Matthew

Lesson notes on the Gospel of Matthew

Pastor Vincent Sawyer

Victory Baptist Church, Port Charlotte, Florida (six lessons from Faith Baptist Church, Corona, New York, 1992-95)

December 2016 to April 2019

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"THE FAMILY TREE OF ROYALTY"

Matthew 1:1-17

12/11/2016

INTRODUCTION: Verse 1a

***Jesus is King! Jesus is Messiah! His genealogy proves it.**

The genealogy of Christ unveils four features about God.

I. The Faithful PROMISES of God (v. 1)
(God's promises to David & Abraham were fulfilled)

A. His promise to David of an eternal throne

B. His promise to Abraham of a world-wide blessing

II. The Amazing GRACE of God (v. 3, 5, 6)
(God's grace was extended to four outcasts)

A. Tamar (v. 3)

B. Rahab (v. 5)

C. Ruth (v. 5)

D. Bathsheba (v. 6)

III. The Greatest MIRACLE of God (v. 16)
(God's miracle of the virgin birth)

IV. The Unsearchable WISDOM of God (v. 11)
(God's wisdom overcame a cursed lineage)

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(God's miracle of the _____)

IV. The Unsearchable <u>WISDOM</u> of God (v. 11)
(God's wisdom overcame a _____)

"THE FAMILY TREE OF ROYALTY"

Matthew 1:1-17
12/11/2016

INTRODUCTION: Verse 1a

The incarnation (infleshment) of Jesus Christ is the most amazing fact of human history (How God could become a Man)

From the standpoint of what He gave up (by coming to earth)
Christ's incarnation (becoming flesh) is the ultimate example of humility!

Christ had:

1) Humble <u>ancestors</u> (lineage)
--Tamar (incest with Judah)
--Rahab (a prostitute)
--Ruth (a Moabite)
Mt. 1:3, 5

2) Humble <u>birth</u>
--swaddling clothes (Lk. 2:7, 12)
Cp. how we are <u>so interested</u> in how we wrap gifts to beautify what is inside, with how God wrapped His gift to us!
"Swaddling clothes" = lit. strips of cloth - Christ was wrapped up like a mummy.
NOTE: This wrapping was part of a <u>sign</u> (v. 12) (a sign is something <u>out of the ordinary).</u>

God's gift was the best gift ever imaginable and yet it wasn't wrapped in special paper! In God`s infinite wisdom He planned that His Son would not be <u>recognized</u> <u>man's way</u>. (by a royal, wealthy family with imperial power and prestige) but that He would be revealed solely by the Holy Spirit (as the Child was to Simeon).

--Manger - a feeding trough for animals in a stall or stable (possibly a <u>cave</u> or an underground barn).

--Bethlehem (Micah 5:2 - "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.")

From the standpoint of How He came to earth (the virgin birth)

The Book of Matthew:

-Author: Matthew (Levi) - a Jewish tax collector for Rome
--Date: Prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Matthew: to the Jew, presents Christ as King
Mark: to the Roman, presents Christ as a servant
Luke: to the Greek, presents Christ as the Son of Man
John: to the world, presents Christ as the Son of God

Since Matthew's gospel was directed toward the Jew, he cited about 50 direct quotes from the O.T. and an additional 75 allusions to the O.T.

Pilate asked Jesus: "Are you a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I have come into the world. . ." (Jn. 18:37)

If Jesus is the Messiah, a Jew would ask, "Can you prove it?" Matthew proceeds to do so by outlining in thematic order: the Messiah's lineage, birth, authority, teaching, miracles, sacrifice, resurrection, and second coming.

In Matthew's Gospel, the word "king" occurs 23 times (more than any other Gospel - Note: Luke 11 times).

And the word "Kingdom" occurs 56 times.

Jesus is called the "King of the Jews (2:2; 27:11, 29); the "King of Israel" (27:42); the "great King" (5:35).

Though Jesus was King and lived in the Roman Empire under King Caesar, He made it known that His Kingdom was divinely ruled ("the Kingdom of God" - 5 times) and that His Kingdom--though it would "come" to earth (Mt. 6:10)--was not an earthly, man-made Kingdom but was a Heavenly Kingdom - sent from and established by Heaven ("the Kingdom of Heaven" - **32 times. Note: the phrase "Kingdom of Heaven" does not occur in any other Gospel.).

"If Jesus is to be heralded and proclaimed King, there must be proof that He comes from the recognized royal family" (MacArthur, p. 2)

Matthew gives such proof by immediately beginning His Gospel with the Family Tree, or legal genealogy of Christ.

Luke traces Christ's "racial lineage" whereas Matthew traces His "royal lineage" (MacArthur, p. 3)

V. 1

"Generation" = genealogy

Any king of Israel who would sit on the throne of David had to have a reliable, accurate family tree that traced back to David.

NOTE: Christ was the final King of Israel. He is the only One who could ever be the Messiah! Reason: The Jews would have no way to trace the genealogy of any supposed contemporary Messiah back because their records perished in 70 A.D. when ancient jerusalem was destroyed and burned by Titus and the Roman Army. Jesus is the only one who could ever be traced to David and Abraham.

"Jesus Christ is the last verifiable claimant tot he throne of David, and therefore to the Messianic line" (MacArthur, p. 3)

The Jews' meticulous concern for accurate records of family trees was for several reasons:

1)To determine land ownership (Num. 26:34-35)
2)To qualify for the priesthood - Levi (Ezra 2:61-62)
3)To transfer property (Ruth 3-4)
4)To reign as king on David's throne

"Jesus" = Savior (from Jeshua - the Lord is Salvation)

"Christ" = Anointed One; Messiah

"Christ" = Anointed One. Israel's prophets, priests, and kings were all anointed. And Jesus, being prophet, priest, and king, was anointed as all three (MacArthur)

***Jesus is King! Jesus is Messiah! His genealogy proves it.**

The genealogy of Christ unveils four features about God.

I. The Faithful PROMISES of God (v. 1)
(God's promises to David & Abraham were fulfilled)

A. His promise to David of an eternal throne

God (through Christ) was faithful to fulfill His promise to David - that his throne would be established forever.

SEE:The Davidic Covenant ratified (II Sam. 7:12-17)
The Davidic Covenant confirmed (Ps. 89:1-5, 20-37; Ps. 132:11, 17; Is. 11:1-6)

The angel Gabriel announced to Mary: (Lk. 1:31-33) "And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

The blind men exclaimed: "Thou Son of David have mercy on us!" (Mt. 9:27)

Paul preached: "Of this man's [David's] seed, hath God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus" (Acts 13:23)

B. His promise to Abraham of a world-wide blessing

God (through Christ) was faithful to fulfill His promise to Abraham - that through his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3).

Gal. 3:8, 16 - "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. . . Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

II. The Amazing GRACE of God (v. 3, 5, 6)
(God's grace was extended to four outcasts)

"It is most unusual to find the names of women in Jewish genealogies, since names and inheritances came through the fathers" (Wiersbe, p. 13)

Outside of Mary, the Holy Spirit singled out four women in the genealogy. Four former outcasts.

A. Tamar (v. 3)

Tamar, the Canaanite daughter-in-law of Judah (v. 3) (Gen. 38)

(a woman who committed incest).

Despite prostitution and incest, God's grace fell on Judah, Tamar, and their son Perez, who all joined the Messianic line.

B. Rahab (v. 5)

Rahab, the harlot of Jericho (v. 5) (Josh. 2:1-21; 6:22-25)

(a woman who was a prostitute)

God's grace not only spared her life, but brought her into the Messianic line, as the wife of Salmon and the mother of her godly son Boaz, who was David's great-grandfather (MacArthur, p. 8)

C. Ruth (v. 5)

Ruth the Moabite (v. 5)

(A woman who was a Gentile)

"God's grace not only brought Ruth into the family of Israel, but later, through Boaz, into the royal line. She became the grandmother of Israel's great king David" (MacArthur, p. 8)

D. Bathsheba (v. 6)

Bathsheba, the former wife of Uriah (v. 6)

(a woman who was an adulteress)

"By God's grace, Bathsheba became the wife of David, the mother of Solomon, and an ancestor of the Messiah" (MacArthur, p. 9).

III. The Greatest MIRACLE of God (v. 16)

(God's miracle of the virgin birth)

Notice that the long list of "begets" stop after Joseph. Why? Because Joseph never "begat" Jesus.

"Of whom" = a feminine singular relative pronoun in Greek, referring to Mary.

SEE: Luke 1:30-37

The mystery of mysteries involves how the eternal Creator of the universe, who had all power, all authority, all honor; the One whom "the Heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain" (I Ki. 8:27) . . . how God could be reduced in all of his essence, into a divinely implanted seed which fertilized the human egg of Mary.

The most amazing miracle (more amazing than creation itself, more amazing than the drying up of the Red Sea, more amazing even than the resurrection of the dead) is the incarnation of Christ.

The virgin birth has nothing to do with the origin of Christ or the beginning of his existence. Rather, the virgin birth concerns only His entrance into the human race.

The entrance of Jesus into this life was totally distinct from that of ordinary men. For this reason, the writers of Scripture (under inspiration) carefully avoided using words such as "born" and "conceived" which tend to imply origin of existence.

Note the terms and phrases used in the N.T. to describe Christ's incarnation:

Jn. 6:51 - "came down from heaven" (cp. Mt. 20:28; Jn. 3:13)
I Tim. 1:15 - "came into the world"
Jn. 3:16 - "He gave His only begotten" Jn. 3:17 - "God sent..."
I Jn. 3:5 - "He was manifested to take away our sins"
Phil. 2:7 - "Made himself...took upon Him..."
II Cor. 8:9 - "He became poor"
Heb. 2:9 - "Made a little lower than the angels"
Gal. 4:4 - "God sent forth his son...made of a woman"
Jn. 1:14 - "made flesh and dwelt among us"
Heb. 2:14 - "Himself likewise took part...of flesh and blood"
I Cor. 15:47 - "The Lord from Heaven"
I Tim. 3:16 - "God was manifest in the flesh"

The virgin birth is foretold in the O.T. -

--A symbol (Is. 53:2 - "Root out of a dry ground" - something that springs out of that which is impossible)

--A prophecy (Is. 7:14 - "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son..." (SEE: Is. 48:16)

Proofs from the Epistles of the virgin birth:

1) Christ assumed a physical body from Mary not Joseph (Gal. 4:4 - "made [physically] of a woman" [not a man]

2) hrist came from heaven into the world (I Tim. 1:15; Heb. 10:5; Rom. 8:3; I Cor. 15:47).

3) Christ was sinless (heb. 4:15; II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26).

Many theologians believe that man's sin nature is passed on through the blood. Genetically, man's blood is determined by the Father. Christ's blood had no connection with an earthly father. We are "in Adam," but Jesus is not "in Adam" - rather, He is the "second Adam" (I Cor. 15:22, 47).

The virgin birth was a one-time, never to be repeated, miracle.

Just as God created Eve without the reproductive elements of man, He supernaturally implanted His Son (in seed form) into the womb of a woman without the reproductive elements of man.

IV. The Unsearchable WISDOM of God (v. 11)

(God's wisdom overcame a cursed lineage)

Jechonias ("Coniah" also called Jehoiachin) was a king who never had a chance to reign. Why? Because a curse had been placed on his life (Jer. 36:30) because of the sin of his father Jehoiakim, who cut up and burned the Word of God (jer. 36:22-26) SEE: Jer. 22:24, 28-30

NOTE: Verse 30 - "For no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah"

The curse was on the physical seed (offspring) of Coniah. None of his offspring was to sit on David's throne.

The point is this: If Joseph were the physical father of Jesus, Jesus would be a descendent of Jeconiah and thus He would never be allowed to sit on David's throne!

The wisdom of God is seen by the fact that: The legal right to David's throne did pass through Joseph, by virtue of Christ's legal relationship to Joseph as his adopted Son. However, the physical blood right to David's throne passed through Nathan's line (Lk. 3:31). Jesus received this by virtue of His birth to Mary.

[NOTE: Matthew's genealogy traces Jesus' legal ancestral line up to Joseph; whereas Dr. Luke's genealogy traces His blood line up to Mary.]

CONCLUSION: **V. 17**

Matthew is saying that each of the 3 time periods included 14 generations, but were not necessarily limited to 14.

Matthew clearly omitted some names from this genealogy (cp. I Chron. 3:10ff).

[NOTE: the word "begot" does no necessarily refer to immediate parentage but merely to direct descent (cp. Robertson). Also, Jewish reckoning did not require every name in order to satisfy a genealogy (Example: the gaps in Ezra 7:1-5)]

Probably, he omitted some names to give a systematic summary of three period of Israel's history, each with fourteen generations. The numeric value of the Hebrew letters for "David" equals fourteen. Matthew probably used this approach as a memory aid to help his readers remember this difficult list (Wiersbe, p. 13)

*The genealogy of Christ is much more than a list of ancient names. It is a beautiful testimony to God's faithful promises, God's amazing grace, God's greatest miracle, and God's unsearchable wisdom!

Everything Spiritual & Eternal that God has to Offer Man comes

to us through His Son:

THE ART COLLECTOR'S SON

Author Unknown

Years ago, there was a very wealthy man who, with his devoted young son, shared a passion for art collecting. Together they traveled around the world, adding only the finest art treasures to their collection. Priceless works by Picasso, Van Gogh, Monet and many others adorned the walls of the family estate.

The widowed, elder man looked on with satisfaction, as his only child became an experienced art collector. The son's trained eye and sharp business mind caused his father to beam with pride as they dealt with art collectors around the world.

As winter approached, war engulfed the nation, and the young man left to serve his country. After only a few short weeks, his father received a telegram. His beloved son was missing in action. The art collector anxiously awaited more news, fearing he would never see his son again. Within days, his fears were confirmed. The young man had died while rushing a fellow soldier to a medic.

Distraught and lonely, the old man faced the upcoming Christmas holidays with anguish and sadness. The joy of the season, a season that he and his son had so looked forward to, would visit his house no longer.

On Christmas morning, a knock on the door awakened the depressed old man. As he walked to the door, the masterpieces of art on the walls only reminded him that his son was not coming home. As he opened the door, a soldier greeted him with a large package in his hand. He introduced himself to the man by saying, "I was a friend of your son. I was the one he was rescuing when he died. May I come in for a few moments? I have something to show you."

As the two began to talk, the soldier talked of the man’s son’s character and told of how the man's son had rescued many other lives. They then talked about their common interest in art. "I'm an artist," said the soldier, "and I want to give you this."

As the old man opened the package, the paper gave way to reveal a portrait of the man's son. Though the world would never consider it the work of a genius, the painting featured the young man's face in striking detail. Overcome with emotion, the man thanked the solider, promising to hang the picture above the fireplace.

A few hours later, after the soldier had departed, the old man set about his task. True to his word, the painting went above the fireplace, pushing aside thousands of dollars of paintings. And then the man sat in his chair and spent Christmas gazing at the gift he had been given.

During the days and weeks that followed, the man realized that even though his son was no longer with him, the boy's life would live on because of those he had touched. He would soon learn that his son had rescued dozens of wounded soldiers before a bullet stilled his caring heart.

As the stories of his son's gallantry continued to reach him, fatherly pride and satisfaction began to ease the grief. The painting of his son soon became his most

prized possession, far eclipsing any interest in the pieces for which museums around the world clamored. He told his neighbors it was the greatest gift he had ever received.

The following spring, the old man became ill and passed away. The art world was in anticipation! Unmindful of the story of the man's only son, but in his honor, those paintings would be sold at an auction.

According to the will of the old man, all of the art works would be auctioned on Christmas Day, the day he had received his greatest gift.

The day soon arrived and art collectors from around the world gathered to bid on some of the world's most spectacular paintings.

Dreams would be fulfilled this day; greatness would be achieved as many would claim, "I have the greatest collection."

The auction began with a painting that was not on any museum's list. It was the painting of the man's son. The auctioneer asked for an opening bid. The room was silent.

"Who will open the bidding with $100?" he asked. Minutes passed. No one spoke.

From the back of the room came, "Who cares about that painting? It's just a picture of his son."

"Let's forget it and go on to the good stuff." More voices echoed in agreement.

"No, we have to sell this one first," replied the auctioneer. "Now, who will take the son?"

Finally, a friend of the old man spoke, "Will you take ten dollars for the painting? That's all I have. I knew the boy, so I'd like to have it."

"I have ten dollars. Will anyone go higher?" called the auctioneer.

After more silence, the auctioneer said, "Going once, going twice. Gone." The gavel fell.

Cheers filled the room and someone exclaimed, "Now we can get on with it and we can bid on these treasures!"

The auctioneer looked at the audience and announced the auction was over. Stunned disbelief quieted the room.

Someone spoke up and asked, "What do you mean it's over? We didn't come here for a picture of some old guy's son. And what about all of these other paintings? There are millions of dollars of art here! I demand that you explain what's going on here!"

The auctioneer replied, "It's very simple. According to the will of the father, whoever takes the son gets it all."

Just as those art collectors discovered on that Christmas Day, the message is still the same - the love of a Father, a Father whose greatest joy came from His Son, who went away and gave His life rescuing others.

And because of that Father's love, whoever takes the Son, gets it all!

"THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF DEITY"

Matthew 1:18-25
12/18/2016

INTRODUCTION:

***Jesus is Messiah! The virgin birth proves it.**

I. The <u>HOLY SPIRIT'S POWER</u> produced the Virgin Birth (v. 18-20)
(Christ's supernatural conception)

II. The <u>NAMES GIVEN TO CHRIST</u> prove the Virgin Birth (v. 21-23)
(Christ's supernatural titles)

A. The name **"Jesus"** means He is **<u>SAVIOR</u>** (v. 21)
Jesus (Jehoshua) = Jehovah Saves!

B. The name **"Emmanuel"** means He is **<u>GOD</u>** (v. 22-23)
Emmanuel = God with us!

CONCLUSION: V. 24-25

"THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF DEITY"

Matthew 1:18-25
12/18/2016

INTRODUCTION:

"After establishing Jesus' human lineage from David, Matthew proceeds to show His divine lineage. That is the purpose of verses 18-25." (MacArthur, p. 14)

"Apart from Jesus being both human and divine, there is no gospel. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is the central fact of Christianity. The whole superstructure of Christian theology is built on it." (MacArthur, p. 13)

***Jesus is Messiah! The virgin birth proves it.**

I. The HOLY SPIRIT'S POWER produced the Virgin Birth (v. 18-20)
(Christ's supernatural conception)

V. 18

"Mary was espoused to Joseph" - "Espoused" = to be betrothed; engaged to be married.

> "Betrothal (erusin qiddushin) preceded the actual marriage by a period varying in length, but not exceeding a twelve month in the case of a maiden. At the betrothal, the bridegroom personally or by deputy handed to the bride a piece of money or a letter, it being expressly stated in each case that the man thereby espoused the woman. From the moment of betrothal both parties were regarded, and treated in law (as to inheritance, adultery, need of formal divorce), as if they had been actually married, except as regarded their living together. A legal document (the "Shitre Erusin") fixed the dowry which each brought, the mutual obligations, and all other legal points. Generally a festive meal closed the ceremony--but not in Galilee, where, habits being more simple and pure, that which sometimes ended in sin was avoided."
>
> (Edersheim, p. 354)

"From that moment Mary was the betrothed wife of joseph, their relationship as sacred as if they had already been wedded. Any breach of it would be treated as adultery; nor could the band be dissolved except, as after marriage, by regular divorce. Yet months might intervene between the betrothal and marriage (Edersheim, p. 150)

The betrothal period was one of purity and chastity; one could not live with nor have sexual relations with the betrothed during this period.

Under the Law: "If a man seduced a girl who was espoused to be married, and if the seduction took place with her consent, both he and she must be put to death (Deut. 22:23-24). If the girl was raped, then the man was put to death (v. 25), and if the girl was not betrothed, then the man was obligated to marry her, and "he may not put her away all his days" (v. 28-29).

“Before they came together" - The phrase "came together" is a euphemism for sexual intercourse. Before Mary and Joseph had physical relations, Mary became pregnant.

"She was found" - Mary was observably pregnant.

"Of the Holy Ghost" = lit. from (ek) [the] Holy Spirit

This most miraculous of pregnancies was wrought by the power of the Spirit of God.

