or on an individual basis.

(d) There are those who participate in seduction. They tempt Christians to join them in their cosmic

wallow - in adultery and fornication, in greed, and in many other cosmic expressions.

(4) As a remedy, the disciples are to become intelligent as serpents. The word 'intelligent' is from PHRONIMOI. This mirrors the Hebrew word `ARUM in Genesis 3:1 - "The serpent was more clever than any other creature in the garden." ARUM means intelligent in a clever way.

(a) PHRONIMOI is neutral; it is neither good nor bad - it depends on how you apply the ability.

(b) They are to be intelligent as serpents, meaning that they should come to understand the ways of their enemy, and avoid their attempts at destroying them.

(5) They are also to be innocent as doves. But 'innocent' is really not a very good translation of AKERAI OI.

(a) The alpha or 'a' at the beginning of the word is like our English 'un.' It negates the meaning of the word. This is called the alpha privative in the Greek.

(b) It is literally, 'without horns.' The idea not of innocence, but of a lack of dangerous ability.

(c) The disciples are not to be violent. They are to be like the dove, who has no horns at all, and no way to defend himself.

(6) This combination of smarts and non-violence is designed to keep the disciples intact through all the wolves of the world and their destructive intent.

(7) They are to pay close attention to men, which is PROSECHETE.

(a) Men will betray them to the courts, the SUNEDRIA. These were the highest Jewish courts in the land, where even capital punishment could be meted out.

(b) Men will scourge them in the synagogues. The Sanhedrin was in Jerusalem, and the synagogues were spread throughout Israel. This is the lesser of the two punishment possibilities. The synagogue did not have the legal power to bring capital punishment, but they could scourge someone.

(c) And indeed these things, betrayal, scourging, and capital punishment, would happen to Jesus

Christ Himself. He would suffer what possibilities He predicted for His disciples' witnessing campaign.

(d) Paying close attention to men meant looking out for betrayal. Betrayal would come from within - from close friends and even disciples.

(e) And Christ gave these instructions even to Judas Iscariot! How very ironic that He warned the betrayer against betrayal.

(f) It is difficult to know whether Christ saw Judas as the betrayer just yet. When it came down to the end, He knew it, but the betrayal is still a year to the future.

The weakness of the disciples' words. "And you will be led before governors and even kings for My sake to testify to them and to the Gentiles. But whenever they give you over, do not care how or what you might speak; For it will be given to you in that hour what you might speak; for you are not the ones speaking but the Spirit of your Father Who speaks in you."

(1) There is a great issue in the Messiah. He is to be the King of kings and Lord of lords. He is therefore a threat to every ruler in the world, whether petty or grand.

(2) The governors and kings will want to know of this Messiah of the Jews, and to see if their own power and lifestyle is threatened.

(3) Both Jewish and Gentile leaders will want to know about Christ, and the throne room can be such an intimidating place for fishermen and laborers from the backwaters of Galilee.

(4) Bartholomew may be the only disciple who is in his element among the aristocracy of the land.

(5) They have fine clothes, and fine speech. In the throne room there is much evidence of wealth, and military power.

(6) They will stand in throne rooms, but they will be there as prisoners and suspects; considered traitors of the ruler on the throne.

(7) And the words that the disciples speak will be in defense of themselves and their Messiah. Their very lives will be at stake, and them with only the speech of rugged Galileans.

(a) They will not have the gift of Paul, who testified before every level of the governments of his time.

(b) Paul was a former member of the Sandhedrin, the high court of Israel. He was skilled in speech and rhetoric; he understood the legal subtleties of his day. As such, he was superior to Peter and the other Galileans.

(8) Christ tells them of the grace gift of God related to speech - the ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

(9) Principle: spiritual words and principles are superior to clothing finery and aristocratic elocution.

(a) This is the exclusive realm of God the Holy Spirit. He is the one who recalls truth from the soul.

(b) It is truth and truth alone that the disciples will need. The impact of spirit-assisted truth in the souls of all men is a truly awe-inspiring thing.

(10) The common grace ministry of the Spirit is not exactly the same as this.

(a) You will notice that this ministry works within the speaker, aiding him in what he will say.

(b) The common grace ministry of the Spirit is not subjective, but objective: it works within the one spoken to. John 16:8-11 defines this well: “(8) And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; (9) concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; (10) and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; (11) and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”

(c) The common grace ministry is restricted to the church age; Christ makes this clear by saying ‘when He comes...’ The Spirit was not operational in this fashion while Christ was present on the earth, and the ministry of Matthew Ten is operational during the disciples’ ministry at least a year before the absence of Christ could allow common grace.

(11) This is a ministry that was available in the church age as evidenced by the book of Acts 4:8,

“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them...”

(12) Indeed, you may rely on the Spirit to work within you in much the same way today.

(13) But understand that He can only use the truth that is present in your soul - He will employ what you have truly digested as a Christian.

(14) There is great power in the testimony of metabolized truth. You as a believer will have words of impressive quality if they include the sure knowledge of their operational efficacy.

(15) How great it is to look someone level in the eye and tell them of the wonders of God’s plan, and what He has done for you in grace.

(16) When Christ says to them, ‘For it will be given to you in that hour what you might speak;’ He wants them to know that they may as well not practice what they are going to say; that it holds no advantage. God the Holy Spirit may have entirely something else in mind on that date.

(17) The only practice needed is the faith perception of the truth; that much will be more than enough for the Spirit to use.

(18) Realizing that the Holy Spirit is speaking through you, and that the speech does not originate in you will overcome any hurdles to self-esteem that the speaker may have.

(19) It is therefore not you and your reputation that is on the line; it is God the Holy Spirit’s.

The hazard of betrayal from within the family. “And a brother will betray a brother unto death and a father a child, and children will rise up against parents and kill them. And you will be hated by all because of My name; but the one who remains until the end, this one will be saved.”

(1) Christ now returns to the issue of the hazards. He makes it known that the worst of the hazards will come from within the family.

(2) There will be betrayal - PARADOSEI - unto death. Not just handing someone over for questioning, but even unto death.

(3) This points out how very threatening Christianity may become - how awful the motivating hatred of God!

(4) Think about betraying your own brother to death because of what he believes, or your child or parent! Yet this is the nature of the cosmic system of Satan. This is what He aims to do.

(5) Of course, such hatred can never exist among Christians; Romans 12:18 makes it clear - "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men." We can have no hatred toward those whom we love, no hatred toward those whom we wish to join us in our love for God and His plan for our lives.

(6) This should give you an appreciation for the country in which you live, because our persecution is so very little here. It is increasing, but it is not a threat to our lives, thanks to the establishment principles which underpin our laws. We are not yet hated by all because of the precious name of our Savior.

(7) There are three main ways to reckon the verb SOZO in Scripture:

- (a) As eternal salvation.
- (b) As rescue from physical danger.
- (c) As rescue from the moral decay in the cosmic system.
- (d) This passage concentrates on the second in the list, the rescue from physical danger.

(8) Because of this comment, it appears that this passage has a tribulational cast to it; this principle at least has to do with that.

(9) Because Christ still sees the tribulation as reality for His disciples, the ministry shift to the church has yet to occur.

Divine guidance through persecution. "And whenever they persecute you in this city, flee into the next; for truly I say to you, you will not complete the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes."

(1) This flight preserves life and allows the message to go on. The objective of this mission is to save Israel from destruction by means of spiritual strength.

(2) But this is not exactly like the flight of Israel in the tribulation where the primary purpose is to save lives, period.

(3) A reminder of the way in which the disciples are to handle persecution comes from the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, because theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. You are blessed whenever they insult you and persecute you, and whenever they ostracize you and they insult you and cast down your name as evil falsely for my sake. Rejoice and exult and leap wildly, because your reward is great in heaven; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

(a) The preposition ENEKA describes an exchange of one thing for another. A very literal translation would be, "Blessed are those who have been persecuted in exchange for their righteousness."

(b) Luke puts this same word in the exchange position with the Son of Man - and so righteousness and the Son of Man are synonyms here.

(c) So, you have righteousness because you hungered and thirsted for it (according to the previous beatitude), and as a result you receive persecution.

(d) Or, you have a relationship with the Son of Man, and you receive persecution because people hate Him and they express it toward you.

(e) The blessing for this is the kingdom of heaven. This seems curious at first, because the same is awarded the poor in spirit no matter what they might do.