Gabriel made this announcement to Mary <u>before</u> she became pregnant. (Lk. 1:34-35 - "Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Exactly how the Holy Spirit implanted the complete eternal essence of the Son of God into the womb of the Virgin Mary will forever be a mystery.

To think that God could be reduced to a seed that fertilized the human egg of Mary is indeed mind-boggling!

As in every work of God, the Triune Godhead was involved in the incarnation of Jesus. The incarnation was accomplished:

--By the <u>plan</u> of the Father (Jn. 3:16; Gal. 4:4)
--In the <u>Person</u> of the Son (Jn. 6:51; I Tim. 1:15)
--Through the <u>power</u> of the Spirit (Lk. 1:35)

V. 19

"Joseph her husband" - During the betrothal period, Mary and Joseph were considered husband and wife.

"A just man" - a righteous, upright, morally sensitive man.

NOTE: Joseph's justice was not harsh and cruel but compassionate (though he no doubt was deeply hurt to find his espoused wife pregnant, rather than having Mary publically humiliated and even stoned, he chose to privately divorce her [cp. Mt. 5:32, 19:9]).

"A public example" - to be exposed and humiliated publically

Joseph could have demanded her death, as provided by the Law (Deut. 22:23-24)

"Was minded" - was determined; had made up his mind

"To put her away" - lit. to <u>divorce</u> (apoluo)

> (NOTE: This author believes that this is the only legitimate grounds for divorce [fornication during the betrothal period justified divorce]. It was in reference to the betrothal period that Jesus gave His "exception clause" in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. The Jewish audience to which Matthew wrote understood perfectly this cultural practice.)

"Privily" - secretly; privately, so as not to humiliate the girl he loved.

V. 20

I'm sure Joseph was shocked when he found out that Mary was pregnant. He could not believe that such a virtuous woman would be unfaithful to him. Such illicit sexual behavior would have been out of character for such a godly person, he thought.

"While he thought" - After he contemplated the divorce, after being mentally shattered by the fornication he thought Mary had engaged in, and after deciding to go through with a private divorce, an angel appeared.

No doubt Mary tried to explain to Joseph that the angel Gabriel had appeared to her and told her about this miraculous conception (Lk. 1:35), but Joseph, like most anyone, would have viewed such a story as absurd, unheard of, a figment of one's imagination.

Therefore, in response to such musings, an angel of the Lord (no definite article in Greek), perhaps Gabriel himself (the angelic announcer of good tidings) confirms Mary innocence, and forbids the intended divorce by exhorting Joseph to marry Mary.

"That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" - Implying: her conception is not the

result of fornication with some man, but is the mighty, miraculous result of the Holy Spirit.

II. The NAMES GIVEN TO CHRIST prove the Virgin Birth (v. 21-23)
(Christ's supernatural titles)

A. The name **"Jesus"** means He is **SAVIOR** (v. 21)
Jesus (Jehoshua) = Jehovah Saves!

What is so important about a name?

Today, people name their child by the sound of the name; how good it sounds. In Bible times, names had more significance than today. A name meant something. It described a particular, outstanding feature about a person.

EX: Adam named his wife "Eve" = "Life gives" because she was the "mother of all living"
God named Abram "Abraham" = "Father of a multitude"
"Daniel" = "God is my judge"
"Michael" = "One who is like God"
"Jacob" = "Supplanter"
"Stephen" = "Crowned one"
"Timothy" = "Honorable one"
"Vincent" = "Conqueror"
"Doug" = "Out of the dark waters"

Of all names, the name of "Jesus" is most significant. The Bible says that "at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow . . ."

Why was this one, Who was born in a manger, whose birth is celebrated every year, called Jesus? This verse (21) gives the answer. **"He shall save his people from their sins"** The name "Jesus" (Yashua) means Jehovah is Savior (Deliverer).

1. Salvation is only through Jesus (The exclusiveness of salvation) "He"

Jesus said, "I am the way . . . the truth . . ."

Peter and John testified: "Neither is there salvation in any other . . ." (Acts 4:12).

Paul said, "For this is one God, and one mediator. . ." (I Tim. 2:5).

Philip preached unto the Ethiopian eunuch only one word in Acts 8:35 –

"Jesus"

"I, even I am the Lord (Jehovah) and beside me there is no Savior" (Is. 43:11; cp. Is. 45:21-25).

I'm glad salvation is only in a single person. Why? Because I no longer have to doubt whether or not I have it.

Satan has offered hundreds of substitutes (counterfeits) for Christ

Satan also offers additions to Christ (EX: You need Christ plus St. __ ; You need Christ plus a church, works, etc.)

Salvation is not from: a religion, baptism, church membership; it's not from good works, a priest, or a preacher. It's not from: turning over a new leaf, keeping the Golden Rule, or ten commandments.

---It is from Jesus!

God has no other means of salvation. There isn't one way for the Moslems, and one different way for Hindus, Africans, Chinese, etc.

The way to heaven is narrow! (Mt. 7) But praise God, it is available. Never a road block!

Why is salvation only through Jesus (`Eph. 2:8, 9)?

--Jesus is God's only plan - "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"

--Jesus is the only one who could pay for your sin - infinite penalty demanded an infinite payment

2. Salvation is certain through Jesus
(The certainty of salvation)
"shall save"

There are not many things that are certain today.

We are not guaranteed perpetual freedom, prosperity.

We don't know when we will die, what the price of gold will be next year, the interest rates, etc.

But we can be sure of our salvation.

God did not say: Jesus may save, might save, could save, or would save -- but shall save (future tense, pointing to certainty)

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Ro. 10:13).

"He that hath the son hath life . . . these things have I written unto you . . . that you may know" (I Jn. 5:13).

3. Salvation is limited to those related to Jesus
(The condition of salvation)
"His people"

In the context of Matthew, Jesus is presented as the King of the Jews. He came for the lost sheep of Israel.
He came to save His own people. (This promise will ultimately be fulfilled prior to the Millennium, at the end of the Tribulation - Zech.12:7,10; Joel 2:32)

But the Bible says "HIs own received Him not." Therefore Salvation is offered to all.

(See John 1:10-13; Salvation is only for those who are born into God's Family. cp. Jn.3:3-6)

You must be personally related to Jesus to have His salvation.

You are adopted into His family, and can wear His name - "Christian" the day you fully trust Jesus.

Salvation is available for all - it is sufficient for all (Luke 2:10, 11 - "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord.""

I Jn. 2:2 - "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

It is sufficient for all, but it is only to those who believe (Acts 16:31 -

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ . . .")

4. Salvation is a spiritual matter through Jesus
(The spiritual nature of salvation)
"From their sins"

EX: When you speak about being "saved" people only think about the physical (EX: saved from drowning, saved from financial ruin, saved from illness, etc.)

God's salvation is spiritual.

From a Christmas card: "If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator. If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist. If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist. But since our greatest need was forgiveness, God sent us a Savior."

I Jn. 3:5 - He was manifested to take away our sins.

--Our sin would bring us to Hell; God's son brings us to heaven
--Our sin would condemn us forever; God's Son grants forgiveness
--Our sin would separate us from God; God's Son joins us to the Father

Why the name "Jesus"?

Because He alone can save.
Because He alone does save.
Because He alone does save from sin.

The sweetest name to the believer's ear is the name of Jesus!

This name causes the angels of Heaven to sing, all men to bow down, and all saints to rejoice.

This name occurs 972 times in the NT and fills our hymnal.

"Many of our hymns begin with it, and scarcely any, that are good for anything, end without it. It is the sum total of all delights. it is the music with which the bells of heaven ring; a song in a word; an ocean for comprehension, although a drop for brevity: a matchless oratorio in two syllables; a gathering up of the hallelujahs of eternity in five letters." (Spurgeon, p. 78).

"His name is Jesus" - Why? "He shall save His people from their

sins."

B. The name **"Emmanuel"** means He is **GOD** (v. 22-23)
Emmanuel = God with us!

V. 22
"That it might be fulfilled" = an often repeated phrase by Matthew, who authenticates Jesus' Messiahship by citing proof texts from the O.T. (cp. 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 27:35)

"Spoken by the Lord through the prophet" - a proof of the inspiration of Scripture. The Bible is God-breathed! (II Tim. 3:16) God is the Author, who used men as His instruments to write His Word.

V. 23
A quote of Isaiah 7:14 - Hebrew for "virgin" is "alma" - Never is used of a married woman in the Bible, but only of virgins (Gen. 24:43; Ex. 2:8; Ps. 68:25; Prov. 30:19; Son 1:3, 6:8)

LXX translated "alma" as "panthenos" which exclusively means virgin.

The Hebrew quote ends with the name "Emmanuel".

The reason why Matthew interpreted the name is to add emphasis to Christ's deity**.**

Whereas the name "Jesus" describes what He came to do (save His people), the name "Immanuel" describes who He was (God!)

In Bible days, a name had meaning. It described one's character or nature. It revealed attributes.

So it is with every name applied to Jesus Christ.

He is called Jesus (Mt. 1:21), Christ (Jn. 1:41), Messiah (Jn. 4:25), Lord (Lk. 23:42), the "I AM" (Jn. 8:58, 18:6), the Son of God (Lk. 1:32), the Son of man (Mt. 8:20), the Son of Abraham (Mt. 1:1), Son of David (Mk. 10:47), the Son of the Highest (Lk. 1:32), the last Adam (I Cor. 15:45), the Word (Jn. 1:1, 14), Savior (Lk. 2:11), Rabbi (Jn. 1:38), Master (Mt. 9:11), Alpha & Omega (Rev. 1:17), King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16), Faithful and True (Rev. 19:11), the Way, truth, life (Jn. 14:6), Bread of life (Jn. 6), the living water (jn. 4), the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10), the Light of the World (Jn. 8), the Door (Jn. 10:9), the Branch and the Vine (Jn. 15), the Cornerstone (mt. 21:42), the Messenger (Mt. 21:37), the Morning Star (II Pet. 1:19), the Prophet (Jn. 4:19), the Rock of Offense (I Cor. 1:23), the only begotten Son (Jn. 3:16), the Lord of Glory (Ja. 2:1), the Great High Priest (Heb. 4:14), the Redeemer

(Eph. 1:7), Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace (Is. 9:6).

There are over 200 names and titles applied to Christ in the bible, but no name is as miraculous, no name is as awe-inspiring as the name "Immanuel." For this name means "God with us" and points to the miracle of miracles - the virgin birth - the incarnation of deity!

Immanuel" - from the Hebrew (Is. 7:14)
"Im" = with (together with)
"(Ma)nu = us
"El" = God
Hence, "With us (is) God"!

*The name "Emmanuel" shows: CHRIST'S DEITY
("God with us")

The Bible teaches that Christ is divine, equal with the Father, God very God, and Lord of Lords!

1. Jesus is Directly Called "God."

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Mt. 1:23).

a. He is called God by John.

John 1:1 - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (the "Word" refers to Jesus - v. 14).

I Jn. 5:20 - "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

Rev. 21:7 - "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

b. He is called God by Thomas.

Jn. 20:27-29 - "...and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God. Jesus said, Because ye have seen me, thou hast believed..."

If Thomas had erred so seriously in addressing Jesus as God, why was there no correction by Jesus? And why did Jesus commend his faith?

c. Jesus refers to Himself as God.

John 5:17-18 - "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."

John 10:30 - "I and my Father are one." [Note the reaction of the Jews (v. 33) - "...Thou, being a man, makest thyself God." Jesus shortly after this said, "...that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him. Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand" (v. 38, 39).

John 14:9 - "...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father..."

d. He is called God by the writer of Hebrews.
Heb. 1:3 - "His Son...who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person..."

e. He is called God by God the Father.
Heb. 1:8 - "But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom." (quoting Ps. 45:6, 7)

f. He is called God by the Apostle Paul.
"Israelites...whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all God blessed for ever. Amen."

Acts 20:28 (Luke quoting Paul) - "...Feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood."

Phil. 2:6 - "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

Col. 1:15 - "Who is the image of the invisible God."

Col. 2:9 - "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." ("fullness" = completeness or perfection; "Godhead" = to have the same essence as God)

I Tim. 3:16 - "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

Titus 2:13 - "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." (cp. I Jn. 5:20; Rev. 21:7; Is. 9:6)

2. Jesus Claimed and Exercised the Prerogatives of God.
(Christ had the rights of God, and did the works of God.)

a. Forgives sins (Mk. 2:10; Lk. 7:48)

b. Raises the dead (Lk. 7:12-15; Jn. 5:25, 29; 6:39-44; 11:24, 25).

c. Controls nature (Mt. 8:26).

d. Judges motives (Mt. 7:22-27).

e. Receives worship (Ps. 2:8, 12; Mt. 8:2, 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 28:9, 17; Jn. 9:35, 38; 20:28, 29; Lk. 24:51, 52; by angels - Heb. 1:6; by all men - Phil. 2:10.
[Note: Peter (Acts 10:25, 26), Paul (Acts 14:11-18) and angels (Rev. 19:10 refused to be worshipped.]

f. Taught with independent authority (Mt. 7:29).
Jesus did not say, "Thus saith the Lord" as the prophets did, but boldly states, "I say unto you" (cp. Mt. 5).

g. Sends the Holy Spirit (Jn. 15:26).

h. Creates (Gen. 1:26; Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:15, 16).
Note: "Firstborn" (Col. 1:15) is a Jewish concept which refers to preeminence or authority, not origin (cp. Col. 1:18 - EX: Jacob & Esau). Jesus had the rights of the firstborn. Cp. Jn. 3:16 - "only begotten" - lit. "one of a kind"; "unique"; not referring to origin. Cp. Heb. 11:17 - Isaac was not Abraham's only son. Cp. Acts 13:33 - reference to the resurrection.

i. Sustains (He preserves creation) (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3).

j. He is the only Judge (cp. Jn. 5:22 with Rev. 20:11).

k. He is to receive equal honor with the Father (Jn. 5:23).

l. The only Savior (cp. Is. 43:11 with Jude 25; I Pet. 3:18).

m. He grants eternal life (Jn. 10:28).

n. He answers prayer (Jn. 14:14).

3. Jesus Christ has the Same Attributes as God.

a. Self-existence (Jn. 8:58 - "I am"; Jn. 1:14, 14:6).

b. Immutability (Heb. 13:8 - "The same...for ever")

c. Eternal (Rev. 22:13 - "Alpha & Omega"; cp. Is. 44:6; Jn. 8:35).

d. Omnipresent (Mt. 28:20 - "I am with you always"; cp. 18:20).

e. Omniscient (Jn. 21:17 - "Lord, thou knowest all things"; cp. Jn. 1:48, 2:24, 4:18, 29).

f. Omnipotent (Rev. 1:8 - "Almighty"; Jn. 1:12, 4:19-21; Phil. 3:21, 21).

g. Life (Jn. 1:4 - "In Him was life").

h. Truth (Jn. 14:6 - "I am the truth").

i. Infinity (meaning no limits or boundaries except those that are self-imposed) (Eph. 3:8 - "unsearchable"; cp. Col. 2:3).

j. Perfection (Col. 2:9 - "fullness of the Godhead"; Eph. 4:13).

k. Omnisapience (I Cor. 1:24 - "the wisdom of God").

It was God who entered the womb of Mary! (Note: Mary was merely the vehicle through which Christ would acquire a physical body to be born - she is in no way deified, nor did Christ come into existence via Mary. Rather, He took on flesh via Mary.

Mary gave birth to her Creator, to her Master, to her Lord, to her Savior.

It was God who was wrapped in swaddling clothes!
It was God who was laid in a manger!
It was God whom Mary fed and cared for!
It was God who brought joy to the home of Mary and Joseph!
It was God who walked the streets of Jerusalem!
It was God who stunned the scribes and doctors of the law with His intense knowledge of the Scriptures!
It was God who worked as a carpenter with His father!

Jesus could not forgive sins unless He was who Matthew said He was (God). For even the scribes knew that no one could forgive sins but God only (Mark 2:7).

If Christ was not virgin born, He could not be God (Mt. 1:23); If Christ was not God, He could not be Savior! (Is. 43:11)

CONCLUSION: V. 24-25

"Knew her not" - Did not have intimate, sexual relations with her.

"Knew" = a common Hebrew euphemism for sexual intercourse (cp. Gen. 4:1, Lk. 1:34)

"Knew her not till" - Joseph did not have a sexual relationship with Mary until after Jesus was born (implying that he did afterwards).

Mary did not remain a perpetual virgin all of her life as the RCC teaches Mary and Joseph had other children (Mt. 12:46; Mark 6:3; Jn. 2:12; 7:3, 5, 10; Acts 1:14; I Cor. 9:5; Gal. 1:19).

Mt. 13:55-56 - "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?"

Who do you really believe Jesus is? Is He really Lord? Is He Lord of your life?

"Some Worshipped; Some Warred"

(Two Different Reactions to the Birth of Christ)

Matthew 2:1-23

12/25/2016

INTRODUCTION:

***What is your attitude toward Jesus Christ?**

Are you for Him or against Him?

Note the two different reactions to the birth of the King of Kings.

I. The King is <u>WORSHIPPED</u> by Wise Men (v. 1 - 11)
(Reaction #1 - The <u>Worship</u> of the Wise Men)
He who is wise <u>worships</u> Jesus!

II. The King is <u>OPPOSED</u> by Wicked Herod (v. 12 - 23)
(Reaction #2 - The <u>Wrath</u> of King Herod)
He who is wicked is at <u>war</u> with Jesus!

"Some Worshipped; Some Warred"

(Two Different Reactions to the Birth of Christ)

Matthew 2:1-23

12/25/2016

INTRODUCTION:

They say that there are 2 things that you don't talk about because of the emotional nature of the subjects: politics and religion.

When I say, "Ronald Reagan" - what comes to your mind?

(If you are liberal, negative thoughts. If conservative, generally positive thoughts.)

When I say, "New York Yankees" - what comes to your mind?

(If you are a Red Sox fan, you can't stand them. If a loyal Yankee fan, they can do no wrong.)

When I say, "Abortion" - what comes to your mind?

(If you love God, the Bible, and human life, you abhor the thought. However, if you disregard God, live for your own selfish pursuits, and buy the Women's Lib line, "Women have a right to their own body" - you think favorably of abortion.)

The point is: On certain subjects, neutrality if impossible! You are either for it or against it!

Above all subjects or persons that could be named, there is no neutrality about Jesus Christ in the minds of men. On the inside, deep in the hearts of men, an attitude toward Jesus Christ exits. Isaiah made this statement regarding the Servant-Messiah:
"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." (Isaiah 53:3)

There are many in this world who love Him. They came to realize who He is (God who came to earth), and they came to realize and believe what He did (He died as a substitute to pay for their sins). To those who are recipients of His eternal life, appreciation swells up in their hearts at the thought of such grace. The name of Jesus is not a curse word to them, but they love His name. Everything about Jesus is wonderful. Those who are for Him gladly serve Him, commune with Him, sing to Him, and worship Him.

On the other hand, there are multitudes (an actual majority of humanity) who have a totally different opinion of Jesus Christ. Though they may express it in different ways and to different degrees, they are actually opposed to Jesus. To express such hostility, some use His name as a curse word.

ILLUS: of the Hasidic Jew in Israel who mocked Jesus Christ, hated His name, and would not so much as utter the name of Jesus, referring to Him as "What's His Face"

Others flee whenever a conversation about Him starts up. Others refer in a demeaning way to Him as a first century radical or revolutionary. Still multitudes of others blasphemously deny His deity and put Him in the rank of a mere prophet, thus ignoring or blatantly contradicting Christ's own testimony about Himself.

*Observe the two different attitudes toward Jesus Christ in Matthew 2 -

The attitude of the Wise Men, kings of the east ... those who worship Him
The attitude of a wicked man, the king of Judaea, Herod ... he who is at war with Him

Matthew, in validating Christ as the King of the Jews, shows the two reactions that are always true of an heir to a royal throne. If Christ was not actually King, the wise men were foolish men, and Herod should not have been so upset.

Jesus said: "He that is not with me is against me" (Mt. 12:30; cp. Lk. 11:23).

He again said: "He that is not against us is on our part" (Mk. 9:40).