(f) However, there is a contrast. In the first beatitude the emphasis lay on eternal security. In this last one it is on eternity, period.

(g) If you suffer because you are Christian, it can lead to no small amount of misery. A simple knowledge that the kingdom of heaven awaits you is valuable indeed.

(h) This would be especially valuable for those who might have endured the rigors of tribulational persecution - the kingdom of heaven would be known to be only a few years off, at most.



(i) Principle: knowledge of eternity is the only real foundation of happiness for those who are persecuted.

(j) Next comes the explanation. It begins with the phrase “you are blessed”.

(k) Luke use four different ways to describe persecution:

- HOTAN MISESOSIN ANTHROPOI is ‘whenever men hate you.’ The verb ‘hate’ is MISESOSIN, and is a fairly square translation of the concept.

- HOTAN APHORISOSIN is literally ‘whenever they separate from you.’ The idea is that others choose to separate themselves from you because of your faith. Your friends and family leave you - your boss fires you - your country banishes you.

- ONEIDISOSIN is next. It translates as reproach or revile, but ultimately it comes down to slander. When you reproach another for his legitimate and true faith, you slander his character and make a false accusation.

- EKBALOSIN TO ONOMA HUMON HOS PONERON is the final persecution possibility. It translates as ‘they cast out your name as evil’ This is pretty much the same as the last one, with a little more emphasis on general slander, as opposed to taking shots at Christianity.

(l) Then comes a command that is predicated on the persecution. ‘Rejoice and exult and leap wildly, because your reward is great in heaven; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.’

(m) The reason for the rejoicing is the reward in heaven that waits for those who endure undeserved suffering. Undeserved suffering leads to great reward in heaven. And, therefore Christ commands His hearers to rejoice when they encounter it.

(n) A further rationale for the rejoicing is that persecution is nothing new, and that the prophets of old endured it as well. Persecution only comes to those who do things right. Divine discipline goes to those who are wrong, but the discipline is not aimed at your Christianity.

(o) The prophets of old did things rightly, and they received persecution on account of it.

(4) The attitude toward the persecutors is revealed in Matthew 5:43 and Luke 6:27-30, 32-36: “5:43 You heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor’ and, ‘Hate your enemy’. 27 But I say to you who hear, ‘Love your enemies, do well to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. 29 to those who strike you on the cheek, offer also the other, and from the one who takes away your shirt, do not withhold also your tunic. 30 To everyone who asks of you give, and from the one who takes what is yours do not ask for it back. 32 And if you love the one who loves you, what kind of grace is to you? For the sinners also love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what kind of grace is to you? The sinners also do the same thing. 34 And if you lend to the ones from whom you hope to receive, what kind of grace? Sinners also lend to sinners to receive their share. 35 Yet love your enemies and do good and lend expecting nothing in return and your reward will be much, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is gracious to the kind and ungrateful. 36 Become merciful just as also your Father is merciful.”

(a) The statements of Matthew 5:43 have a background from the Old Testament.

- The love command is issued in Leviticus 19:17-18, “You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.”

- The hatred command is not directly from the Old Testament, but is a misinterpretation of the doctrine of self-defense.

- The Old Testament authorized national self-defense and personal self-defense. Sometimes in self-defense you must exercise lethal force, and the interpreters of the day misconstrued this into hatred. Thus ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’

(b) The doctrine of self-defense will be abrogated during the millennial rule of Jesus Christ. All thieves and thugs will be culpable before the visible throne of the Son of God, and He will handle all matters of justice in a personal and effective manner.

(c) Since Christ does not rule visibly, we still have the responsibility of self-defense.

(d) But nonetheless the command to love our enemies is valid in a very Christian way:

- Because you have experienced the very best in your life through your relationship with God, you are motivated to bring that to every human being.

- You realize that your enemy is a slave of Satan, and is as redeemable as any other human being. He has as much potential as anyone thanks to grace.

- The apostle Paul is the classic example of a persecutor turned to a man of God. Acts 7:54-8:3 records the death of Stephen at the command of Saul: “(54) Now when they heard this [the speech of Stephen] they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him. (55) But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; (56) and he said, ‘Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.’ (57) But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears and rushed at him with one impulse. (58) When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. (59) They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them!’ Having said this, he fell asleep. (8:1) Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. (2) Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. (3) But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.”