Today, you are either <u>for</u> Jesus Christ or you are <u>against</u> Him! (perhaps against Him by default, but you are against Him unless you love Him, serve Him, uphold His cause, hold dearly His word, and submit to His will. There is NO neutrality regarding Christ. If you think you are neutral, you are really against Him. If enough pressure was put on you, you would deny Him in a second!

You either <u>worship</u> Him or you are at <u>war</u> with Him!

***What is your attitude toward Jesus Christ?**

Are you for Him or against Him?

Note the two different reactions (polar opposite reactions; extreme reactions) to the birth of the King of Kings.

On one end of the spectrum…

I. The King is <u>WORSHIPPED</u> by wise men (v. 1 - 11)
(Reaction #1 - The <u>Worship</u> of the Wise Men)
He who is wise <u>worships</u> Jesus!

What a happy occasion the birth of a child is! The parents and family all want a chance to hold the baby, hug the baby, and kiss the baby. Family and friends many times celebrate the birth by bringing gifts, balloons and cards.

The birth of one baby stands out as unique. This Baby is the One whose incarnation much of the world remembers each year on December 25. This Baby, no doubt, received all of the affection and hugs that other children in His day received.

However, this Child received something no other child has ever received. This Child received <u>worship from angels</u>! (Heb. 1:6 - "And again, when He bringeth in the First-begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him.").

Not only did an angel <u>foretell</u> His birth (Mt. 1:20-24), <u>announce</u> His birth (Lk. 2:10-12), and <u>sing praises</u> at His birth (Lk. 2:13-14), but the Bible teaches that the angels <u>worshipped</u> Him at His birth (Heb. 1:6).

The Baby Jesus was honored and adored beyond that of any other child. He was <u>glorified</u> by shepherds (Lk. 2:16-20) and extolled by Simeon & Anna (Lk. 2:25-38).

However, the most astounding honor the Baby Jesus received was the fact that—both as an infant (by the Angels and Shepherds) and now as a toddler --He was <u>worshipped</u>!

SEE: Matthew 2:11

***Jesus was, is, and always will be worthy of worship!**

Jesus, as a young child, was worthy of worship: **Because the Baby Was <u>KING</u>!**

Matthew 2:1-12

v.1 – "Bethlehem" ("house of bread") – Isn't it interesting that the bread of life was born in the "house of bread"

"wise men" – How many wise men? Most people assume three, because of the 3 gifts of Gold, Frankincense and myrrh which they brought. There were perhaps at least three, but could have been many more.

"from the east" – from the region of ancient Persia (Modern day Muslim countries)

v.2 – "King of the Jews" – Why are Gentiles seeking a Jew's King? They are believers in the True God of Scripture.

Jesus is King who was predicted to come!

Jeremiah 23:5 -"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."

Zechariah 9:9 -"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation: lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

Jesus would fulfill those prophecies!

John 1:49 - "Nathanael answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."

Luke 19:38 -"Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest."

Luke 23:38 -"And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS"

Matthew 27:11 -And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest."

Jesus is King of Kings, yet His kingdom was not of this world or age!

John 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

v.2 – "we have seen His star" – They had been looking to the stars for the arrival of the Jewish Messiah. Why? Because Isaiah made this prediction: Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. (Isaiah 60:1-3).

Interesting note: Just as a peculiar unique occurrence signaled Messiah's first coming so the constellations will signal His second coming for judgment in the Day of the Lord. But instead of a bright shining star, there will be the dimming of the sun and the discoloration of the moon along with the stars falling from the Heavens. (Joel 2:31; Acts 2:20; Mt. 24:29; Rev. 6:12-17).

v.3 – Herod …was troubled" – He thought his "job was on the line." As a typical politician Herod was troubled that someone might upset His comfortable kingdom. He assumed that he was in jeopardy of having his kingdom stripped away from him. He didn't want to lose his summer and winter palaces etc. that he had built for himself.

As a typical, worried politician, Herod feared that his dynasty would soon end if this child of Bethlehem were truly the King of the Jews.

NOTE: the contrast between v. 2 & 3. Verse 2 speaks of submissive <u>worship</u> to the King; whereas v. 3 speaks of rebellious <u>worry</u> because of the King. The same King Jesus produced 2 totally different responses.

"Herod was an Edomite, not a Jew, and had no legitimate claim to be the Jews' king. He therefore feared and hated even the suggestion of a rival claimant" (MacArthur, p. 24).

v.4 – The religious Jews knew where the Messiah would be born and still rejected Jesus.

v.6 – The prophetic Scriptures not only predicted <u>WHERE</u> the Messiah would be born (Micah 5:2), but also foretold <u>WHEN</u> (Dan. 9:25) and <u>HOW</u> (Is. 7:14; 9:6).

v.7 – Why a secret inquiry by Herod? He had evil intentions and didn't want them known. Why such diligent questioning? Herod wanted to know about how old Jesus would be so he would know who to target in the "massacre of the innocents".

V. 8
Herod's intention was anything but worship. He wanted blood! Infanticide!

v.9 – The star (like the bright North Star) provided the direction from Jerusalem. They would head south as the supernaturally produced temporary light hovered over Bethlehem (from their perspective).

v.10 – Evidently the star had temporarily dimmed and was now re-illuminated and re-directed for their benefit. These Gentile kings follow a star to the Star!
Numbers 24:17 – "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel…"

v. 11 - "When they were come into the house" - the wise men arrived at "the house" (v.11) (Not the Inn) where they found "the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him…" This verse makes it clear that Jesus was no longer an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger (feeding trough), but a toddler perhaps just under 2 years old (cp. v.16) living in a house by the time the wise men arrived.

v. 11 – THEY…FELL DOWN, AND WORSHIPPED HIM.

NOTE: "They <u>worshipped Him</u> (not "Mary His mother")

They presented unto <u>Him</u> <u>gifts</u>" - Gifts fit for a King, Priest, and Prophet.

The ancient church also understood the gifts to symbolize aspects of Christ's life and ministry, the work He would do. They had symbolic value.
We cannot help but wonder, "Why these particular gifts?"

The following thoughts are condensed from "Gold and Frankincense and Myrrh" by Henry M. Morris and Kathleen Bruce. Published by Institute for Creation Research. Santee, CA

GOLD (an appropriate gift for a King)
The gift of gold obviously was appropriate for both honoring a king and worshipping God. It has always been symbolic of wealth and of royalty. The essential symbol identifying a king was a golden crown on his head. But God is the ultimate Sovereign and His Son is the King of kings (Revelation 17:14). Therefore gold is most fittingly appropriate.

As God was structuring the nation of Israel in the wilderness under Moses, He told them to build a tabernacle in which He could "dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). As He gave the pattern that they were to follow in building the tabernacle and its furnishings, it is noteworthy how often gold was to be used. The word was used well over 100 times as they received and carried out these instructions. Everything was either made of gold or overlaid with gold.
The same was true on an even larger scale in the temple, which King Solomon later built in Jerusalem to replace the tabernacle. Again there was gold everywhere (1 Kings 6:21-22). But the tabernacle and the temple, as beautiful and meaningful as they were, were only types of God's future home with all His people. The heavenly city, New Jerusalem, will be made of gold everywhere (Revelation 21:18, 21). A gift of gold was indeed a wonderfully appropriate gift for the Magi to offer the Lord Jesus as they worshipped Him.

FRANKINCENSE (an appropriate gift for a Priest)
But what about frankincense and myrrh? Both were highly valued in Israel and other nations of that time, used especially for medicines, incense, and perfumes. Interestingly, they are both encountered for the first time in the Bible in God's instructions for the services of the tabernacle (Exodus 30:23, 34). The use of frankincense was commanded, both as a chief ingredient of the incense which was to be kept burning in the tabernacle and also in connection with the meal offering.
David prayed: "Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense" (Psalm 141:2). As the smoke of the burning offering ascended up from the altar, so the people believed their prayers would go up to God with it, and it would be a sweet savor to Him. The typological meaning of burning incense as prayer rising up to God is seen even in the prophecies of Revelation. John saw "golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints" (Revelation 5:8). This surely gives us a clue as to the real significance of burning incense (especially its chief ingredient, frankincense) rising up to God's

throne. We pray, on the basis of the sin cleansing sacrifice of the Lamb of God, and they rise up to the throne of God via the indwelling Spirit of God.

In the Old Testament figure, the High Priest had to serve as the intermediary, but now the relationship is different: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5; see also Hebrews 7:1-8:6).

Now we can see how wonderfully meaningful was this gift of frankincense to the little child in Bethlehem. Not only is He destined to be the great King, but also our eternal High Priest. The incense confesses that He alone can convey our prayers, and indeed our very souls to God.

MYRRH (an appropriate gift for a Prophet)
The third gift was myrrh. Its first use in the Bible would suggest that its definitive Biblical use was in the holy anointing oil. The priests were to be "anointed" with a divinely designed oil, the main ingredient of which was myrrh. This type of special ritualistic anointing was also applicable to kings and prophets. For example, Samuel anointed Saul and later David to be king over Israel (1 Samuel 10:1; 16:13; Psalm 89:20). God told Elijah: "Elisha...shalt thou anoint to be prophet" (1 Kings 19:16).
Myrrh is used in a striking way in Psalm 45, which eulogizes the Messiah ("the Anointed One"). Jesus is pictured in this psalm as about to leave the palaces of heaven for a mission to Earth with a "tongue" like the "pen of a ready writer" and with grace "poured into thy lips" (Psalm 45:1-2). He has beautiful words from God (Hebrews 1:1-2); in fact He is the Word of God (John 1:1, 14)!

PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING
The Magi had surely read Moses' promise of the coming Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15), as well as David's promise of the coming Priest (Psalm 110:4), and Daniel's promise of the coming King (Daniel 9:24-27), and when they saw Him, they fell down and worshipped Him, presenting Him with the three most fitting gifts of worship which the world contained.

Note: The gold, and frankincense, and myrrh not only had symbolic value, but would be very practical gifts and most needed as Joseph, Mary and the Christ Child would have to flee to Egypt and perhaps with little or no money to sustain them for the journey and during their stay in Egypt. God sovereignly brought them resources with enough monetary value to sustain them until their return to Nazareth. Like them, we today, we must never forget that God brings what we need, when we need

it!

NOTE: the repeated key phrase in v. 1-11 -"worship Him" (v. 2)
"worship Him" (v. 8)
"worshipped Him" (v. 11)

Jesus receives worship:

Ps. 2:8, 12 -"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. . . Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

Mt. 8:2 -"And behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

9:18 -"While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live."

14:33 -Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

15:25 - "Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me."

28:9, 17 -"And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and help him by the feet, and worshipped him. . . . And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted."

John 9:35, 38 -"Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? . . . And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him."

20:28-29 -"And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Luke 24:51-52 -"And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven, And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

Jesus must be God to be worshipped. The Law of Moses forbade the worship of anyone or anything other than Yahweh.

"Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Mt. 4:10; cp. Dt. 6:13 & 10:20).

Do you worship Jesus?

It has been said that "behind every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction" (Newton's third law of physics)

II. The King is <u>OPPOSED</u> by Wicked Herod (v. 12 - 23)

(Reaction #2 - The <u>Wrath</u> of King Herod)

He who is wicked is at <u>war</u> with Jesus!

V. 18

The prophecy found in Jer. 31:15 originally referred to Rachel (Jacob's favored wife) weeping [symbolically] over her children who were exiled to Babylon.

"That calamity and Herod's new atrocity are viewed as part of the same broad picture" (Ryrie note).

Pharaoh in similar fashion tried to exterminate the Jewish baby boys in the days of Moses' birth (Exodus 1).

V. 19

Herod died very soon after the slaughter of the infants. He reigned 40 - 4 B.C.

V. 20

"They are dead" - More people than Herod wanted to kill the Christ child (perhaps other Jewish leaders).

Ever since Lucifer's rebellion (is. 14), he has always been attempting to destroy God's work.

Satan tried to resist:

*Israel, and King David in particular (I Chron. 21:1 - "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel")

*Joshua the high priest (Zech. 3:1-2 - "And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?")

*Jesus from going to the cross (Mt. 16:21-23)

*Sergius Paulus from getting saved (Acts 13:4-12 *v. 10)

Satan either works independently or he uses people.

See Rev. 12:1-5 for Satan's attempt to destroy the Son of God.

"A woman" = Israel.
Israel is often depicted as a woman in the Bible (Is. 54:5; Ezek. 16:32; Hos. 2:16) - both as the "wife" of the Lord (Jer. 31:32; Hosea), and as the "mother" of the Jewish nation (Gal. 4:26).
****SEE Gen. 37:9-11 - for the same imagery depicting Israel.**

V. 2
In Isaiah 26, Israel cries out for deliverance awaiting the arrival of the Messiah, and exclaims: *"Like as a woman with child that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O LORD."*

V. 3
NOTE: ***"Another wonder"*** (sign). This sign is not "great" as was the first.
This sign involves a description of Satan, who is not great in terms of virtue (goodness), but is "great" in terms of power and wickedness (v. 9).
"Great red dragon" = none other than Satan himself (SEE v. 9; cp. 20:2).
"Red" = fiery red. The word literally means the "color of fire" - it is interesting that Satan, who is destined for fire [Rev. 20:10} has the appearance of it.

"Seven heads . . . seven crowns" = indicative of the completeness of Satan's authority (cp. Satan's authority in the world - Lk. 4:6; Eph. 2:2; 6:12; I Jn. 2:15).

Why ***"10 horns"***? - a horn represents "power" or "control"
Satan has 10 horns because he will be the world ruler of the "10-horned beast" (a world government system comprising 10 kings - 17:12-13) that will reign in the

Tribulation (Rev. 13:1).

V. 4

"The stars of Heaven" = angels who rebelled with Lucifer (Satan).

Angels are referred to as "stars" elsewhere in the Bible (Job 38:7; Rev. 1:20; 9:1; Dan. 8:10).

"Cast them to the earth" - SEE v. 9 - "he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

[NOTE: Some demons are presently in hell in chains of darkness, reserved unto judgment (Jude 6; II Pet. 2:4), while other demons are free to work with Satan.]

The gruesome picture is that of a hungry cannibalistic dragon waiting in front of a pregnant woman to eat up her child as soon as it is born.

** When Christ was born, Herod the king heard about it, and being inspired by Satan sought to destroy the child (2:1-8; **16**).

V. 5

"She brought forth a man (male) child" = Christ

It is Christ who will (future) "rule all nations with a rod of iron" -

Rev. 2:27 - *"And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."* SEE Psalm 2:9, Rev. 19:15.

"Caught up unto God" = The ascension of Christ.

Christ's ascension shows the failure of Satan's efforts to destroy Him.

"...And to his throne" = The exaltation of Christ at the Father's right hand)

The reason why such antagonism exists over Christ and true Christianity is because it is real! it is true!

No one gets angry over nothing! (Example: of Bill Murray's testimony about his mother's [Madelaine Murray O'Hare] antagonism toward prayer, the Bible, Christianity, etc. He said the fact that his mom was so much against Christ actually proved His existence. No one gives their life to fight against something that doesn't exist.)

CONCLUSION:

Men throughout history have tried to oppose God and His work, yet God's plan has not been frustrated or thrown off course. Everything He has determined beforehand will be fulfilled as He has decreed.

In the midst of Herod's vain attempt to destroy the Christ child, the sovereignty of God's plan is seen, and His Word is being fulfilled.

God's sovereign fulfillment of prophecy:

Bethlehem - the place of Christ's birth (2:6) -- to fulfill Micah 5:2
"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

Egypt - the place of Christ's childhood (2:15) -- to fulfill Hosea 11:1
"I…called my son out of Egypt"

Nazareth - the place of Christ's youth (2:23) -- This citation is an inference to Is. 53:2, Ps. 22:6, since Nazareth was an insignificant and despised town with a negative reputation (Jn. 1:46; 7:52). Also the word: "Nazareth" is a derivative of the Hebrew word "Natzar" which means "a branch." Christ would be the "branch" an offshoot of Jesse and King David.

> **Messiah, the Branch** *(natzar)* **will Rule with the Holy Spirit's Power & Integrity** (Isaiah 11:1-5, 10)
>
> **"Branch" (Isaiah 11:1)-**
>
> The word *natzar* refers to a new green shoot which grows out of a tree (again, the Davidic family tree).
>
> The terminology in Isaiah 11:1 points to a key descendent, a particularly vitally important descendent of the Davidic lineage.

Two proofs that "Nazareth" is related to the word *natzar*:

1) The obvious phonetic correspondence

2) The humble, lowliness motif of Isaiah 11:1
(Gundry)

"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (Jn. 1:46)

For the past 2 millennium, many have been so much for Jesus Christ that they were willing to die for Him, and multitudes of others were so much against Him that they have tried to obliterate anything associated with Him.

I ask you:

Are you for Jesus . . . or against Him?

Do you love Him? Or are you still "hiding from Him?"

1 Cor. 16:22 - If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.
Isaiah 53:3 - He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

"True Repentance"

Matthew 3:1-12
1/8/2017

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 2

***Realize what true repentance is!**

I. The MESSENGER of Repentance (v. 2-6)
(Who qualifies to call others to repentance?

A. A Herald (v. 2-3)

B. A Holy Man (v. 4)

C. A Humble Man (v. 11)

II. The MOTIVES of Repentance (v. 2, 7, 10, 12)
(Why should you repent?)

A. The Promise of God's Kingdom (v. 2)

B. The Prospect of God's Wrath (v. 7, 10, 12)

III. The FRUITS of Repentance (v. 5-6, 8-10)
(How can you see real repentance?)

A. Outward Fruit (v. 5-6)

B. Worthy Fruit (v. 8-9)

C. Good Fruit (v. 10)

IV. The BLESSINGS of Repentance (v. 11-12)
(What is the result of repentance?)

A. "The Holy Spirit" - Salvation (v. 11)

B. "The Garner" - Heaven (v. 12)

CONCLUSION:

"True Repentance"

Matthew 3:1-12
1/8/2017

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 2

V. 1

"In those days" - i.e. In the days the Lord Jesus grew up in the city of Nazareth (2:23).

"The wilderness of Judea" - not a forest, but a barren wasteland or desert containing nothing but rocks and hills and dust (located west of the Jordan River).

John wanted people to turn away from ritualism, worldliness, hypocrisy, and superficiality; therefore, "he brought them away where they would be freer to listen, think and ponder, without the distractions and the misleading leaders they were so accustomed to following" (macArthur, p. 53).

"The message John proclaimed was simple, so simple it could easily be summarized in one word: Repent!" (MacArthur, p. 53).

Note the stress on repentance in verses 1 - 12 -

V. 2 - "Repent ye"

V. 8 - "Fruits meet for repentance"

V. 11 - "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance"

V. 2

~Repent" = from metanoeo. Lit: meta = to change; noeo = the mind

The word "repent" means to change one's thinking; to alter one's opinion and attitude.

In the Jewish mindset it was impossible to change one's attitude without also changing one's actions. Attitude determines action.

Hence, the repentance that John called for was a change of mind toward God, toward sin, and toward your life that would result in a distinctly different way of living.

In other words, repentance was not mere intellectual assent. it was a turning from sin and unbelief and turning to God and His righteousness (I Thes. 1:9).

The two sides of repentance - turning from and turning to:

Is. 55:7 - "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon"

Joel 2:12-13 -"Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil."

Verses on Repentance:

Repentance was the message of Jesus -

Mt. 4:17 - "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
Lk. 13:3 - "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Repentance was the message of Peter -

Acts 2:38 - "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost."
Acts 3:19 - "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

Repentance was the message of Paul -

Acts 26:20 - "But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."

***Realize what true repentance is!**

I. The MESSENGER of Repentance (v. 2-6)

(Who qualifies to call others to repentance?

A. A Herald (v. 2-3)

The Lord Jesus' message was just like John's - ""Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt. 4:17)

For over 400 years, the thundering voice of a prophet of God had not been heard in Israel.

To break the silence, God sends His man John the Baptize to announce the coming of Christ and the need for repentance.

V. 3

"The voice of one crying" - John was a herald, one who sounded out the announcement of King Jesus' arrival.

John simply viewed himself as a voice for Christ (Jn. 1:23).