- And yet Paul went on to be the great apostle.

- This is also the great example of the principle of persecution as divine guidance. If persecutors make so much trouble for you that you must move on, then God has someone somewhere else that is positive to the gospel.

(5) The end limit for the persecution is the coming of the Son of Man. The term ‘Son of Man’ reveals the following:

(a) That Christ is indeed the Messiah.

(b) And that the Messiah is the God-man in hypostatic union.

(c) And that Christ is the Son of Man from Daniel 7:13-14.

(d) That Christ has authority during the incarnation.

(e) That the Messiah is the atoning Messiah.

(f) That the Messiah will have the authority to judge in the coming kingdom.

(6) Whenever Christ employed this term, every one got excited, because the Daniel seven passage was exceptionally popular at the time.

Preparation for persecution. “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor is a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher and the slave like his master. If they have called the ruler of the house Beelzebub, how much worse they will call the household members!”

(1) Christ reverses this principle of rank and humility to warn of the greater severity of persecution for His followers.

(2) First comes the two general principles of rank. The realm of the teacher and the realm of the master. Christ recognizes the reality of rank and authority; He recognizes the axiomatic nature of the relationship between people of varying ranks.

(3) Second is the principle of imitation: the disciple is to become like his teacher and the slave like his master. It is important to recognize that this is the objective for us as disciples of Christ.

(4) We are to imitate our Teacher and Master, Jesus Christ with regard to the way that He lived His life. We are to imitate His complete humility

and dependence on God, and His perfect character in the discharge of all of His responsibilities.

(5) But then comes a principle that returns to the realm of persecution. If they revile the master, then how much more will they revile the slaves?

(6) The slave or the disciple of Beelzebub is a fool for following the devil. In a sense he is worse than Beelzebub, because he is of lower rank and privilege.

(7) Christ is telling His disciples that they can expect worse persecution than even what He has endured!

Words of encouragement and assurance of vindication.

The assurance of eternal vindication. “Therefore do not fear them; for there is nothing having been concealed that will not be revealed and hidden which will not be made known.”

(1) This exhortation gives the eternal rationale toward the persecution.

(2) There is the threat of death from persecution. Though they may kill the body, the soul remains forever, and God has all of eternity to compensate the martyr.

(3) The aorist subjunctive mood with the negative particle ME makes a very strong negative. Christ is being very intense here with this command.

(4) The perfect passive participle KEKLUMMENON describes the supreme efforts of man to hide his inglorious deeds.

(a) Man may persecute and kill and attempt to hide what he has done.

(b) But God will reveal it. The future passive indicative verb APOKALUPHTHESETAI makes this certain.

(c) The declarative indicative mood shows a certain reality to what will occur in the future with regard to the acts of man.

(d) And the passive voice designates that the revelation will come from a source outside the perpetrators. God will be the revealer - He will say, “Let there be light!” and there will be light.

(5) Christ employs a parallelism to confirm and emphasize what He has spoken. The second half of the parallel has two changes:

(a) It employs the adjective KRUPTON in place of the participle KEKLUMMENON.

(b) It substitutes APOKALUPHTHESETAI with its synonym GNOSTHESSETAI.

(c) These together are translated “there is nothing hidden which will not be made known.”

(6) You may have complete confidence that all the hidden deeds of men will be revealed and made known.

(7) See the doctrine of the judgment seat of Christ.

The encouragement toward forthrightness. “What I say to you in the dark you say in the light, and what you hear [whispered] in the ear, you preach upon the housetops.”

(1) As a result of their confidence in eternal vindication, the disciples may be confident with regard to what they say in this life.

(2) The metaphor of light and darkness is here employed in an unusual fashion - not as good and evil, but rather as private and public.

(3) Christ’s training of His disciples is by necessity private. For their protection and as a matter of efficiency.

(4) This lesson concerning the eternal advantage seems to apply in countless realms. The lesson is that the eternal advantage should give you a sense of self-esteem about who you are in Christ.

(a) It applies in all realms of undeserved suffering, including persecution.

(b) It applies in the realm of sacrifice for the sake of the study of the word.