John's baptism was authorized from heaven (Mt. 21:23-27), yet the religious leaders rejected it for themselves.

Isaiah's prophecy in chapter 40 will ultimately be fulfilled at the end of the Tribulation (40:2) prior to the Millennial reign of Christ.

Question: Whose way did John prepare?
Answer: The way for Jesus the Lord.

Important note on Christ's deity. The word "Lord" is a quote of Is. 40:3, which is the Hebrew word "Jehovah." Jesus is Jehovah!

B. A Holy Man (v. 4)

"Holy" means set apart.

John was truly set apart, as evidenced by his clothing, diet, and lifestyle.

If John had been worldly, he could never have gained the respect he needed to call others to repentance.

Only a pure man can persuade sinners (Ps. 51:13).

"The same John" - the greatness of John's message is now shown in contrast to the humility of John.

John's wardrobe and diet are given to teach an important point. Don't judge the importance of a man's message by the externals of his appearance (I Sam. 16:7). John did not wear a flashy suit, a gold chain, a balaua watch, and shoes made in Paris.

His picture would not be seen on the cover of GQ ("Gentleman's Quarterly) magazine.

John wasn't exactly a knock-out when it came to impressing people with his appearance. He wore no royal robe, yet his message was above that ever given in any royal court; he had not the dress of a diplomat, yet his ministry was greater than every ambassador who ever lived combined!

John looked like the Prophet Elijah (II Ki. 1:8; cp. Zech. 13:4).

Perhaps another reason for John's humble appearance and lifestyle was to attest to the fact that Christ's great Kingdom was not going to come in the worldly way the Jews expected. Christ's humble ministry and lifestyle perfectly matches that of his forerunner, John.

"Leathern girdle" - a leather belt.

"Locusts and wild honey" - the food of a nomad. John sacrificed the luxurious life to serve his Lord as a Nazarite.

John ate locusts for his protein and honey for his carbohydrates.

(Note: locust was kosher - Lev. 11:22).

C. A Humble Man (v. 11)

"He . . . is mightier (stronger) than I" - by comparison John was an ant under the foot of a giant.

"Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear" (to lift up and carry; a slave's office in Judea, Greece, and Rome - Reinecker, p. 7-8).

John also humbly admitted that he was unworthy to even stoop down and untie the thongs on Christ's sandals (Mk. 1:7; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:27).

Note: Jesus recognized John the Baptist as the greatest man who ever was born of women (Mt. 11:11), yet in comparison to Christ, who came into the world from Heaven, John was insignificant. No wonder John the Baptist said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (Jn. 3:30).

John sets a blazing example for every minister (by his boldness, his set-apartness, and his humility)

II. The MOTIVES of Repentance (v. 2, 7, 10, 12)

(Why should you repent?)

A. The Promise of God's Kingdom (v. 2)

The reason given for John's urgent appear to repent is that "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

"The kingdom of heaven" = Heaven's kingdom; the kingdom from heaven.

For those tired of this world's kingdoms (namely the empire of Rome), John announced the soon arrival of God's kingdom.

"Is at hand" - perfect tense - has drawn near and still is coming closer.

John is not saying that the kingdom has arrived but that it is on its way.

The kingdom was at hand because the King was here! A national repentance among Israel would have ushered in the Messiah's long-awaited kingdom (Mt. 23:37-39).

Problem: They never did repent (Jn. 1:11) as a nation and never did realize how close the kingdom was to coming to earth. Hence our prayer remains, "Thy kingdom come" (Mt. 6:10).

At Christ's second coming the establishment of His kingdom will be fulfilled (Mt. 25:31).

B. The Prospect of God's Wrath (v. 7, 10, 12)

V. 7

The Pharisees and Sadducees had "come" but didn't submit to his baptism (Lk. 7:29-30).

They just observed, no doubt mocked .

They didn't come (like the rest of the people) because they had been warned of God's wrath; they came simply because they were sent from headquarters. They wanted to see what this "maniac fundamentalist" was up to, and how his ministry was so successful.

Beware of the danger of being a spectator only (coming out to meetings only to see what is happening).

Pharisees = religious legalists (glorified the externals of religious - Mt. 23; the name Pharisee means "Separated one")

Sadducees = religious liberals (denied the supernatural - miracles and resurrection - SEE: Acts 23:6-9).

"Who hath warned you" - John knows that nobody has. For they were smugly complacent and indifferent to God's coming wrath.

The Pharisees viewed themselves as being too good to deserve such wrath. And the Sadducees didn't believe in any such thing (didn't believe in a literal hell).

"O generation of vipers" - You offspring of snakes! You children of snakes! The picture is of baby snakes which are the offspring of snakes (thus bearing the same image and likeness).

John is saying to the Pharisees and Sadducees - you are the product of your ancestors. They were vipers, and you are following in their diabolical ways.

Jesus also referred to the hypocritical religionists as "vipers" (meaning full of poison and venom - false doctrine) (Mt. 12:34; 23:33).

"Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

John's question teaches us some important truths about God's wrath (the deep-seated anger of a holy God against sin) -

1. God's wrath is no joke - "warned"

2. God's wrath is to be avoided at all costs - "flee"

   The word "flee" means to escape. To run from with all your might.

   "It suggests the fleeing of snakes from a field when the harvest begins" (McNiele, cited by Reinecker, p. 7).

3. God's wrath is not here yet - "To come" = it is future.

   V. 10 - "Now . . . the axe is laid" - shows the imminency of death and God's judgment.

   God's axe is lying at the base of every man's life. All He has to do is pick it up and swing it once and it's all over!

   We hang onto life by a thin thread. When God says your time is up, He cuts the thread!

   Therefore, "Now is the accepted time, Now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2).

III. The FRUITS of Repentance (v. 5-6, 8-10)

(How can you see real repentance?)

A. Outward Fruit (v. 5-6)

God is not satisfied with regret or remorse; He wants fruits (obedience).

V. 5

John did not make it convenient for people to hear his message and submit to his baptism - they had to travel from Jerusalem, etc., several miles down to the Jordan River.

V. 6

"Baptized of him" = dipped under water by ("hupo") him; immersed by him.

"Confessing their sins" - the present participle suggests that the public confession occurred at the time of their baptism. A public acknowledgement of sin evidenced true repentance and was a great testimony of the work of God in the lives of people.

Baptism is an outward evidence of an inward change. Regardless of their past, they were now publically identifying themselves with righteousness and with John's message.

B. Worthy Fruit (v. 8-9)

V. 8

"Fruits meet for repentance" - fruits which equal or match true repentance.

True repentance will always be accompanied by corresponding fruit.

"By their fruits ye shall know them" (Mt. 7:20).

Good works are not the roots of repentance, they are the fruits of it.

V. 9

Having a religious heritage does not guarantee you exemption from God's wrath.

Many Jews in John's day pacified (comforted) themselves and took confidence in the fact that they were children of Abraham, therefore supposedly under the automatic blessing of God.

Such confidence was a delusion (Jn. 8:31-39). "The common teaching of that day said that Jews participated in the merits of Abraham, which made their prayers acceptable, helped in war, expiated sins, appeased the wrath of God, and assured a share in God's eternal kingdom." (Ryrie note, p. 1342).

Beware of the danger of thinking that the righteousness of your forefathers and families would cover and suffice for you.

"God is able of these stones" - It's not such a great matter to boast about, that you are a descendent of Abraham. For God could raise up children to him from stones!

C. Good Fruit (v. 10)

At the Great White Throne Judgment, unregenerate man's own works (or absence of them) will condemn him forever (Rev. 20:11-15).

"Cast into the fire" - the fire is speaking of hell and the Lake of Fire.

IV. The BLESSINGS of Repentance (v. 11-12)

(What is the result of repentance?)

A. "The Holy Spirit" - Salvation (v. 11)

"I baptize you with water" - lit. "I baptize you in water"

Bible baptism is always immersion.

"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost" - it is Jesus who, beginning on the day of Pentecost, baptizes people into the Holy Ghost (I Cor. 12:13 - "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.")

"And with fire" - meaning: "and in fire"

This "fire" is not speaking of those who are "on fire for God." Nor is it speaking of the fire that the Spirit gives, but in this context (v. 10, 12), John is referring to the fate of the unbelievers!

Jesus, who is Judge (Jn. 5:22), will by Himself execute Judgment on the evil doers (Jn. 5:27-29).

Three baptisms in Matthew 3:11 -

1. Water - Repentance
2. Spirit - Salvation
3. Fire - Damnation

B. "The Garner" - Heaven (v. 12)

"Fan" = winnowing forks; a fork-like shovel that would scoop up threshed grain and fling it into the air to separate the chaff from the wheat.

EX: the separation of the tares from the wheat (Mt. 13:30, 38-42, 49-50).

"Garner" = storehouse or barn (describing heaven)

"He (Jesus) will burn up the chaff" - chaff often used to describe the ungodly who are judged and condemned

> Ps. 1:4 - "The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away."
>
> Ps. 35:5 - "Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase them."
>
> Is. 17:13 - "The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind."
>
> Job 21:18 - "They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away."
>
> Mal. 4:1 - "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

"Unquenchable fire" - describing a fire that will never be doused; that will never go out; that will burn forever.

CONCLUSION:

Repentance is a gift of God (II Tim. 2:25 - "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth") (cp. Acts 5:31, 11:18).

True repentance will affect the:

1. Intellect (recognition of sin; understanding of God's holiness and righteous standard)

2. Emotion (a godly sorrow for sin - II Cor. 7:10=11)

   "He that never mourned for sin has never rejoiced in the Lord. If I can look back on my past life and say, 'I have no grief over it,' then I should do the same again if I had the opportunity. And this shows that my heart is as perverse as ever it was, and I ma still unregenerate" (Spurgeon, p. 174)

3. Will (a willingness to turn from sin; a change of direction)

For the unsaved, repentance means basically to turn from anything that is keeping you from turning to Christ 100 %.

For the Pharisee, repentance meant to turn from their man-made religious rules and their self-righteousness and to turn to Christ.

For the Sadducee, repentance meant to turn from their unbelief and financial exploitation in the name of religion, and to turn to Christ.

For the prostitute, drunkard and thief, it meant to turn from these vices which so enslaved their hearts and to turn to Christ.

"CORONATION DAY"

(The King is Crowned)
(Matthew 3:13-17)
1/15/2017

INTRODUCTION:

***Crown Him Lord of all and King of all!**

3 credentials show Jesus to be worthy of global kingship:

I. He <u>FULFILLED</u> all Righteousness
As the <u>HUMBLE SON OF GOD</u> (v. 13-15)

II. He was <u>ANOINTED</u> with Power
By the <u>HOLY SPIRIT</u> (v. 16)

III. He was <u>HONORED</u> with Praise
By the <u>HEAVENLY FATHER</u> (v. 17)

"CORONATION DAY"

(The King is Crowned)
(Matthew 3:13-17)
1/15/2017

INTRODUCTION:

Edward Perronet penned these words:

All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all!

Matthew is showing Jesus as King (King of Kings!)
He has done so by giving His:

1) Royal Geneology (Mt. 1)
2) Virgin Birth (Mt. 2)
3) Worship Received (Mt. 2)
4) Forerunner's Announcement (Mt. 3:1-12)

Now Matthew continues to expand on that by showing the Messiah's Coronation Day!

V. 13

Jesus--who spent most of His first 30 years on earth living in Nazareth (Mk. 1:9) in the region of Galilee--now travels south to the Jordan River with the sole intention (purpose) of being baptized. [Note: Christ's baptism marks the beginning of His public ministry]

"After an eternity of glory in heaven and some thirty years of virtual obscurity on earth, the Messiah-King is manifested publicly for the world to see and know." (MacArthur, p. 74)

Before Jesus called His disciples, before He called the world to repentance, before He performed any public miracles, He was anointed or coronated as King.

***Crown Him Lord of all and King of all!**
3 credentials show Jesus to be worthy of global kingship:

I. He <u>FULFILLED</u> all Righteousness
As the <u>HUMBLE SON OF GOD</u> (v. 13-15)

V. 14

John, realizing his own insignificance compared to Christ, tries to avoid baptizing Him.

"John forbade Him" = imperfect tense, indicating continual or repeated attempts to prevent the baptism.

John. . . who didn't consider himself worthy to untie (Mk. 1:7) or carry (Mt. 3:11) Christ's shoes. . . John, who said "He must increase, I must decrease" (Jn. 3:30). . . now in humility attempts to prevent Jesus from submitting to his baptism.

Perhaps one reason why John was so timid to baptism Jesus was because of the wrong impression of Christ which the people might receive.

John has just made it known that Jesus was the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29). Now, Jesus is submissively requesting John to baptize Him.

What a feeling of <u>unworthiness</u> John must have had!

Every servant of God who realizes the exalted privilege of being used by God will feel unworthy to serve Him. It is a "big thing" to serve God.

No one is worthy of God's call; no one is worthy to minister to Christ. The fact that God allows any kind of relationship with Himself is beyond comprehension.

The centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof" (Mt. 8:8).

Paul said, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."(I Tim. 1:12)

(Cp. Eph. 3:8)

V. 15

"Suffer it to be so now" = now, at the present, during Christ's humble incarnation, He would submit to John's baptism.

Jesus, recognizing His superiority over John and His future glory over every creature, emphasizes that for the present time,f or this unique occasion, He would allow himself to be baptized by a mere mortal.

Why did Jesus submit to John's baptism? "To fulfil all righteousness"

Jesus did not come to destroy the Law . . . but to fulfill it (SEE: Mt. 5:17-19)

"It becometh us" = it is fitting, suitable, proper, right

John's baptism was not part of the O.T. Law, but it was a new righteous ordinance, commanded from Heaven (Mt. 21:25; Mk. 11:30; Lk. 20:4).

This newly-established, symbolic ordinance was just as much righteousness as any of the O.T. commands**.**

Jesus kept every O.T. Law (except those which were for people who sinned); EX: Jesus never had to offer up a sin or trespass offering, because He never sinned or trespassed the Law (Lev. 4 & 5 cp. Heb. 7:26-27)

Jesus baptism signifies **3** truths about baptism:

1) Baptism does not save
(If baptism saved, the implication would be that Jesus was a sinner, which He was not - Heb. 4:15; II Cor. 5:21)

2) Baptism is a matter of obedience
(Jesus, by being baptized, is fulfilling His own righteous requirement

3) Baptism is by immersion
(Jesus went up . . . out of the water") (v. 16)

"Baptizo" = to dip or submerge (cp. Lk. 16:14 - "dip" (baptizo) the tip of His finger in water")

4) Baptism symbolizes identification. By being baptized by John, Jesus is identifying (showing agreement with John's mission and message). Jesus preaches the same message as John (Mt. 3:2; 4:17)

[Note: believers baptism identifies the believer with the Trinity (Mt. 28:19-20)

Some have suggested that Christ's baptism was a symbol of His future death, burial, and resurrection, whereas Christian baptism looks back at that event.

II. He was ANOINTED with Power
By the HOLY SPIRIT (v. 16)

"Lo, the heavens were opened" -

"Lo" = Look! Behold! See! Check this out!

The same word appears in v. 17 - "Lo, a voice from heaven!"

What John the Baptism saw was so awesome, so wonderful, so breathtaking, so amazing that he drew special attention to it.

"He saw the Spirit" - Who is meant by the "He"? Jesus.

But John also saw this phenomena (Jn. 1:32-33 - "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode on Him. And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.)

The reason why God allowed John the Baptist to see the Spirit in the form of a dove was to prove to John that this Jesus was the very one who would baptize with the Spirit (Jn. 1:33).

"The dove is a beautiful symbol of the Spirit of God in its purity ("white") and in its ministry of peace ("lighted upon") (Wiersbe, p. 17)

NOTE: The descent of the Holy Spirit (as a dove) at Christ's baptism is not a repeated occurrence, but a once and for all, never to be repeated historical fact. Never build a doctrine on a historical narrative. This is not the baptism of the Spirit which all believers receive (I Cor. 12:13); rather, this is the final theocratic anointing of the Spirit.

This anointing of the Spirit is for kingly power.

Every O.T. king was anointed on the head with oil.

Christ, the King of kings, however, is anointed with the Holy Spirit (many theologians draw a parallel between the anointing of oil and the Spirit)

Certain specifically chosen O.T. saints experienced the Spirit coming "upon" them. This anointing was for power, wisdom, and control.

Examples:

This spiritual anointing was unlimited on Christ (Jn. 3:34 - "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit_ by measure unto him.")

This spiritual anointing "remained" on Christ (Jn. 1:32) in contrast with the anointing of O.T. leaders, kings, and prophets, which was temporary (EX: King Saul [I Sam. 10:6]; cp. I Sam. 16:14; Ps. 51:-11).

Why did Jesus need the power of the Spirit? Not because He was not divine, but because He voluntarily surrendered the independent exercise of certain of His divine attributes while He was one earth.

Every miracle that Christ did, he did by the power of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 4:18-19 - "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.).

Christ was led by the Spirit (Mt. 4:1)
Christ cast out demons by the Spirit (Mt. 12:28)
Christ was glorified by the Spirit (Lk. 4:14-15)

Someone has described the Spirit as: "The greatest unused source of power every known to man"

We have the power of the Holy Spirit available to us! (Acts 1:4-5, 8)

III. He was HONORED with Praise
By the HEAVENLY FATHER (v. 17)

On three special occasions, the Father spoke from heaven: "at Christ's baptism, at the Transfiguration (Mt. 17:3), and as Christ approached the cross (Jn. 12:29-30)" (Wiersbe, p. 17)

1) at the beginning of Christ's ministry;
2) at the peak of Christ's ministry,
and 3) at the conclusion of Christ's ministry.]

At the mount of Transfiguration, the Father again spoke from Heaven and commended His Son (Mt. 17:5 - "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

NOTE: the Father's words about the Son in Heb. 1:5, 8, 13

"My beloved Son" - lit. "This is my son, the beloved." Jesus is often called "the beloved" - Mt. 12:18, 17:5, Eph. 1:6)

Because the Father loves the Son, to love Jesus is to love the One whom the Father set his love on. Jesus should be the object of your love because He is the object of the Father's love.

"I am well pleased" - Because Jesus always did exactly and totally what the Father's will was - the Father gave this testimony (cp. Mt. 12:18).

Jesus said: "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." (Jn. 8:29)

In order to be like Christ, and follow in His steps, we too should live with the goal of pleasing God.

We should not live to please ourselves (Rom. 15:1).
We should not live to merely please others (Gal. 1:10; I Thes. 2:4)
But we should live to please God

I Th. 4:1 - "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more."

II Tim. 2:4 - "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier"

I Jn. 3:22 - "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."

We cannot please God by the power of the flesh but by the Spirit (Rom. 8:8-9).

We cannot please God without faith (Heb. 11:6).

How do we please God? SEE: Heb. 13:15-16

CONCLUSION:

Note the Trinity in verses 16 & 17 -

God the Son - "Jesus . . . baptized"

God the Spirit - "descending like a dove"

God the Father - "A voice from heaven"

CONQUERING TEMPTATION

Matthew 4:1-11

1/22/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 1-2

The Purpose of Testing

--To teach

--To mature

The Time of Testing

--Satan tempted after Christ's victory

--Satan tempted at Christ's weakest moment

YOU CAN CONQUER TEMPTATION!

. . . By Responding to the Enemy's Attacks Like Jesus Did!

Observe Satan's points of attack and Christ's defense:

I. THE FIRST TEMPTATION (v. 3-4)

A. Satan's Suggestion: "Satisfy yourself - independently" (v. 3)

B. Christ's Defense: "Depend on God's Word - continually" (v. 4; Dt. 8:3)

II. THE SECOND TEMPTATION (v. 5-7)

A. Satan's Suggestion: "Surrender yourself - foolishly" (v. 5-6)

B. Christ's Defense: "Don't test God - unBiblically" (v. 7; Dt. 6:16)

III. THE THIRD TEMPTATION (v. 8-10)

A. Satan's Suggestion: "Submit yourself - disobediently" (v. 8-9)

B. Christ's Defense: "Devote yourself to God - exclusively" (v. 10)

CONCLUSION: V. 11

CONQUERING TEMPTATION

Matthew 4:1-11
1/22/2017

INTRO: Throughout history (since Eden), men have battled with temptation. On the one hand men have attempted to avoid it, flee from it, resist it, isolate themselves from it, ignore it, or even deny it; on the other hand, they have succumbed and yielded to it.