(c) It applies in the realm of doing the right thing regardless of the sacrifice, the true integrity of application.

(5) Preaching from the housetops was a method for reaching as many people as possible with one speech. This was before the era of the public address system and the cassette tape.

The distinctions regarding temporal and eternal loss. “And do not fear from the ones who kill the body, but who does not have the power to kill the

soul; but fear rather the one who has power to kill both the soul and the body in Gehenna. Aren't two sparrows sold for a cent? Yet one of them does not fall upon the ground apart from your Father. And indeed every hair of your head is numbered. Therefore do not fear; you yourselves are much different from sparrows."

- (1) Again Christ broaches the subject of fear; especially fear of death.
- (2) Because no human being present and alive on this planet is able to give a report concerning the nature of life after death, the matter remains a great mystery.
- (3) The mysterious nature of death makes it a matter of fear for many. Ignorance breeds fear and superstition, and there is no greater matter for fear and superstition than death.
- (4) But God's word fills this void of ignorance, so that we need not fear. And Christ here gives them the word of God.
- (5) Gehenna was the highest court of all, and that is the court of the Gehenna of the Fire.
  - (a) The locality of Gehenna was in Jerusalem, and Jeremiah 19:5-6 identifies this place as the final place for the administration of the fifth cycle of discipline on the nation, "They have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as offerings to Baal - something I did not command or mention, nor did it enter my mind. So beware, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when the people will no longer call this place Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter."
  - (b) It was the place of child sacrifice, and the fire is the identification with the burning fires of sacrifice to Baal.
  - (c) It would become the place where the Jews were slaughtered for their sins by the final attack of the Babylonian armies.
  - (d) Therefore the Jeremiah passage represents the administration of the fifth cycle of discipline on Israel.
  - (e) But here Christ employs Gehenna in a figurative sense to indicate something even worse

- the final judgment of the unbeliever, the Lake of Fire.

- (6) There are two judges in view, two realms of power.
  - (a) The human judge, with his realm of power over the physical;
  - (b) The judge of the human race, who is Jesus Christ, with His complete realm of power over the physical and the spiritual.
- (7) Often, these judges are at odds with one another; they have differing objectives and differing motives in life.
- (8) When we find ourselves the object of both classes of authority, and they differ in their desires for us, our duty is clear.
- (9) The a fortiori argument of the sparrow compares men and sparrows. If God cares for the sparrow, then how much more for men, who are greater than sparrows? There is no sparrow who falls to the ground apart from the Father.
  - (a) Even the death of the least of God's creatures requires His consent.
  - (b) You will therefore not die without God's consent.
  - (c) If God gives His consent to your death, then how might you prevent it?
  - (d) This should never prevent you from fighting for your own life according to principles of good conscience, but when God gives His decree concerning your right time, then that is surely it.
- (10) God has the hairs on your head numbered; surely if He has this knowledge, He is in direct control of what happens to you.
- (11) In any circumstance of persecution, you must have a focus on the divine ability to protect you; you must have an understanding of just how great His perceptive and protective powers are.
- (12) This faith will remove the fear and allow you to do your duty unto Him.
  - (a) Faith removes fear; love removes fear.
  - (b) Faith and love are not far removed from one another. Love is dependent on faith, and love guarantees the purity of the faith.

The reassurance of eternal vindication. “Therefore everyone who confesses in me before men, I will confess also in them before My Father Who is in heaven; And whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father Who is in heaven.”

(1) This again returns to the judgment of Christ, where Jesus Christ will do one of two things:

- (a) Confess you before the Father;
- (b) or deny you before the Father.

(2) To be confessed to the Father by Christ is confirmation that He will personally presented you to God the Father at a heavenly honors ceremony.

(a) Revelation 3:5. “...and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.”

(b) Colossians 3:4, “When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you will also be revealed with Him in glory.”

The divisive nature of the Kingdom of God. “Do not think that I came to cast peace upon the earth; I did not come to cast peace but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man’s enemies are his household-members.”

Now here is a change - Christ talks tough to His disciples so that they will understand again the nature of the enemy arrayed against them.

Christ indicates that He came to earth to make war among men. And indeed this is true; even when you take into account the nature of the first advent and the cross of peace.