THE PURPOSE OF TESTING (v. 1-2)

Jesus was "led up" by the Holy Spirit into this confrontation. Why the set up? From God's perspective it was a test to prove Christ's righteousness. From Satan's, it was a temptation to get Him to sin.

NOTE: God allows Satan to tempt (ex. Job); but Satan is like a dog on a leash--he can only go so far.

Why does God test?

- TO TEACH

  God tested Israel to reveal her heart and teach her dependence (Dt. 8:2-3).

  God tested Christ to prove His sinlessness (to demonstrate Christ's righteous character after the Father's declaration in chapter 3).

- TO MATURE

  Time spent in battle with temptation is not a waste when God is glorified, the believer edified, and Satan mortified!

THE TIME OF TESTING (v. 1-2)

The Tempter came at just the right time (at a suitable "season" - Luke 4:13).

- SATAN TEMPTED AFTER VICTORY

  Mk. 1:12 - Immediately after Christ's baptism/anointing/hailing as "The Beloved Son" in whom the Father was "well-pleased."

  Cp. Israel's temptation - right after redemption from Egypt (Ex. 15).

  "Let him who thinks he stands . . ." (I Cor. 10:12).

- SATAN TEMPTED AT CHRIST'S WEAKEST MOMENT

1. Jesus faced bad circumstances - wilderness ("the Judean desert"), hot barren, dry.

2. Jesus was hungry because He had fasted forty days prior to testing.

   Hunger makes one physically weak and tends to cause one`s attention to move from spiritual to physical.

*Contrast Adam's fall in perfect circumstances with Christ's victory (the second Adam) in the worst.
We can't blame circumstances!

* YOU CAN CONQUER TEMPTATION . . .
by responding to the Enemy's attacks like Jesus did!

THE CONFLICT OF TESTING (v. 3-10)

Satan tempts in the areas of:

lust of the flesh
lust of the eyes
pride of life
(I John 2:16)

I. THE FIRST TEMPTATION (v. 3-4)

A. Satan's Suggestion - "Satisfy yourself - independantly" (v.3)

This test is aimed at "the lust of the flesh."

Satan picks up on the Father's declaration and says, "If you are the son . . ." as the Father said you were.

NOTE: Satan tempts in the areas of:

1) Relationship - "Son"
2) Ability - As the Son, He certainly had the ability - Jesus could just say the words and the stones would immediately become bread. Jesus is called the "word" (Jn. 1:1).

LOOK UP: **Col. 1:16, Heb. 11:3, Jn. 1:3, 10 -** creation
Mt. 8:26 - storm
Jn. 11:43, Mk. 5:41 - raise dead
Mt. 9:6 - heal
Lk. 6:10 - restore a withered hand
Lk. 8:32 - cast out demons

3) Rights - Jesus being Creator of all deserved the right to eat.

Satan is suggesting that Christ go ahead and satisfy himself independently of God's Will.

2. Christ's Defense - "Depend on God's Word - continually" (v.4; Dt.8:3)

Note Christ's response:

1) He did not ignore the temptation (took positive action to overcome it).

2) He did not defend Himself. He could have said, "Satan, this feat is no problem for me, but I refuse to obey you."

3) He did not reason with Satan.

Note Christ's Weapon: The Word of God

1) This shows the Bible's authority.

2) This shows the Bible's continuing relevancy.
The verse was originally stated some 1,400 years ago, yet still was useful.

3) This shows the Bible`s varied applicability.
Was originally given to Israel, and now is used against Satan.

4) This shows the Bible's suitability - to handle needs of all occasions.

5) This shows the Bible's inspiration - "God-breathed" (II Tim. 3:16); "every word" (v. 4)

NOTE: Though Christ's words while on earth had equal authority with the written Word--He appealed to the written Word!
How much more should we?

The verse Christ used was Deut. 8:3.
(Read and explain Dt. 8:1-3)
God's supernatural feeding of Israel with "manna," teaches the principle that life is not sustained merely by physical means, but by spiritual, supernatural provision.

God is teaching that the source and sustenance of life depends on Him!

God promises over and over to meet our needs (Phil. 4:19; Mt. 6:8, 33).

Life is more than food; there are deeper dimensions to life.

There are times when we must refrain from grabbing immediate satisfaction - if it contradicts God's will, or God's means of getting it (See Jn. 4:31-35).

B. THE SECOND TEMPTATION (v.5-7)

1. Satan's Suggestion - "Surrender yourself - foolishly" (v.5,6)

v.5) Christ's bodily transport to Jerusalem (cp.Acts 8:39 - Phillips transport)

Whereas in the first temptation a need (lack of food) already existed, in the second, Satan suggested that a need be created.

Satan now appeals to the "pride of life"

To be more persuasive, Satan now uses Scripture to justify his suggestion. By countering Christ's Scripture with Scripture, Satan in a sense is implicitly saying: "so you want to battle with Scripture oh!, Well take that!"

Satan's use of Scripture shows:

1) His respect for it (at least when he is dealing with others who respect it)

2) His extensive knowledge of it (cp. His messengers II Cor.11:15).

3) His misuse of it. Satan misquotes Ps.91:11. The liar (Jn.8:44) leaves out the phrase "in all your ways" Note: In the context of Ps. 91:11 God's promise to protect is limited to "all your (righteous) ways" or "all a man's ways that please God", not to protect man no matter what he does.

v.6) In this temptation Satan is implying:

"So you claim to be God's Son and you claim to trust His Word...If so, why don't you demonstrate your sonship and prove the truth of God's Word by putting Him to a test - a spiritual test? If you won't use your own divine power to help yourself let your father use His divine power to help you. If you won't act independently of the Father, let the Father act. Give your Father a chance to fulfill the Scripture I just quoted to you."(MacArthur, p.93).

2. Christ's Defense - "Don't test God - unBiblically" (v.7; Dt.6:16)

v.7) Christ reverses Satan's tempting appeal by comparing Scripture with Scripture, while Satan opposed Scripture to Scripture. Satan's use contradicted other passages that warned against testing God. (cp. Num.14:22-23; Ps.19:13; Dan.5:22-23)

Jesus Quotes Deut. 6:16 from the Septuagint (Greek translation of the O.T.) exactly, which shows His approval of translations)

Read & explain Deut.6:14-16.

"Tempt" = To prove the quality of something; to put to the test.

The point is: God's trustworthiness is not to be found out by testing Him.
Such testing is absolutely wicked! Why? It is contrary to faith. It insults God.
When you have to say to God: "prove it" you are calling Him a liar.

Examples of testing God:

1) Gideon's fleece.

2) Jews seeking a sign (Mt.12:39; 16:4)

Application: Men test God today by:

1) Saying "I won't believe without proof"

2) Seeking signs (ex. tongues etc.) rather than believing His word that you are genuinely saved and Baptized with the Spirit the moment you truly believe the Gospel.

3) Thinking (in pride) that God will make a special allowance for you to do something against His word and get away with it.

4) People who arrogantly sin and dare God to do something about it.

B. THE THIRD TEMPTATION (v. 8-10)

1. Satan's Suggestion - Submit yourself-disobediently" (v.8-9)

Satan appeals to the "the lust of the eyes."

Luke 4:5 says that Satan showed Christ all the kingdoms "in a moment of time" (this shows the mysterious ability of Satan)

In this temptation, what Satan offered could be received by Christ in 3 ways:

1) the quick way
2) the easy way
3) the wrong way

a. Satan offers the quick way (wrong time)

Satan tempted Christ with that which He (Christ) ultimately had every right to, but which was not yet His to take (Christ's reign was future!).

We must always wait for God's time (ex. I Sam. 8:7 - Israel's premature asking for a king).

APPLI: of young people who commit fornication and participate in something that God says to wait for marriage to have (Heb. 13:4).

b. Satan offers the easy way (cheap price)

Satan offers Christ a kingdom without a cross. (see Mt. 16:23 - Satan again tempting through Peter)

(Only a single act of worship is commanded)

APPLI: God's will is not easy street! EX. Advertisement of promises of how to make big bucks $ fast and easy! God's plan for us to eat our bread is by sweat and work!

Satan now shifts (from his previous 2 temptations) from "prove to me" to "take from me."

See Luke 4:6 - It "is delivered unto me . . ."

Ask the question: Did Satan have the right to offer the kingdoms of this world?

In a certain sense, it is a legitimate offer, because there would be no temptation in it if it was untrue.

Satan does in a sense have control of the world's present system (II Cor. 4:4; Jn. 12:31; I Jn. 3:19).

But Satan is actually an illegitimate ruler who usurped this authority from man--the rightful heir of creation--in Eden. Satan is offering stolen merchandise.

c. Satan offers the wrong way

Satan has always desired the prerogatives that only belong to God (Is. 14:13-15).

--Satan wanted worship
--Satan wanted a specific manner of worship ("by falling down")
(such worship would imply that he was God)

Christ taught us by example: The end (a kingdom) never justifies the means (false worship).

Satan offered the wrong means to gain a desireable end.

APPLI: People who say "Think of all the teenagers we could bring to the Lord if we only make our music contemporary Christian rock."

2. Christ's Defense - "Devote yourself to God - exclusively" (v.10)

The phrase "Get thee hence" (go away) implies that such a suggestion to worship Satan is utterly unthinkable.

Jesus again places total authority on the Word of God. He quotes Deut. 6:13 (Turn to it and explain)

The verse puts heavy emphasis on the exclusive worship of Yahweh.

NOTE: Heb. word order: "Yahweh your Elohim you shall fear, and Him you shall serve, and in His name you shall swear."

All other worship (other than to God) is idolatry! (Ex. 20:1ff)

NOTE: Christ is proven to be God because He received worship. (Ps. 2:8, 12; Mt. 8:2, 9:18, 14:33, 15:25, 28:9, 17; Jn. 9:35 & 38, 20:28-29).

CONCLU: Mt. 4:11 - Results of victory = "Then the devil leaveth him . . ." (cp. Ja. 4:7).

In every temptation Jesus ignored the bait (NOTE: not the temptation situation) and responded with principle! He did not say: "I think, I know, I feel, I believe" but rather "It is written."

(NOTE: Jesus quoted an often over-looked O.T. book - Deut.)

APPLI: How many verses from Deut. can you quote? (this book is often hidden and overlooked by Christians)

APPLI: This lesson shows the need for Bible memorization.

NOTE: 1) All quoted verses must correspond to context; otherwise when you think you are waving a sharp double-edged sword, you are only waving imitation plastic.

2) Christ's quotation were not just to take the defensive (to silence Satan) but the offensive (to give Himself authority for His position and conduct).

ILLUS: story of a man who was trying to teach his dog obedience. He threw a large piece of meat on the floor and each time the dog went for it, he would swat the dog and say, "NO." Soon all he would have to do is say the word. Eventually when the meat was thrown out, the dog would not even look at it, but would focus his eyes on his master, waiting for his approval or denial.

**Keep your eyes focused on the Master! and cling to the Word of God!

"BE A FISHERMAN!"

Matthew 4:12-25
1/29/2017

INTRODUCTION:

***Follow Jesus and be a fisher of men!**

Why should we be fishers of men?

I. THOSE IN DARKNESS NEED LIGHT (v. 12-17)

II. SOULS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN FISH (v. 18-22)

III. JESUS IS A GREAT SAVIOR (v. 23-25)

His greatness is revealed by:

A. His Message (v. 23a)

B. His Miracles (v. 23b)

C. His Fame (v. 24)

D. His Following (v. 25)

"BE A FISHERMAN!"

Matthew 4:12-25
1/29/2017

INTRODUCTION:

ILLUS: "The Lifesaving Station" (MacArthur, p. 112)

ILLUS: Painting - "The Rock of Ages" (MacArthur, p. 116)

***Follow Jesus and be a fisher of men!**

Why should we be fishers of men?

I. THOSE IN DARKNESS NEED LIGHT (v. 12-17)

V. 12

John the Baptist's imprisonment was perhaps a signal to Jesus that His forerunner's ministry was now complete and that He (Jesus) was to call His disciples and continue that ministry of calling men to "repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand? (Mt. 4:17; cp. John's identical message - Mt. 3:2).

V. 13

Capernaum - the home of Peter, Andrew, James & John; a place where Jesus did many of His miracles

V. 14

Matthew again continually cites O.T. statements of prophecy which Jesus fulfilled -- in keeping with his theme that Jesus is the King of the Jews.

V. 15

Zabulon & Nephthalim" - two northern tribes of Israel that settled side by side on the northwest side of the sea of Galilee. (Nazareth was in Zabulon and Capernaum was in Nephthalim).

V. 15-16

Galilee is called the region of the "Gentiles" because Assyria conquered and scattered the northern tribes of Israel in 722 B.C. The land was then populated by Gentiles.

V. 16

Verses 15-16 are quotations from Isaiah 9:1-2.

V. 1 - Zebulon and Naphtali came under the yoke of Assyria (II Ki. 15:29).

"Galilee of the nations" - Galilee of the Gentiles

V. 2 - "Because Christ would minister and live in Galilee, it would be glorious" (Ryrie footnote)

NOTE: Isaiah 9:1-2 clearly refers to Jesus as evident by verses 6-7.

"Darkness" = referring to spiritual darkness (Judea had God's Law; Jerusalem was the place of worship, and the Galileans were viewed as pagans since they did not have God's revelation, the Bible).

"After the fall, mankind had two "candles" as it were, that continued to give light about God and His will - the candle of creation and the candle of conscience. But man paid little attention to either, preferring to walk in the darkness of his own corrupted will (See: Rom. 1:18-21)" (MacArthur, p. 102)

"Sat. . .sat" - Why the word "sat" rather than walked, etc.? ANSWER: When you are in darkness, you can't see where you are going; so rather than walking and stumbling (Jn. 12:35), they complacently sat.

The metaphor of "light" "conveys the idea of the illuminating, truth-revealing and sin-exposing ministry of the Son of God." (MacArthur, p. 101).

"Great light" - Jesus is not merely light, He is great light.

Cp. Is. 42:6-7. The Father prophesied this of the Son (His "Servant") - "I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."

"Shadow of death" - a common Hebrew expression (EX: Job 3:5, 10:21-22, 12:22, 16:16, 24:17, 28:3, 34:22, 38:17; Psalm 23:4, 44:19, 107:10, 14; Is. 9:2; Jer. 2:6, 13:16).

This phrase means to be on the verge of death; to be i an absolute pitch black region, surrounded by a host of demons, all whose aim is to kill, steal, and destroy.

"Sprung up" - NOTE: the light did not gradually come; but rather, wherever Jesus is there is total light, instant light, because in Him there is "No darkness at all" (I Jn. 1:5).

Instant light - EX: the light switch brings immediate light.

The life of Christ is called "the light of men" (Jn. 1:4).

"Light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil" (Jn. 3:19).

"I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life" (Jn. 8:12; cp. Jn. 9:5).

"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness" (Jn. 12:46).

While we, like John the Baptist, reflect the light of Christ (Mt. 5:14), we are "not that Light" but are sent to "bear witness of the Light" (Jn. 1:7).

Like Paul, it is our privilege to "open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to lig and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins,a nd inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18).

If such a privilege is ours, what will Satan's chief aim be? -- II Cor. 4:4 - "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

God "hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (I Pet. 2:9).

V. 17

The exact same message that John preached (Mt. 3:2) - only this time the kingdom is being announced by the King Himself.

Since the King was on earth, His kingdom was "at hand" (I.e. ready to be established on earth, if the prerequisite of repentance was met).

II. SOULS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN FISH (v. 18-22)

V. 18

This is not the first time Jesus met these disciples.

The chronology is:

1. Jesus met Andrew first in the region of the Jordan River where John was baptizing (Jn. 1:35-40)

2. Then his brother Peter met Jesus (Jn. 1:41)

3. Then in Galilee Jesus met Philip and Nathaniel (Jn. 1:43-46)

4. Jesus then went back to Judea with His disciples and they baptized people (Jn. 3:22-36) (John the Baptist was still not imprisoned)

5. He then went north again into Galilee (Jn. 4:33)

6. It was while He was in Galilee that He confronted His disciples (the fishermen) with a demonstration of His power and deity. It is at this point that four of the prominent disciples left all to become fishers of men (Lk. 5:10-11; SEE: Mk 1:14-20)

"Jesus walking by the sea" - this evidently occurred the day immediately after the "big catch" described in Luke 5:1-11.

SEE: Lk. 5:1-11

Every fisherman knows the excitement of catching fish, and the anticipation of going back to the same lake where a "big catch: was formerly made. This is what motivated Peter and Andrew to be up and fishing the day after the supernatural catch was made.

"Casting a net into the sea" - a throw net or "cast net" was used during daytime fishing from the shore.

V. 19

"Follow Me" = lit. "come after Me!" come along behind Me, keep up in step with Me and let Me lead you.

Before anyone can be a Godly fisher of men, they must be a follower of Jesus.

If fishing for men is the result of following Jesus, what does this say about Christians who are not fishing for men? ANSWER: They are not following Jesus.

"I will make you" - how did Jesus "make" them such fishers of men?

1. By His example (Jn. 4; Mt. 9:9-13)
2. By His command (2 by 2; Mk. 16:15; Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)
3. By His enablement (Jn. 15:7-8, 16)

"Fishers of men" -

1. Our "lake" is the world (Jn. 3:16; Mk. 16:15)
   (NYC is our part of the lake)

2. Our "net" is the Gospel (I Cor. 1:17-18, 2:1-5)
   (the simple gospel, not eloquent rhetoric)

3. Our "fish" are lost sinners (Rom. 3:23)

Note: Fishing for men is the only type of fishing where you catch them dead and bring them home alive! (Eph. 2:1ff) (whereas, fishing for fish you catch them alive and bring them home dead).

Why did Jesus refer to evangelism as "fishing"?

1) Because evangelism like "fishing" requires patience

2) Because evangelism like "fishing" demands work and discipline

(NOTE: their type of fishing was not like sitting out on a lawn chair on a lake with a rod and a can of soda on a Saturday afternoon. It was rigorous work to pull in the nets, sort the fish, mend their nets, row their boat, battle the elements and stay up late at night [most fishing was done at night, since their nets were visible cotton, not synthetic line]).

3) Because evangelism like "fishing" requires perseverance

(Going from place to place, many times covering the same area over and over again)

4) Because evangelism like "fishing" requires dependence upon God

(only those which God directs into your net, do you catch!)

The greatest long-term, remaining, enduring benefit that we can be to humanity is to fish for them and bring them to Jesus.

Note everyone that we get in the net will be saved. Some false professors will slip in (SEE: the parable of the drag net - Mt. 13:47-50).

V. 20

"Straightway" - immediately; without any delay.

"Left their nets" - for these men, this was leaving their livelihood, their trade, their career, their "first love," their "bread and butter," the work they knew best. They were to leave their fishing business to become disciples of Jesus and fishers of men.

V. 21

"Mending their nets" - James and John were repairing the net that broke the day prior because of the over-abundant catch that Jesus gave them (Lk. 5:6).

V. 22

"Left the ship and their father" - James and John not only left their economic security (fishing) but also their social security (father).

Sometimes it is easy to leave a business to go to a foreign field and be a missionary, but it is not so easy to leave family!

Many "would be" missionaries have forfeited a life of serving Jesus Christ so they could forever enjoy the security of mama and papa!

The former has greater rewards (Lk. 18:29-30 - "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.")

III. JESUS IS A GREAT SAVIOR (v. 23-25)

Christ's public ministry was three-fold:
"Teaching. . . preaching . . . healing"

His greatness is revealed by:

A. His Message (v. 23a)

"In their synagogues" - Why? Because Jesus went to the "Jew first." (Mt. 10:5-7) -- their promised kingdom was being offered.

Also, the Jew would have the necessary knowledge of God's moral Law, which prepared the way for the reception of the Gospel.

NOTE: Paul followed this custom of Jesus (Lk. 4:16; Acts 9:20, 13:5).

"Gospel" = good news

B. His Miracles (v. 23b)

"Healing all ... sickness and all ... disease" - the evidence of a true miracle worker is his ability to heal all ailments (not just psychosomatic ones, like contemporary "faith healers").

C. His Fame (v. 24)

The typical doctor specializes in one area of medical practice. Jesus being God can do it all! He is the Great Physician.

--"Diseases" - various sicknesses, infirmities, or injuries
--"Torments" - severe pain and torture
--"Possessed with devils"
--"Lunatick" - not crazy, insane people but epileptics (cp. Mt. 17:15)
--"Palsy" - lame, paralyzed
There was no case too difficult for Jesus!

D. His Following (v. 25)

Even today, people among every race and nation follow Jesus because He is the only true Savior and Lord (Phil. 2:10-11).

CONCLUSION:

Prov. 11:30 - "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."

Dan. 12:3 - "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

ILLUS: Allegory - "The Fishless Fisherman"

Hymns -"Rescue the Perishing"

"Send the Light"

"Let the Lower Lights Be Burning" (SEE: story, MacArthur, p. 120)

"Who is Truly Blessed?"



(Part 1)
Matthew 5:1-5
2/5/2017

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 2

***Are you "blessed"?**

Key evidences of someone whom God has blessed:

I. ***Blessed are those who***
REALIZE THEIR SPIRITUAL BANKRUPTCY WITHOUT GOD'S SALVATION
("Blessed are the poor in Spirit" - v. 3)

II. ***Blessed are those who***
GRIEVE OVER SIN AND ITS EFFECTS
("Blessed are they that mourn" - v. 4)

III. ***Blessed are those who***
HAVE SOFT HEARTS AND HUMBLE MINDS
("Blessed are the meek" - v. 5)

"Who is Truly Blessed?"



(Part 2)
Matthew 5:1-12
2/11/2017

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 2

***Are you "blessed"?**

Key evidences of someone whom God has blessed:

I. ***Blessed are those who***
REALIZE THEIR SPIRITUAL BANKRUPTCY WITHOUT GOD'S SALVATION
("Blessed are the poor in Spirit" - v. 3)

II. ***Blessed are those who***
GRIEVE OVER SIN AND ITS EFFECTS
("Blessed are they that mourn" - v. 4)

III. ***Blessed are those who***
HAVE SOFT HEARTS AND HUMBLE MINDS
("Blessed are the meek" - v. 5)

IV. ***Blessed are those who are***
STARVING AND THIRSTING FOR WHAT IS RIGHT
("Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness" - v.6)

V. ***Blessed are those who***
HOLD BACK PUNISHMENT FROM PEOPLE WHO DESERVE IT
("Blessed are the merciful..." - v.7)

"Who is Truly Blessed?"



(Part 3)
Matthew 5:1-12
2/19/2017

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 2

***Are you "blessed"?**

Key evidences of someone whom God has blessed:

I. ***Blessed are those who***
REALIZE THEIR SPIRITUAL BANKRUPTCY WITHOUT GOD'S SALVATION
("Blessed are the poor in Spirit" - v. 3)

II. ***Blessed are those who***
GRIEVE OVER SIN AND ITS EFFECTS
("Blessed are they that mourn" - v. 4)

III. ***Blessed are those who***
HAVE SOFT HEARTS AND HUMBLE MINDS
("Blessed are the meek" - v. 5)

IV. ***Blessed are those who are***
STARVING AND THIRSTING FOR WHAT IS RIGHT
("Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness" - v.6)

V. ***Blessed are those who***
HOLD BACK PUNISHMENT FROM PEOPLE WHO DESERVE IT
("Blessed are the merciful..." - v.7)

VI. *Blessed are those who are*
CLEAN ON THE INSIDE
("Blessed are the pure in heart. . ." v. 8)

"Who is Truly Blessed?"



(Part 4)
Matthew 5:1-12
2/26/2017

***Are you "blessed"?**

Key evidences of someone whom God has blessed:

I. ***Blessed are those who***
REALIZE THEIR SPIRITUAL BANKRUPTCY WITHOUT GOD'S SALVATION
("Blessed are the poor in Spirit" - v. 3)

II. ***Blessed are those who***
GRIEVE OVER SIN AND ITS EFFECTS
("Blessed are they that mourn" - v. 4)

III. ***Blessed are those who***
HAVE SOFT HEARTS AND HUMBLE MINDS
("Blessed are the meek" - v. 5)

IV. ***Blessed are those who are***
STARVING AND THIRSTING FOR WHAT IS RIGHT
("Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness" - v.6)

V. ***Blessed are those who***
HOLD BACK PUNISHMENT FROM PEOPLE WHO DESERVE IT
("Blessed are the merciful..." - v.7)

VI. ***Blessed are those who are***
CLEAN ON THE INSIDE
("Blessed are the pure in heart. . ." v. 8)

VII. *Blessed are those who*
SEEK TO RECONCILE man to GOD and men to MEN
("Blessed are the peacemakers. . ." v. 9)

"Who is Truly Blessed?"



(Part 5)
Matthew 5:1-12
3/12/2017

***Are you "blessed"?**

Key evidences of someone whom God has blessed:

I. ***Blessed are those who***
REALIZE THEIR SPIRITUAL BANKRUPTCY WITHOUT GOD'S SALVATION
("Blessed are the poor in Spirit" - v. 3)

II. ***Blessed are those who***
GRIEVE OVER SIN AND ITS EFFECTS
("Blessed are they that mourn" - v. 4)

III. ***Blessed are those who***
HAVE SOFT HEARTS AND HUMBLE MINDS
("Blessed are the meek" - v. 5)

IV. ***Blessed are those who are***
STARVING AND THIRSTING FOR WHAT IS RIGHT
("Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness" - v.6)

V. ***Blessed are those who***
HOLD BACK PUNISHMENT FROM PEOPLE WHO DESERVE IT
("Blessed are the merciful..." - v.7)

VI. ***Blessed are those who are***
CLEAN ON THE INSIDE
("Blessed are the pure in heart. . ." v. 8)

VII. ***Blessed are those who***
SEEK TO RECONCILE man to GOD and men to MEN
("Blessed are the peacemakers. . ." v. 9)

VIII. *Blessed are those who are*
TREATED WRONG BECAUSE THEY DO RIGHT
("Blessed are they which are persecuted. . ." v. 10)

"Who is Truly Blessed?"

(Part 1)
Matthew 5:1-12
2/5/2017

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 2

v. 1

Jesus withdrew from the multitudes (who had followed Him because of His miracles and fame) to give private instruction to his disciples.

The mount of the Beatitudes is noted as "the Sinai of the New Testament." (Delitzsch)

The word "disciple" (mathatas) means: disciplined one; on who learned (manthano); one who is instructed in the disciplines of the Lord; i.e. one who is taught.

These 12 men had the personal privilege of being pupils (students) of the greatest Teacher ever to walk on this earth. He was the authority on every subject He spoke about (Mt. 7:29), because He was the designer, builder, and controller of the entire universe (Col. 1:16-17).

V. 2

"He opened His mouth and taught" - Jesus taught many lessons by example; here He teaches by precept. (NOTE: For teachers, both methods of instruction are needed).

When comparing Matthew's account (Mt. 5 - 7) with Luke's (Lk. 6), it is evident that Christ the Master Teacher expanded and expounded on what is recorded in each Gospel.

To drive it home, He used more than one way to say each thoughts (EX: Luke Beatitudes are combined with the "woes"). Each writer focused on peculiar aspects of Christ's great sermon.

The theme of this sermon is "True Righteousness" (5:20).

Christ in this sermon lifts the veil and removes the blinders to God's standard of righteousness.

It's amazing to see to what great lengths people have gone to excuse themselves from obeying (following) this sermon.

Some view this sermon as a hyperbole (an exaggeration of truth); others - as applying only to those who will live in the future millennial kingdom; others say this sermon only applied to those who lived from the time Christ presented it to the time of Israel's rejection of the kingdom. They say it was limited to that time period and doesn't apply today.

However, I believe this sermon applies to believers of all ages.

This sermon definitely applies to the Church for the following reasons:

1. Nothing in the context would limit this sermon
2. The time of Matthew's writing was during the Church age
3. Many concepts are found in other N.T. epistles
4. This sermon was to be taught until Christ returned (Mt. 28:19-20)
5. Some concepts taught cannot apply in the future kingdom (For example: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake…" There will be no persecution in the Millennium).

V. 3

"Blessed" - Verses 3 - 11 all begin with the word "blessed."

The word "blessed" (makarioi) comes from the root "makros" meaning large or lengthy (Vine, p. 133).

It refers to one who has much to be happy about. A fortunate man. An enriched, prosperous, flourishing individual. A blessed person is one who is showered upon by God's good and great (numerous) blessings.

A blessed man is one who has a long list of virtuous, desirable things to praise God for. He has been enriched with true prosperity and success.

The word is translated "happy" (Jn. 13:17). (note: Happiness is the result of blessedness. They are not one and the same).

Because of God's greatness, He is called "blessed" (I Tim. 1:11, 6:15).

The greatness or enormity of what is meant by the word "blessed" is evident by the magnitude of the blessings mentioned: "the kingdom of heaven" (v. 3). . . "inherit the earth" (v. 5) . . . "filled" (v. 6) . . . "see God" (v. 8), etc.

God's "blessing" is the opposite of "woe." The opposite of the "blessed life" (mt. 5) is the "cursed life" (Mt. 23). (MacArthur, p. 144).

All of the descriptions of the people Jesus calls "blessed" are from the world's standpoint viewed negatively. The culture of Jesus' day (EX: the Roman culture) would have viewed such people as weak and wimpy.

"Poor...mourn...meek...hungry...merciful...pure in heart...peacemakers" None of those were desirable qualities in the opinion of the average Roman. Such qualities are not wanted by those who are proud, macho, war-like, pleasure seekers, etc.

"Jesus congratulates those the world most pities, and calls the world's rejects 'blessed'." (John R. W. Stott).

NOTE: The promised reward perfectly contrasts and corresponds to the praised virtue.

The opposite of being poor is possessing God's kingdom; the opposite of mourning is comfort; the opposite of meek is inheriting the earth; the opposite of hunger and thirst is being filled, etc.

Jesus did not state these Beatitudes to say, "Hey, get with it and be meek, pure in heart, etc." But to say, "Hey, I see you showing these qualities - let me share the blessed promises in store

for you."

***Are you "blessed"?**

Key evidences of someone whom God has blessed:

I. Blessed are those who
<u>REALIZE THEIR SPIRITUAL BANKRUPTCY WITHOUT GOD'S SALVATION</u>
("Blessed are the <u>poor</u> in Spirit" - v. 3)

"There's something enchanting about a credit card. It makes you think you're rich. With that mystical piece of plastic you can fly to Hawaii, buy a car, or get cash out of a bank. "Relax," the ads tell you. "You are wealthy. The world is in your wallet." People love to think of themselves as well-off financially." (Branon, p. 7).

Jesus said, however, that the way to be rich is to be <u>poor</u>! (not in a material sense, but in a spiritual sense. Many people are smugly complacent in what they view as spiritual security).

"Poor in spirit" = to be spiritually destitute (Robertson, p. 40)

"Poor" = (ptochoi) - to be poverty stricken; to be a beggar (EX: Lazarus - Lk. 16:20, 22); to be in deep poverty.

To be "poor" is to have <u>nothing</u>!

Those who are poor in spirit realize that they have nothing spiritually. They recognize that they have no relationship to God, no salvation, no connection to His Spirit, no power to live the Christian life, etc., so in desperation they do the very thing they needed to do the very thing they needed to do -- they throw themselves into the arms of Jesus and trust Him to enrich them with spiritual life.

NOTE: A deep sense of one's wickedness is a prerequisite to acquiring God's salvation. No one gets saved until they first realize that they are drowning in their sins nd have <u>no</u> means of rescue in themselves.

"in spirit" = the spirit of man by which he communicates with God.

A man who is "poor in spirit" is one who realizes his absolute dependence upon God to satisfy his spiritual need. He is one whose spirit recognizes a deep need for God's grace and mercy.

You are "poor in spirit" when you acknowledge that you are in "<u>spiritual bankruptcy</u>" and come to Jesus and ask Him to credit His righteousness to your account (II Cor. 5:21;

Rom. 4)

--The poor in spirit are not self-righteous (such people sense no need of God's grace)
--The poor in spirit are not blinded by religion (such people's religion pacifies their spirit, giving them a feeling of satisfaction)
--The poor in spirit are not those who attempt to gain Heaven by their works (to work for their salvation) (rather, they realize that they have nothing to offer God to appease His wrath or gain entrance into Heaven)

ILLUS: of a man poor in spirit -- The Pharisee and the Publican (Lk. 18:9-14)

Even Christians need this same perspective. Not only is it impossible for us to be saved without a deposit of God's rich saving grace, but it is impossible to overcome daily struggles and temptations without His sustaining grace.

"The Kingdom of Heaven" - this phrase, occurring exclusively in Matthew (32 times), is synonymous with the phrase "kingdom of God"

II. Blessed are those who
GRIEVE OVER SIN AND ITS EFFECTS
("Blessed are they that mourn" - v. 4)

"Many people make a living these days joking about sin. Popular entertainers use immorality, adultery, and lying as a source of humor. The audience roars, the advertisers buy more time, and the comedians laugh all the way to the bank. But there's a problem: Sin is no laughing matter." (Dave Branon, "What Does It Take to Be Happy" - Radio Bible Class Publ. p. 9)

What should our attitude be toward sin?

Jesus said, "Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep" (Lk. 6:25)

"Mourn" = to have an inner sorrow or grief

To "Mourn" is to lament over sin and /or the effects of sin (Ja. 4:8-9; I Cor. 5:2; II Cor. 12:21).

"Mourning" (v. 4) is an outward expression of one who is "poor in spirit" (v. 3)

(NOTE: Each beatitude seems to build on the one before)

The "mourning" that Jesus is describing is not a selfish weeping over material things lost (Ex: the child who cries when someone takes his toy). But rather, it is grief over things that displease God.

It is crying over sin in our lives (Ja. 4:8-9) (when we have created hurt and pain in the lives of others because of our failings and sin. Lam. 2:18-19; Ja. 5:1-6).
Lamenting over unbelief, lack of love.

It is crying over disobedience in the lives of others (I Cor. 5:2; II Cor. 12:21).

It is shedding tears over injustice in America; over God's honor being defamed; over truth being ignored; over righteousness being thrown down; over souls being lost and condemned.

It is weeping over a wayward child or an unfaithful spouse, or when a hero of the fiath falls into gross sin.

Today we have too light a view of sin. We need the heart of Paul: "O wretched man that I am. . ." (Ro. 7)

We need the heart of Nehemiah (Neh. 1)

"We ought to hate sin like we hate the death of a loved one" (Thomas Watson). If we did, we would weep over both!

--Jeremiah wept (Jer. 9:1)
--Jesus wept (Mt. 23:27)
--Paul wept (Acts 20:19, 31)

While it is true that God comforts us in this life (II Cor. 1:3-5), in Matthew's context, Jesus is describing the future comfort that awaits the penitent Christian to be enjoyed in Heaven throughout eternity. (SEE: Zech. 12:10-14; Is. 61:1-3; - Note: Israel's mourning in the Tribulation will turn into comfort - Rev. 21:2-4)

"There can be no comfort where there is no grief" (McNeile)

Without grief there exists no need for comfort.

God's comfort is all the more sweeter to those who mourned and went through severe trial in this life (cp. Rev. 7:14-17)

The reason why mourning leads to comfort is because mourning leads us to the comforting heart and hand of God!

Sorrow will be turned into joy (John 16:19-21)

Rom. 8:18, 22-23 - "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. . . For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And no only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

Is there a nagging sin in your life that you haven't been able to get rid of? What is your attitude toward it? Are you content with it? Or do you mourn over it?

III. Blessed are those who
HAVE SOFT HEARTS AND HUMBLE MINDS

("Blessed are the meek" - v. 5)

The word "meek" was used in Greek literally to describe:

1. Soothing medicine
2. A colt brought under control
3. A soft breeze

All have power, but if under control they are a refreshing blessing.

"Meekness" certainly is not weakness. For Christ was all powerful yet surrendered the independent exercise of that power (Phil. 2:5ff)

EX: Hymn - "There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus . . . No friend like Him is so high and holy . . . and yet nor friend is so meek and lowly" (Victorious, # 208)

Christ was meek (Matt. 11:29 - "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Mt. 21:5 - "Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.")

Moses was meek (Num. 12:3 - "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the fact of the earth.")

"Meek" - to be mild - mannered, to be gentle (not harsh or abrasive). It is the "fine blend of spiritual poise and strength" (Robertson, p. 41).

Meekness is the gentleness that comes from being truly humble. It is the result of humility; the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23).

True meekness is not effeminate, rather it has a blend of strong iron and soft velvet. It is masculinity at its highest.

"Meekness" is in a sense to be "cool, calm, and collected." It is to be in control of your sinful emotions. It is to have an "accurate self-image."

Meekness is the opposite of self-assertiveness and self-interest; the opposite of arrogance, pride, selfish ambition, stubborn/rebellious spirit.

It takes meekness (gentleness; mildness) to do the following:

1. To receive God's Word (Ja. 1:21 - "Wherefore, lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is

able to save your souls")

2. To restore an erring brother (Gal. 6:1 - "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.")

3. To be a servant of the Lord (II Tim. 2:24-26 - "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.")

4. To be a godly woman (I Pet. 3:4 - "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.")

"Inherit the earth" - Why the earth? Why not heaven? Because the earth is where Christ is going to rule and reign for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1ff). The meek will inherit <u>with Him</u> ("joint heirs" - Rom. 8:17).

Key Context: SEE: Zeph. 1:18- 2:3 - The meek among Israel will be protected "<u>hid</u>" in the Day of the Lord's anger (Zeph. 2:3) and will inherit the earth in the future Millennium.

Ps. 37:11 - "But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."

IV. Blessed are those who are
<u>STARVING AND THIRSTING FOR WHAT IS RIGHT</u>
("Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness" - v.6)

Most of us really do not know what it means to genuinely hunger or thirst.

To skip a couple of meals is not hunger. To sweat a bit and have a dry tongue does not equate a life-threatening thirst.

ILLUS: The Sheriah Wells (MacArthur, p. 180-181)

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after Righteousness"

The words "hunger and thirst" speak of a strong desire, an insatiable desire, a longing deep in the soul, a Godly ambition.

"A starving person has a single, all-consuming passion for food and water. Nothing else has the slightest attraction or appeal; nothing else can even get his attention" (MacArthur, p. 179).

Just as food and water are absolute necessities to our physical health, so righteousness is to our spiritual health. No one is spiritual who is not righteous (NOTE: Jesus' theme of the Sermon on the Mount is "true righteousness" -- true righteousness is not legalistic and external (Mt. 5:20) but is internal - a matter of the heart (Mt. 5:21ff).

Such a strong desire comes from a heart which senses its inner emptiness and need.

"After righteousness"

In a world of injustice, crookedness, or unrighteousness, those who are blessed of God long for His truth, His standards to be upheld, His kingdom to be established. . . . they simply long for God ("righteousness exalteth a nation...")

The world is thirsty for that which ultimately gratifies self: the flesh.

In Job 15:16, man is referred to as one who "drinketh iniquity (sin) like water."

In a world that:
is <u>apathetic</u> toward spiritual matters;
has many <u>distractions</u> from spiritual matters;
offers many <u>substitutes</u> for spiritual matters. . .

We need God to make us thirsty!

As a Pastor I need God to do for us what I cannot.

I can preach about God, but I cannot give you an appetite for Him.

I can teach the Word, but I cannot make you hungry for it.

I can encourage you to come to church, Bible Institute, etc, but I cannot cause you to take in, digest, and utilize the food you get here.

"You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink." He, like you, will only drink if he is thirsty.

Seeking God's righteousness should be our # 1 goal in life! Mt. 6:33 - "Seek ye first . . . His righteousness"

No one receives God's imputed righteousness (salvation) unless they really want it.

"He has the most need for righteousness that least wants it" (Thomas Watson).

NOTE: Luke's parallel passage states: "Blessed are you who hunger now" (6:21). The time to hunger for God is now!

"For they shall be filled"

Filled with what?

Filled with that which they hungered and thirsted for -- namely, righteousness -- God's righteousness

The Bible illustrates spiritual hunger and thirst in the book of Psalms.