This does not change the nature of 2 Peter 3:9, “God is not willing that any should perish...” He does indeed want everyone to become humble before Him.

Christ came in order to win our salvation; our reconciliation and peace before God. But the cross was also an act of war.

Now the sword which Christ mentions does not represent physical violence and warfare. Rather, there is a representation of spiritual warfare.

Spiritual warfare divides families as long as the enemy exists within that family. Spiritual distinctions divide families at least until all are with Christ.

This does not abrogate the responsibility of virtue love toward all members of the human race, including your family.

Perhaps this statement can be summarize by the statements of James 4:6-10, “(6) But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, ‘God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ (7) Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee. (8) and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (9) Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. (10) Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord and He will exalt you.”

Christ did indeed come to make war against the arrogant.

(1) During the first advent, the nature of that war was entirely spiritual. The ultimate operation of that war was at the cross.

(2) The cross is a great act of war against the arrogant. Ultimately, it is destructive of their anti-grace ideas, because it is all grace.

(3) At the second advent, the warfare will be physically violent, swift, and decisive. Jesus Christ is the greatest warrior of all men; He will win the greatest victory of all time, and leave millions of the enemy dead on the battlefield of Armageddon.

And you must realize that two realms are at war: the arrogant and the humble. These may well be within your family.

With Jesus Christ, you have a new and greater and more permanent family. It is the family of God. The family of God is greatly superior to any relationship that is based solely on the things of this world.

This does not preach a total separation from your family; only a separation from their worldly ways. You cannot take part in that!

You must also make the realization that there is a possibility of eternal separation from the unbeliever elements of your family; your greater allegiance must go to God, since you will not be separated from Him in eternity.

Here are the main factors that separate you from the unbeliever elements of your family.

- (1) Your belief system, which is in a loving God and a loving savior in Jesus Christ.
- (2) Your *modus operandi*, which is grace.
- (3) Your motivation in life, which is love for God.
- (4) Your destiny, which is blessing for time and eternity.

You must embrace every virtue from your family, and separate from their worldliness.

The results of the priorities according to the divisions. "The one who love his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and the one who loves a son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me; and who does not take his cross and follow after Me, he is not worthy of Me. The one who find his soul destroys it, and the one who destroys his soul in my behalf finds it."

Christ demands love. Not from a lack of self-esteem on His part - not because He feels threatened or is neurotic in some way.

Christ chooses the family because it is most often the closest relationship that people have.

It is curious and significant that He does not choose the husband-wife relationship. The two are one flesh by the decree of God, so Christ avoids contradicting the will of God.

He demands love because love for Him is truly beneficial, and pays dividends for both time and eternity.

This is a matter of priorities; Christ does not prevent us from loving our families - He only warns us concerning our priorities.

If we love our families to the point where we cause neglect in our relationship with God, we have made a grave mistake that will reach into eternity.

You cannot take your family with you. They may decide on their own to join you, but you have no power to bring them into eternity.

The power of God to compensate you in eternity for the loss of your family in time is your source of comfort.

It is your love for Christ that makes you worthy of Him. If He is your top priority in life, you will be worthy of Him, and receive His approval at the judgment seat of Christ.

Then comes something completely out of the ordinary; Christ tells His disciples that they must take up their cross and follow after Him. Taking up the cross is equated with worthiness.

- (1) But Christ has not died on the cross yet. You would think that this sounds much more like a post-resurrection saying than it does one that is before His death on the cross.
- (2) How did Christ know? The cross was a common method of capital punishment, and because of its tortures, it was universally feared.
- (3) And He says, 'Follow after Me.' This indicates that He has already taken up His own cross, and is walking with it.
- (4) Taking up a cross is a reference to the practice of the day, which was to force the convicted criminal to carry his cross from the place of judgment to the place of execution.
- (5) Carrying the cross was a symbol of public ridicule.
- (6) But here Christ wants His disciples to carry their crosses with *esprit de corps*.
- (7) By this time, Christ had surmised that He was going to die on cross. He understood the significance of the 22nd Psalm, and had identified that it applied to Him. He had seen other men die on crosses, and with a chill of recognition seen the exact match between the prophecy and the reality.
- (8) This made His prayers in Gethsemane all the more real. He knew of the physical ordeal, and more than that, of the spiritual ordeal that was ahead.

The Romans employed the following procedures in crucifixion.

- (1) Flogging as the precedent to the actual crucifixion, and it was their custom to flog the back of the victim to a point where the blood flowed freely. This, though it seemed cruel, actually hastened the death of the crucified, and usually shortened their torture by many hours.
- (2) The victim was then required to carry his cross-beam (the upright beam was always planted in the ground beforehand) to the place of execution. This symbolized his culpability before the public - that he was fully to blame for the torture and death to come.
- (3) The executioners would then force the victim to the ground, and fasten him to the cross-beam - commonly by use of ropes, and less often by means of nails through the wrist joint. At this point the man and his cross beam were lifted to the upright.
- (4) At this point the victim was often offered a mixture of wine and narcotic, in order to deaden his senses through the ordeal. It is important to note that Christ refused this offer.
- (5) The cross beam was then secured to the upright, often by means of pre-positioned blocks of wood, and the victim's feet were bound or nailed together. Archaeological evidence indicates that it was not always the practice to secure the feet to the upright. They were nailed together, yes, but not also to the upright of the cross.
- (6) Not often mentioned in Christian circles, but appearing often in the historical accounts of crucifixion is the use of a SEDICULA. This was a peg or block of wood positioned mid-way on the upright with the purpose of a support for the buttocks of the victim. This was especially heinous, for it kept the victim alive for an inordinate amount of time. The SEDICULA was mutually exclusive with the securing of the feet to the upright. The SEDICULA was not mentioned in the death of Christ, and was most likely not used in His case. It may be unlikely, because Christ died quite swiftly for a victim of crucifixion. The record stay on a cross was nine days - an altogether remarkable feat.

(7) The agony of the cross was due to several factors:

- (a) The pressure on the hands or wrists and feet due to gravity. Without the SEDICULA, the entire weight of the body was on the fastenings of the wrists. If this was a nail type of fastening, the agony was due to the tearing of the flesh. If a rope fastening, then the agony was due to the loss of circulation. In both the arms and legs, there was the commonality of extreme stress on the joints, and even dislocation.
- (b) The inability to draw a good breath. With the arms spread out and the back hard against the upright, there is a difficulty in moving the chest muscles which work together to draw breath. If the feet were fastened to the upright, then the agony of tearing flesh would have to be endured in order more effectively to breathe. With all of the trauma, heavy breathing would be the norm. With crucifixion, heavy breathing is quite difficult. When the executioners broke the legs of the victim, it was to speed the death by suffocation.
- (c) Exposure. Victims were most often stripped of all clothing before they were crucified. In cooler climates or seasons, victims could easily expire due to hypothermia. Also, victims who survived for a few days would finally succumb to thirst.
- (d) Public shame. Hanging naked on a cross in a public place, unable to relieve yourself in private, all of these would induce much mockery.
- (e) Illness and disease. The longer the victim lasted, the more susceptible he was to illness and disease. Tetanus and lockjaw must have been common; infected wounds due to the presence of flies and other insects must have been common as well.
- (f) Extreme fatigue. Remaining in one position for 24 hours a day would render the muscles completely useless.

Taking up your cross willingly was to admit your guilt of your own volition. This of course was never done.

And yet this is what Christ tells His disciples to do. What a great thunderbolt this was from Christ.

Association with Christ means association with the cross, and Christ knew it long before He would take up his own cross.

The cross is a legitimate reason for boasting in the Christian life, Galatians 6:14, "But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

(1) The cross causes our death to the world, and the world's death to us.

(2) We now live a new life, a life that is unto God.

kp The cross stands as a symbol of our experiential victory over sin:

(1) Romans 6:3-7, "(3) Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? (4) Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (5) For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, (6) knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; (7) for he who has died is freed from sin."

(2) 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 will live with Him because of the power of God directed toward you."

(3) Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of god, who lived me and gave Himself up for me."