NOTE: Three evidences of someone who deeply craves God's righteousness:

They will have:
A thirst for GOD (Psalm 42:1-4; 63:1)
A thirst for "GOD'S HOUSE" (Psalm 84:1-4, 10; I Timothy 3:15)
A thirst GOD'S WORD (Psalm 119:131; I Peter 2:2)

Your spiritual thirst can be quenched at no charge (Is. 55:1ff; Rev. 22:17).
Your spiritual thirst can be quenched only by Jesus Christ.
Jesus can satisfy your spiritual thirst.
EX: Woman at the well - Jn. 4:13-14 - "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."
EX: The multitude who ate of the 5 loaves and 2 fish -
Jn. 6:35 - "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."
EX: Jews at the Feast of Tabernacles - Jn. 7:37-38 - "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."
Is. 44:3a - "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground."
Cp. Isaiah 41:17, 18

V. Blessed are those who
HOLD BACK PUNISHMENT FROM PEOPLE WHO DESERVE IT
("Blessed are the merciful..." - v.7)

To the Romans, mercy was a sign of weakness.

A popular Roman philosopher called mercy "the disease of the soul."

ILLUS:Father - Thumbs up, thumbs down

Slave-owners - could kill their slave for any reason

"A society that despises mercy is a society that glorifies brutality." (MacArthur, p. 188-189)

Perhaps the best way to define "mercy" is to compare it to "grace." What is the difference?

Mercy - is when you withhold what someone deserves

Grace - is when you give them what they don't deserve

In other words, when God is merciful to us - the result is no Hell.
When God is gracious - the result is Heaven.

Mercy withholds the bad we deserve
Grace gives the good we don't deserve

Mercy is a characteristic of God

Lam. 3:22 - "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not."

Jesus said: "Be ye merciful, even as your Heavenly Father is merciful."

Justice gives exactly what is deserved. Whereas mercy does not give what is deserved.

The reason why God could be both just and merciful at the same time is because His justice was satisfied by the death of Christ (Rom. 3:23, 26).

Mercy shows pity on those who don't deserve it, but desperately need it ("Father, forgive them..." - Lk. 23:34; Acts 7:60)

Many today, like in Jesus' day, only love those who love them, only greet those who greet them (Mt. 5:46, 47), only give to those who give to them, only show mercy to those who show mercy to them.

SEE: Luke 6:31-37 (**v. 36)

*They forget to see their own need for mercy.

Those who show no mercy to others have failed to recognize how merciful God has been to them; They fail to see how God has withheld His judicial punishment from falling upon them.

Mercy is sympathy. You cannot sympathize unless you have experienced a similar situation.

ILLUS: The Unforgiving Servant (Mt. 18:21-35)

*The unmerciful have higher demands for others than they have for themselves (Mt. 23:3-4)

They are very concerned that others are stringently dealt with according to the Law. They are rigid, unbending, bitter, "prune-faced." People who are anxious to see judgment executed on others, but fail to see their own need (ILLUS: the woman caught in adultery - Jn. 8:3-11)

Mercy is the opposite of being hard and unfeeling.

Mercy stems from compassion (Eph. 2:4-5) and reveals itself in forgiveness (Titus 3:5)

The basis of mercy is compassion. Someone without mercy is someone without compassion. Compassion is the driving force of mercy.

"Mercy is compassion in action."

"For they shall obtain mercy."

The concept of the merciful receiving mercy is similar to the forgiving receiving forgiveness (Mt. 6:14-15)

James 2:13 - "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment."

Why wouldn't the unmerciful obtain mercy?

They do not understand mercy; therefore, they do not have the capacity to accept God's mercy through Christ.

God is not teaching that mercy is earned or deserved by being merciful.

In other words, He is not saying that your mercy is the means to God's mercy; rather, your mercy is the result of God's mercy. Just as "we love because He first loved," (I Jn. 4), so we show mercy because we have understood and accepted God's mercy.

Those who show mercy will receive it in this life because God's law of sowing and reaping applies to every area of life. "Whatsoever a man soweth..." (Gal. 6:7)

VI. Blessed are those who are CLEAN ON THE INSIDE

("Blessed are the pure in heart. . ." v. 8)

- What's on the inside matters! Ex. Apple with worm in it; Bone Cancer;
- A car may have a beautiful body, but if under the hood you have a greasy-grimy, blown-broken motor, you don't have much.
- A girl may be a "knock out" with unblemished external beauty, but if in her heart purity is absent, she is nothing more than an empty shell, vain veneer, hollow plastic.

This mighty statement of Jesus in verse 8 was a rebuke to the mere outward, superficial,

hypocritical religion of the Scribes and Pharisees.

The call to "purity in heart" perfectly conforms to the theme of the Sermon on the Mount - namely: "True Righteousness" (Mt. 5:20).

"Blessed" = to be fortunate, well off, in a state of divine favor.

"Heart" = kardia (Eng. cardiac, etc.) - "the chief organ of physical life ("for the life of the flesh is in the blood - Lev. 17:11), occupies the most important place in the human system. By an easy transition, the word came to stand for man's entire mental and moral activity, both the rational and the emotional elements. In other words, the heart is used figuratively for the hidden springs of the personal life." (Vine, p. 206-207).

"The heart is the center of the inner life of the person where all the spiritual forces and functions have their origin" (TDNT)

Our heart (kardia) is that inner aspect of man that:

thinks (Lk. 9:46) - Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart…

reasons (Mk. 2:6 - But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?)

ponders (Lk. 2:19 - But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.)

imagines (Lk. 1:51 - He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.)

remembers (Lk. 1:66 - all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea. And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts,)

purposes (II Cor. 9:7 - Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.)

wonders (Lk. 3:15 - And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;)

determines (Lk. 21:14 - Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer:)

questions (Lk. 24:38 - And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?)

believes (Lk. 24:25 - Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:; cp. Acts 8:37; Ro. 10:9, 10)

motivates (Mk. 7:21 - For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,…).

The heart encompasses man's intellect (Mt. 13:15; Prov. 23:7); emotion (Jn. 16:22), and will (Ro. 6:17, Col. 3:15). It enables him to think, feel, and do.

The heart is your "hidden man" (I Pet. 3:4); the real you that lies deep beneath that part of you that everyone sees.

"Pure" = katharos (i.e. Katherine) to be clean

The phrase "pure in heart" has great significance!

It shows that:

--Internals are more important than externals (EX: the Pharisees of Jesus day majored on the externals (Mt. 23:25-28)
--What you think does matter to God
--True happiness is being cleansed from sin ("blessed. . .")

Jesus' statement shows that not everyone's heart is pure (clean).

By nature, our hearts are depraved. Such depravity is evidenced by sin.

Because of the inner, deep-rootedness of our hearts, we often do not even know our hearts (Jer. 17:9).

"There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness" (Prov. 30:12).

"The problem that caused God to destroy the earth in the flood was a heart problem" (MacArthur, p. 202). (Gen. 6:5 - *"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.")*

The signs of "heart disease" are revealed by the Great Physician in Mark 7:21-22.

One's fruit is an indication of one's heart (Lk. 6:45 - *"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh").*

--Religion is no substitute for being pure in heart.

--Knowing Bible facts is no substitute for being pure in heart.

Living in a "glass bubble" (in isolation from the "rif-raf" of society) is no substitute for a pure heart (Monasticism does not eradicate our problem).

What is a pure heart?

1. It is a sincere heart

I Pet. 1:22 - *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently"*

The word "pure" (katharos) was a Greek term "often used of metals that had been refined until all impurities were removed, leaving only the pure metal. In that sense, purity means unmixed, unalloyed, unadulterated" (MacArthur, p. 204)

2. It is a righteous heart

God's standard for purity of heart is perfection of heart (Mt. 5:48).

100% purity is God's standard (MacArthur, p. 205). Such a standard can only be met if God gives us a heart transplant!

Being pure in heart is the opposite of:

--Lustful thoughts (Mt. 5:28 - *"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart")*

--Materialistic thoughts (Mt. 6:21 - *"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also")*

We need a pure heart in order to truly love *(I Tim. 1:5 - "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned") (Cp. I Pet. 1:22 - "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently")*

We need a pure heart in order to truly call on God (II Tim. 2:22 - *"Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.")*

Our only means of cleansing is Christ's blood shed on Calvary (I Jn. 1:7 - *"the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin")*

ILLUS: the hymn - "There is a Fountain" - "Sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains"

God purifies people's hearts by faith (Acts 15:9) after He opens their heart (Acts 16:14).
See: Revelation 3:20
The Holy Spirit resides in the "heart" of the believer (II Cor. 1:22; Gal. 4:6) and makes an indelible impression on our hearts (II Cor. 3:3).

"They shall see God" - Such a promise is eschatological (future). No one living sees God now!

"Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face" (I Cor. 13:12).

"Whom having not seen ye love" (I Pet. 1:8).

"And they shall see his face" (Rev. 22:4).

Now, the pure in heart see God through eyes of faith (I Cor. 13:12; Heb. 11:27), but throughout eternity, the pure in heart will see God literally (I Jn. 3:12 - *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.")*

(Psalm 17:15 - "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.")

"They shall <u>see God</u>" - A promise of entering His holy presence and viewing His splendor and glory forever (SEE: Ps. 24:3-4)

Absolute pure if heart is the prerequisite for seeing God.

REASON: He is holy (Is. 6)

Ps 73:1 - A Psalm of Asaph. » Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

CONCLUSION:

"God knoweth your hearts" (Lk. 16:15)

God will <u>expose</u> what is really on the inside of men's hearts (I Cor. 4:5 - *"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts; and then each one's praise will come from God" NKJV)*

What lost sinners need is a spiritual heart transplant (Ezek. 36:25-26)

Rather than patching your exterior to hide the interior, why not ask God to create in you a clean heart? (Ps. 51:10).

We should spend more time on being what we ought to be, rather than hiding what we are."

Applic. for Christian - Just as one would remove dirt, filth, and contamination from a glass or drinking container before filling it and drinking out of it, so God must purify a heart before He can fill it or use it.

Our Prayer needs to be:
Ps 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

VII. Blessed are those who

<u>SEEK TO RECONCILE man to GOD and men to MEN</u>

("Blessed are the peacemakers. . ." v. 9)

"Scripture contains over 400 references to peace. . . The Bible opens with peace in the Garden of eden and closes with peace in eternity" (MacArthur, p. 209)

I saw a bumper sticker which said: "Imagine world peace"

There will be no true world peace until the prince of peace comes to establish it.

Man's nature since the fall has been opposed to peace (EX: Cain killed Abel).

Because man is basically selfish, conflict generally occurs whenever someone else gets in the way of what we want.

". . . the popular philosophy of the world, bolstered by the teachings of many psychologists and counselors, is to be put self first. But when self is first, peace is last." (MacArthur, p. 210)

Our natural, unregenerate proneness is toward war not peace; conflict not cooperation; violence not serenity; antagonism not unity; racial discrimination not social harmony; bloodshed not protection of life; hate not love.

The opposite of peace is turmoil, discord, confusion, fighting, and war.

Despite the clamor for peace (as evidenced by marches, rallies, protests, demonstrations, and riots), our society really is opposed to true peace.

Our society exalts violence and war. "The model man is not meek but macho. The model hero is not self-giving but self-seeking, not generous but selfish, not gentle but cruel, not submissive but aggressive, not meek but proud."

If you don't believe that man's natural tendency is bent toward violence, then ask why TV and the movies have so much blood and gore. People pay big money to go to a professional boxing match for the sheer enjoyment of seeing two men attempt to knock the brain out of each other. The main attraction of hockey games has become the brawls and fights.

Because so often our world is characterized by fighting and unloading ammunition at others in a vain quest for sovereignty (power), the scarcity of peace has prompted someone to suggest that "peace is that glorious moment in history when everyone stops to reload" (cited by MacArthur, p. 209).

In a fallen world where tempers flare easily, where selfish ambition quickly becomes the driving force, where many live looking for a fight, anyone can make war (fight). It takes a <u>real man</u> to make peace.

"Peacemaker" = eirene - peace; poieo - to make

"Peace<u>maker</u>" - Note: Jesus is <u>not</u> saying: "Blessed are the peace<u>ful</u>"
To be peaceful is not always virtuous, if it is a non-confrontational, passive attitude that never seeks to correct, confront error, expose evil, or lovingly rebuke a straying brother.

Some people are so "peaceful" that they never say anything or do anything that might cause waves or stir up things.

Such passivity was not characteristic of our Lord Jesus, nor is it expected of us. We will cause waves when we beam as light, sting as salt (v. 13-16).

To be a "peacemaker" is simply to be a <u>maker</u> of <u>peace</u>; someone who does more than <u>talk</u> about peace, someone who does more than <u>promote</u> peace; rather, he <u>produces</u> peace.

A peacemaker is a "bridge-builder" - he himself acts as a mediator as he stands in between the two people at odds with each other, stretching out his hands as it were and

grasping both parties and pulling them together.

A story is told of a couple at a divorce hearing who were arguing back and forth before the judge, accusing each other and refusing to take any blame themselves. Their little four-year-old boy was terribly distressed and confused. Not knowing what else to do, he took his father's hand and his mother's hand and kept tugging until he finally pulled the hands of his parents together (cited by MacArthur, p. 213).

A "peacemaker" is one who realizes that some fellow Christian is struggling and is at war with God's will, but because he is controlled by the spirit of God he says just the right words, at the right time, in the right way, and restores the erring brother.

A "peacemaker" knows about a marriage that is going to fall apart, and rather than passively doing nothing, he prays fervently for the husband and wife, then does all that he can to mend the problem.

A "peacemaker" sees a brother get bitter against another and seeks to replace the bitter attitude with a sweet one.

A "peacemaker" senses disunity among the brethren and seeks to unite them around Christ and His cause.

Being a "peacemaker" requires involvement, work, concern, spiritual diplomacy (divine wisdom).

A Godly peacemaker does not pursue peace at the expense of <u>purity</u>! He will not compromise convictions to maintain or restore peace. "The wisdom that is from above is <u>first pure</u>, then peaceable..." (James 3:17)

NOTE: In the Beatitude context, purity in heart precedes being a peacemaker (cp. Spurgeon, <u>Morning and Evening</u>, p. 155)

Peace cannot be divorced from holiness. "Righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. 85:10)

Peace cannot co-exist with wickedness. "There is no peace for the wicked, says the Lord" (Is. 48:22)

A "peacemaker" does not believe in "peace at any price" nor protecting the "status quo" if it is sinful nor “political correctness” which dances around issures and avoids true matters of importance.

A true peacemaker: confronts problems and seeks to solve them.

*Follow God's principles for peacemakers:

How can you become a "peacemaker"?

1) You must <u>belong</u> to the <u>Maker of peace</u>

True peace with others begins with peace toward God

(II Cor. 5:18-20)

You can't give what you don't have.

"God is not the author of confusion but of peace."

Being a "peacemaker" is a very noble occupation.

Peacemakers are truly Godly people - Reason: They take after their Heavenly Father, who is called, "The God of peace" (Rom. 15:33; II Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9).

Because God gave His Son, you can now have peace with God (ILLUS: Peace Child by Don Richardson, cited by MacArthur, p. 213-214)

2) You need to love God and others

"Speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15)

Rom. 14:19 - "Follow after the things which make for peace

Eph. 4:3 - "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace"

Heb. 12:14 - "Follow peace with all men"

3) You must be righteous (you can't sincerely call people to righteousness if you are not)

Basically, if you fulfill the first 5 beatitudes, you qualify for # 6

4) You need courage to get involved

(Willing to confront, not avoid all conflicts)

Beatitude # 7 (persecution) is sometimes the result as you are misunderstood and your work is misinterpreted.

We must follow matthew 18:15-17.

"If it be possible. . . live peaceably with all men" (Ro. 12:18).

It is not always possible (Mt. 10:34; cp. Lk. 12:51). "I came not to send peace, but a sword."

5) Depend upon God for wisdom

Only those who "make peace" will produce righteous fruit

SEE: James 3:13 - 18

Ja. 3:18 - "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

This verse means that the fruit that righteousness produces can only be sown by peacemakers.

"Sown in peace" - the manner in which we speak is just as important as the message we speak.

"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Prov. 15:1)

Col. 4:5-6 - "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

Eph. 4:2-3 - "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

"Right relationships are the soil in which the reward of righteousness alone can grow. . . nothing good can ever grow in an atmosphere where men are at variance with each other" (Barclay, James, p. 62)

The best peacemaker is the Godly mother, who resolves her children's daily quarrels.
--She hears both sides of the story
--She encourages them to admit wrong
--She encourages them to ask God's forgiveness
--She encourages them to ask the person they wronged for forgiveness and make restitution if needed.

You cannot be carnal and be a peacemaker. Carnal people tend to be factious, divisive, clichish (EX: the church of Corinth - I Cor. 1).

"They shall be called the children of God" - The blessing of being a peacemaker is the impression you will make on the watching world. They will know you are different, that you belong to God, by the peace that you make between the brethren.

A peacemaker realizes that when God's people are unjustifiably at odds with each other, they are destroying the work of Christ and the testimony of Christ.

My whole life as a Christian and pastor is to be a "peacemaker."

--To see the lost gain peace with God (Rom. 5:1)

--To see the saved know the peace of God (Phil. 4:7)

--To see those who are at odds with each other gain peace with each other.

The future ministry of Elijah (like that of John the Baptist 0 Lk. 1:17) will be to "turn the heart of the father to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (Mal. 4:6)

We need people who are. . .

--Christian "firemen" - they don't start fires, they put them out

--Christian "architects" - they don't plan evil schemes, but plan for God-honoring interpersonal relationships

--Christian "carpenters" - they don't tear apart relationships but build them.

Francis of Assisi said it best:
"Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace!
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love. . ."

VIII. Blessed are those who are

TREATED WRONG BECAUSE THEY DO RIGHT

("Blessed are they which are persecuted. . ." v. 10)

INTRODUCTION: Verse 10

"Some years ago a popular national magazine took a survey to determine the things that make people happy. According to the responses they received, happy people enjoy other people but are not self-sacrificing; they refuse to participate in any negative feelings or emotions" (MacArthur, p. 219)

V. 11

"When" - not "if" It is unavoidable.

Many would say: But it's not fair; it's not just! Did God always promise us fair and just treatment by the world?

"Blessed are ye" - Jesus moves from third person, to now second person, to specifically apply truths to his disciples. This applies to you and me.

A. The <u>REAL REASON</u> for Persecution (v. 10-11)
(*<u>Be aware</u>* of why you will be treated wrong)

1. "For righteousness sake" *(v. 10)*

"For righteousness sake" - because you do right (justly)

There is no blessing in being persecuted if you did wrong and are getting what you deserve (I Pet. 4:15 - "But let non of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.")

Two basic reasons why those who live righteously would be opposed:

a. Righteousness is a <u>rebuke</u> to unrighteousness

The reason people would persecute the righteous is because their righteousness is a rebuke to their unrighteousness.

Doing good is a rebuke to their doing bad.
Holiness is a rebuke to impurity.
Honesty is a rebuke to lying, fraud, and theft
Light is a rebuke to darkness.

Lost men, in an effort to extinguish the light that exposes their darkness, strike out at the light.

Do you ever wonder why when you seek to help some people, they get angry? EX: Acts 7)
It is because you have struck a tender nerve. You have hit a sore spot; you have opened a closet; you have exposed a secret. You have uncovered the truth; often the truth hurts.

Righteousness by its very nature is confrontational; it cuts across the grain of the world.

Godliness will generate antagonism, hot emotions, and hostility from the world. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33)

EX: Savanarola (MacArthur, p. 221)

b. <u>Satan</u> hates righteousness

We have an adversary (I Pet. 5:8) who wants to keep men blind to the truth (II Cor. 4:4), so he incites lost men (who are at his disposal) to stir up opposition to the truth in order to turn men away from the truth (EX: Elymas the Sorcerer - Acts 13:8, 10) (EX: The masters who exploited a demon-possessed girl - Acts 16:19-20) (EX: The unbelieving Jews - Acts 17:5) (EX: The Ephesian craftsmen - Acts

19:27-29)

Persecution is an earmark of Godly living (II Tim. 3:12 - "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.")