(4) Galatians 5:24, "Now those who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

The cross stands as the supreme symbol of Christ-like character:

(1) Philippians 2:5-8, "(5) Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, (6) who, although He existed in the form of God, did

not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, (7) but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. (8) Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

(2) Hebrews 12:1-3, "(1) Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, (2) fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfect 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. (3) For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

So when you take up your cross and follow Jesus Christ, it is a symbol of your humility toward God's plan for your life, and your separation from the world by means of a symbolic death

The reward of the faithful. "The one who receives you receives Me, and the one who receives Me receives the one who sent Me. The one who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive the profit of a prophet, and the one who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man will receive the reward of a righteous man. And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water, truly I say to you, he will certainly not lose his reward!"

There is a connection between Christ and His disciples: they are His substitutionary representatives to the all the people that they minister to. They are His ambassadors.

Furthermore, there is a connection between God and Christ; Christ is the ambassador for God, and the ultimate ambassador, He is God's Son.

There is reward for those who receive the disciples. Christ employs two proverbs or common truths in order to communicate this principle of reward.

(1) The profit of the prophet goes to those who receive the prophets in the name of the prophet.



(a) This may seem a little confusing. Therefore, a principle - not all those who receive the prophet receive them fully.

(b) Prophets are celebrities, and there is much to gain by receiving them into your home - approbation, social standing, even an increase in commerce.

(c) But receiving a prophet in his own name means receiving his message in your own heart - really believing and implementing what he has to say.

(d) It is only this person who receives the reward of the prophet - who shares in the bounty that comes from God through the prophet.

(2) The reward of the righteous man goes to those who receive the righteous man in the name of the righteous man.

(a) Again there is advantage to receiving a righteous man. Advantage that goes beyond the spiritual realm to the earthly.

(b) On account of that, only the one who receives the righteous man and his message receives the reward of the righteous man.

(3) With regard to Christ, you must be more than just a Christian by name. If you apply the Christian name to yourself for personal advantage, you will certainly not receive the heavenly reward of Christ.

(a) Indeed you may well miss out on salvation, if you do not accept the essence of the salvation offer;

(b) You may well miss out on eternal reward above and beyond salvation, if you do not accept the essence of the plan of God.

(c) Calling yourself a Christian because your shadow once darkened the halls of a church does not make you a Christian. Calling yourself a Christian because your parents baptized you a Christian as an infant does not make you a Christian.

(d) You are not a Christian because you call yourself one; indeed you are only a Christian if you have trusted in Christ's work for your eternal salvation.

(e) And to be a mature Christian, you must have a Christ-like character that has been tested by the fire of undeserved suffering.

(4) The name of the prophet and the name of the righteous man has to do with the core of their being and their mission; the name was tantamount to essence.

The final statement is interesting: "And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water, truly I say to you, he will certainly not lose his reward!"

(1) It seems the focus is Christian charity toward children. But perhaps it is best to focus on the word Christian.

(2) For this simple act of charity must be done in the name of a disciple in order to produce the intended effect.

(3) There must be proper Christian motivation for every act of charity: 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, "(1) 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. (2) 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. (3) And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing."

(4) Notice that charity does not gain a reward, it only prevents you from losing it!

(a) This is a really important distinction!

(b) The mature Christian is the one who advances in God's plan and produces Christ-like character; furthermore, he is the one who endures undeserved suffering and maintains his love for God.

(c) Charity is the application of the doctrine of grace to the truly helpless. It is one facet of divine character and the attitude of the spiritually mature.

(d) A charitable attitude alone does not define you as a mature believer.

(e) Eternal reward above and beyond salvation goes to those who have mature Christ-like character in all facets.

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(f) But, you may lose your reward if you begin to slip in one category, such as charity. Therefore the distinction of loss of reward, and the proper placement of motivation with reference to charity.

III. The prepared ambassador for Christ:

Understands the issue of grace orientation.

Understands the need to leave behind and completely forget those who are negative.

Keeps moving, not spending undue time on the negative.

Understands the nature of negative volition.

It may be expressed in disinterest.

It may be expressed in antagonism.

Murderous antagonism.

Slandorous antagonism.

Proselytizing antagonism.

Is confident that the Spirit will guide his words, and that spiritual information is all the eloquence that he needs.

There is danger of persecution from even the closest of friends and family; be prepared for the need to choose between family and Christ as a matter of priorities.

Be prepared for greater persecution than even what Christ experienced.

Understands the eternal advantage, and how it allays the fears related to ambassadorship.

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