It is an inevitable "gift" (Phil. 1:29 - "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake")

ILLUS: The Secret Christian (MacArthur, p. 220)

2. "For My [Jesus] **sake"** (v. 11)

"For my sake" - to be persecuted for Jesus' sake is synonymous with being persecuted for righteousness sake, because he is righteousness personified.

If they persecuted the Master (Christ), they will persecute His servants (Christians) (Jn. 15:18-21)

Because of opposition, many who have a shallow profession of Christ fall away when the pressure is on (Mt. 13:20-21 - "But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended")

For fear of persecution, many deny Christ (often by default)
EX: Peter

Mt. 10:33 - "But whosoever will deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

"When we are hated, maligned, or afflicted as Christians, the real animosity is <u>not</u> against <u>us</u> but <u>against Christ</u>. Satan's great enemy is Christ, and he opposes us because we belong to Jesus Christ, because He is in us" (MacArthur, p. 228)

EX: Rome's persecution of Christians (MacArthur, p. 223-224)

Persecution may often come from those closest to us - family (Mt. 10:34-39; Lk. 12:52-53)

B. The <u>VARIED TYPES</u> of Persecution (v. 11)
(*<u>Be ready</u>* for different kinds of oppression)

1. You may be the object of <u>insult</u>

"Revile" - to reproach; to insult; to mock and ridicule (EX: "Virgin Vinny"; "The Preaching Printer")

"Bible-banger" "Funny-mental-ist" etc.

EX: How Jesus was insulted (Mt. 26:67-68; Mk. 15:19-20)

2. You may be the object of <u>injury</u>

"Persecuted" - to pursue after; to hunt down

Like a dog would hunt a pheasant or rabbit; like a hunter would pursue and lie in wait for a deer.

The most intense opposition that Christians will ever face will come from the Antichrist in the Tribulation.

How will we overcome?

1) By a <u>confidence</u> in God's <u>Word</u> (Rev. 12:11)

2) By a <u>sacrifice</u> of <u>self</u> (Rev. 12:11b)

Our awareness of the eternal doom of those who receive the mark of the Beast will prevent us from receiving it (Rev. 14:9-13)

3. You may be the object of <u>lies</u>

"All manner" - all sorts of; every kind of; vicious words come in a wide variety.

"Evil" - to accuse of wickedness and sin

"Falsely" - the lost will lie and hypocritically seek to defame a Christian and ruin his testimony.

Don't give Satan any ammunition! (Titus 2:5, 8, 10)

Jesus was lie about; accused of being "gluttonous and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners" (mt. 11:19)

C. The <u>OPTIMISTIC ATTITUDE</u> of the Persecuted (v. 12)
(*<u>Be joyful</u>*, not discouraged)

1. "Rejoice!"

"Rejoice" - our response of faith (James 1:2)

2. "Be exceeding glad!"

"Be glad" - like Peter and John who rejoiced at the privilege to suffer for Jesus (Acts 5:41) and like Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25).

How does gladness come? Suffering for Jesus is a confirmation to us that we are saved (I Pet. 4:14 - "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified")

D. The END RESULT for the Persecuted
(*Be expectant* because something great is in store for you)

1. An Eternal Kingdom *(v. 10)*

"Theirs is the kingdom of Heaven" - Jesus ends the Beatitudes with the same blessing He promised when He began (v. 3)

To suffer now is nothing by contrast with the glory later (Rom. 8:18 - "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us")

If you are opposed for righteousness, keep you head up and your eyes on eternity. And realize that what they say is not true and it does not alter your destiny (SEE: Isaiah 51:6-8)

2. A Great Reward *(v. 12)*

"Great is your reward" - Much is your payback

A "Crown of life" is what Jesus promised to the suffering church at Smyrna (Rev. 2:10-11)

ILLUS: John Chrysostom (MacArthur, p. 232-33)

E. The SWEET CONSOLATION for the Persecuted (v. 12b)
(*Be encouraged* because you are not alone)

God does not call his people to be "sanctified celebrities" but often to be suffering martyrs.

The prophets from A to Z (Abel to Zecharias) were persecuted (Mt. 23:37)

When you are persecuted for righteousness sake, you are stepping into the shoes of great men of the past (II Chron. 36:16 - "But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.")

We enter the ranks of men like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; Jeremiah; Michaiah (I Ki. 22:8, 14, 24, 26-27), Paul; Stephen; John, etc. (SEE: Heb. 11:36-38)

CONCLUSION:

SEE: I Peter 4:12-16

"KEYS TO GOD'S BLESSING"
Matthew 5:1-12

7/12/92

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 2

***Are you "blessed"?**

Key evidences of someone whom God has blessed:

I. Blessed are those who
REALIZE THEIR SPIRITUAL BANKRUPTCY WITHOUT GOD'S SALVATION
("Blessed are the poor in Spirit" - v. 3)

II. Blessed are those who
GRIEVE OVER SIN AND ITS EFFECTS
("Blessed are they that mourn" - v. 4)

III. Blessed are those who
HAVE SOFT HEARTS AND HUMBLE MINDS
("Blessed are the meek" - v. 5)

IV. Blessed are those who are
STARVING AND THIRSTING FOR WHAT IS RIGHT
("Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness" - v.6)

V. Blessed are those who
HOLD BACK PUNISHMENT FROM PEOPLE WHO DESERVE IT
("Blessed are the merciful..." - v.7)

VI. Blessed are those who are
CLEAN ON THE INSIDE
("Blessed are the pure in heart. . ." v. 8)

CONCLUSION:

"KEYS TO GOD'S BLESSING"
Matthew 5:12
7/12/92

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"KEYS TO GOD'S BLESSING"
Matthew 5:1-12
Part I
6/7/92

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 2

v. 1

Jesus withdrew from the multitudes (who had followed Him because of His miracles and fame) to give private instruction to his disciples.

In ministry, a balance is needed between public ministry and private ministry. There is a need both for "fishing for men" (evangelizing - 4:19) and for discipling men (edification).

The mount of the Beatitudes is noted as "the Sinai of the New Testament." (Delitzsch)

"His disciples" - all 12 had been chosen before this Sermon on the Mount had been given (Luke 6:12-17).

The word "disciple" (mathatas) means: disciplined one; on who learned (manthano); one who is instructed in the disciplines of the Lord; i.e. one who is taught.

These 12 men had the personal privilege of being pupils (students) of the greatest Teacher ever to walk on this earth. He was the authority on every subject He spoke about (Mt. 7:29), because He was the designer, builder, and controller of the entire universe (Col. 1:16-17).

V. 2

"He opened His mouth and taught" - Jesus taught many lessons by example; here He teaches by precept. (NOTE: For teachers, both methods of instruction are needed).

When comparing Matthew's account (Mt. 5 - 7) with Luke's (Lk. 6), it is evident that Christ the Master Teacher expanded and expounded on what is recorded in each Gospel.

To drive it home, He used more than one way to say each thoughts (EX: Luke Beatitudes are combined with the "woes"). Each writer focused on peculiar aspects of Christ's great sermon.

The theme of this sermon is "True Righteousness" (5:20).

Christ in this sermon lifts the veil and removes the blinders to God's standard of righteousness.

It's amazing to see to what great lengths people have gone to excuse themselves from obeying (following) this sermon.

Some view this sermon as a hyperbole (an exaggeration of truth); others - as applying only to those who will live in the future millennial kingdom; others say this sermon only applied to those who lived from the time Christ presented it to the time of Israel's rejection of the kingdom. They say it was limited to that time period and doesn't apply today.

However, I believe this sermon applies to believers of all ages.

This sermon definitely applies to the Church for the following reasons:

1. Nothing in the context would limit this sermon

2. The time of Matthew's writing was during the Church age

3. Many concepts are found in other N.T. epistles

4. This sermon was to be taught until Christ returned (Mt. 28:19-20)

V. 3

"Blessed" - Verses 3 - 11 all begin with the word "blessed."

The word "blessed" (makarioi) comes from the root "makros" meaning large or lengthy (Vine, p. 133).

It refers to one who has much to be happy about. A fortunate man. An enriched, prosperous, flourishing individual. A blessed person is one who is showered upon by God's good and great (numerous) blessings.

A blessed man is one who has a long list of virtuous, desirable things to praise God for. He has been enriched with true prosperity and success.

The word is translated "happy" (Jn. 13:17). (note: Happiness is the result of blessedness. They are not one and the same).

Because of God's greatness, He is called "blessed" (I Tim. 1:11, 6:15).

The greatness or enormity of what is meant by the word "blessed" is evident by the magnitude of the blessings mentioned: "the kingdom of heaven" (v. 3). . . "inherit the earth" (v. 5) . . . "filled" (v. 6) . . . "see God" (v. 8), etc.

God's "blessing" is the opposite of "woe." The opposite of the "blessed life" (mt. 5) is the "cursed life" (Mt. 23). (MacArthur, p. 144).

All of the descriptions of the people Jesus calls "blessed" are from the world's standpoint viewed negatively. The culture of Jesus' day (EX: the Roman culture) would have viewed such people as weak and wimpy.

"Poor...mourn...meek...hungry...merciful...pure in heart...peacemakers" None of those were desirable qualities in the opinion of the average Roman. Such qualities are not wanted by those who are proud, macho, war-like, pleasure seekers, etc.

"Jesus congratulates those the world most pities, and calls the world's rejects 'blessed'." (John R. W. Stott).

NOTE: The promised reward perfectly contrasts and corresponds to the praised virtue.

The opposite of being poor is possessing God's kingdom; the opposite of mourning is comfort; the opposite of meek is inheriting the earth; the opposite of hunger and thirst is being filled, etc.

Jesus did not state these Beatitudes to say, "Hey, get with it and be meek, pure in heart, etc." But to say, "Hey, I see you showing these qualities - let me share the blessed promises in store for you."

***Are you "blessed"?**

Key evidences of someone whom God has blessed:

I. Blessed are those who REALIZE THEIR SPIRITUAL BANKRUPTCY WITHOUT GOD'S SALVATION

("Blessed are the poor in Spirit" - v. 3)

"There's something enchanting about a credit card. It makes you think you're rich. With that mystical piece of plastic you can fly to Hawaii, buy a car, or get cash out of a bank. "Relax," the ads tell you. "You are wealthy. The world is in your wallet." People love to think of themselves as well-off financially." (Branon, p. 7).

Jesus said, however, that the way to be rich is to be poor! (not in a material sense, but in a spiritual sense. Many people are smugly complacent in what they view as spiritual security).

"Poor in spirit" = to be spiritually destitute (Robertson, p. 40)

"Poor" = (ptochoi) - to be poverty stricken; to be a beggar (EX: Lazarus - Lk. 16:20, 22); to be in deep poverty.

To be "poor" is to have nothing!

Those who are poor in spirit realize that they have nothing spiritually. They recognize that they have no relationship to God, no salvation, no connection to His Spirit, no power to live the Christian life, etc., so in desperation they do the very thing they needed to do the very thing they needed to do -- they throw themselves into the arms of Jesus and trust Him to enrich them with spiritual life.

NOTE: A deep sense of one's wickedness is a prerequisite to acquiring God's salvation. No one gets saved until they first realize that they are drowning in their sins nd have no means of rescue in themselves.

"in spirit" = the spirit of man by which he communicates with God.

A man who is "poor in spirit" is one who realizes his absolute dependence upon God to satisfy his spiritual need. He is one whose spirit recognizes a deep need for God's grace and mercy.

Your are "poor in spirit" when you acknowledge that you are in "spiritual bankruptcy" and come to Jesus and ask Him to credit His righteousness to your account (II Cor. 5:21; Rom. 4)

--The poor in spirit are not self-righteous (such people sense no need of God's grace)

--The poor in spirit are not blinded by religion (such people's religion pacifies their spirit, giving them a feeling of satisfaction)

--The poor in spirit are not those who attempt to gain Heaven by their works (to work for their salvation) (rather, they realize that they have nothing to offer God to appease His wrath or gain entrance into Heaven)

ILLUS: of a man poor in spirit -- The Pharisee and the Publican (Lk. 18:9-14)

Even Christians need this same perspective. Not only is it impossible for us to be saved without a deposit of God's rich saving grace, but it is impossible to overcome daily struggles and temptations without His sustaining grace.

"The Kingdom of Heaven" - this phrase, occurring exclusively in Matthew (32 times), is synonymous with the phrase "kingdom of God"

Compare: Matt. 4:12, 17 with
Mark 1:14-15

Compare: Matt. 10:7 with
Lk. 9:2

Compare: Matt. 5:3 with
Luke 6:20

Compare Matt. 11:11 with
Luke 7:28

Compare: Matt. 19:14 with
Mk. 10:14 and Lk. 18:16

II. Blessed are those who <u>GRIEVE OVER SIN AND ITS EFFECTS</u>

("Blessed are they that <u>mourn</u>" - v. 4)

"Many people make a living these days joking about sin. Popular entertainers use immorality, adultery, and lying as a source of humor. The audience roars, the advertisers buy more time, and the comedians laugh all the way to the bank. But there's a problem: Sin is no laughing matter." (Dave Branon, "What Does It Take to Be Happy" - Radio Bible Class Publ. p. 9)

What should our attitude be toward sin?

Jesus said, "Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep" (Lk. 6:25)

"Mourn" = to have an inner sorrow or grief

To "Mourn" is to lament over sin and /or the effects of sin (Ja. 4:8-9; I Cor. 5:2; II Cor. 12:21).

"Mourning" (v. 4) is an outward expression of one who is "poor in spirit" (v. 3)

(NOTE: Each beatitude seems to build on the one before)

The "mourning" that Jesus is describing is not a selfish weeping over material things lost (Ex: the child who cries when someone takes his toy). But rather, it is grief over things that displease God.

It is crying over sin in our lives (Ja. 4:8-9) (when we have created hurt and pain in the lives of others because of our failings and sin. Lam. 2:18-19; Ja. 5:1-6).

Lamenting over unbelief, lack of love.

It is crying over disobedience in the lives of others (I Cor. 5:2; II Cor. 12:21).

It is shedding tears over injustice in America; over God's honor being defamed; over truth being ignored; over righteousness being thrown down; over souls being lost and condemned.

It is weeping over a wayward child or an unfaithful spouse, or when a hero of the fiath falls into gross sin.

Today we have too light a view of sin. We need the heart of Paul: "O wretched man that I am. . ." (Ro. 7)

We need the heart of Nehemiah (Neh. 1)

"We ought to hate sin like we hate the death of a loved one" (Thomas Watson). If we did, we would weep over both!

--Jeremiah wept (Jer. 9:1)
--Jesus wept (Mt. 23:27)
--Paul wept (Acts 20:19, 31)

While it is true that God comforts us in this life (II Cor. 1:3-5), in Matthew's context, Jesus is describing the future comfort that awaits the penitent Christian to be enjoyed in Heaven throughout eternity. (SEE: Zech. 12:10-14; Is. 61:1-3; - Note: Israel's mourning in the Tribulation will turn into comfort - Rev. 21:2-4)

"There can be no comfort where there is no grief" (McNeile)

Without grief there exists no need for comfort.

God's comfort is all the more sweeter to those who mourned and went through severe trial in this life (cp. Rev. 7:14-17)

The reason why mourning leads to comfort is because mourning leads us to the comforting heart and hand of God!

Sorrow will be turned into joy (John 16:19-21)

Rom. 8:18, 22-23 - "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. . . For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And no only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

Is there a nagging sin in your life that you haven't been able to get rid of? What is your attitude toward it? Are you content with it? Or do you mourn over it?

III. Blessed are those who HAVE SOFT HEARTS AND HUMBLE MINDS

("Blessed are the meek" - v. 5)

The word "meek" was used in Greek literally to describe:

1. Soothing medicine
2. A colt brought under control
3. A soft breeze

All have power, but if under control they are a refreshing blessing.

"Meekness" certainly is not weakness. For Christ was all powerful yet surrendered the independent exercise of that power (Phil. 2:5ff)

EX: Hymn - "There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus . . . No friend like Him is so high and holy . . . and yet nor friend is so meek and lowly" (Victorious, # 208)

Christ was meek (Matt. 11:29 - "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Mt. 21:5 - "Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.")

Moses was meek (Num. 12:3 - "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the fact of the earth.")

"Meek" - to be mild - mannered, to be gentle (not harsh or abrasive). It is the "fine blend of spiritual poise and strength" (Robertson, p. 41).

Meekness is the gentleness that comes from being truly humble. It is the result of humility; the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23).

True meekness is not effeminate, rather it has a blend of strong iron and soft velvet. It is masculinity at its highest.

"Meekness" is in a sense to be "cool, calm, and collected." It is to be in control of your sinful emotions. It is to have an "accurate self-image."

Meekness is the opposite of self-assertiveness and self-interest; the opposite of arrogance, pride, selfish ambition, stubborn/rebellious spirit.

It takes meekness (gentleness; mildness) to do the following:

1. To receive God's Word (Ja. 1:21 - "Wherefore, lay apart all filthiness and

superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls")

2. To restore an erring brother (Gal. 6:1 - "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.")

3. To be a servant of the Lord (II Tim. 2:24-26 - "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.")

4. To be a godly woman (I Pet. 3:4 - "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.")

"Inherit the earth" - Why the earth? Why not heaven? Because the earth is where Christ is going to rule and reign for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1ff). The meek will inherit <u>with Him</u> ("joint heirs" - Rom. 8:17).

Key Context: SEE: Zeph. 1:18- 2:3 - The meek among Israel will be protected "<u>hid</u>" in the Day of the Lord's anger (Zeph. 2:3) and will inherit the earth in the future Millennium.

Ps. 37:11 - "But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."

IV. Blessed are those who are <u>STARVING AND THIRSTING FOR WHAT IS RIGHT</u>

("Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness" - v.6)

Most of us really do not know what it means to genuinely hunger or thirst.

To skip a couple of meals is not hunger. To sweat a bit and have a dry tongue does not equate a life-threatening thirst.

ILLUS: The Sheriah Wells (MacArthur, p. 180-181)

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after Righteousness"

The words "hunger and thirst" speak of a strong desire, an insatiable desire, a longing deep in the soul, a Godly ambition.

"A starving person has a single, all-consuming passion for food and water. Nothing else has the slightest attraction or appeal; nothing else can even get his attention" (MacArthur, p. 179).

Just as food and water are absolute necessities to our physical health, so righteousness is to our spiritual health. No one is spiritual who is not righteous (NOTE: Jesus' theme of the Sermon on the Mount is "true righteousness" -- true righteousness is not legalistic and external (Mt. 5:20) but is internal - a matter of the heart (Mt. 5:21ff).

Such a strong desire comes from a heart which senses its inner emptiness and need.

"After righteousness"

In a world of injustice, crookedness, or unrighteousness, those who are blessed of God long for His truth, His standards to be upheld, His kingdom to be established. . . . they simply long for God ("righteousness exalteth a nation...")

The world is thirsty for that which ultimately gratifies self: the flesh.

In Job 15:16, man is referred to as one who "drinketh iniquity (sin) like water."

In a world that:
is apathetic toward spiritual matters;
has many distractions from spiritual matters;
offers many substitutes for spiritual matters. . .

We need God to make us thirsty!

As a Pastor I need God to do for us what I cannot.

I can preach about God, but I cannot give you an appetite for Him.

I can teach the Word, but I cannot make you hungry for it.

I can encourage you to come to church, Bible Institute, etc, but I cannot cause you to take in, digest, and utilize the food you get here.

"You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink." He, like you, will only drink if he is thirsty.

Seeking God's righteousness should be our # 1 goal in life! Mt. 6:33 - "Seek ye first . . . His righteousness"

No one receives God's imputed righteousness (salvation) unless they really want it.

"He has the most need for righteousness that least wants it" (Thomas Watson).

NOTE: Luke's parallel passage states: "Blessed are you who hunger now" (6:21). The time to hunger for God is now!

"For they shall be filled"

Filled with what?

Filled with that which they hungered and thirsted for -- namely, righteousness -- God's righteousness

The Bible illustrates spiritual hunger and thirst in the book of Psalms.

NOTE: Three evidences of someone who deeply craves God's righteousness:

They will have:

- A thirst for God
- A thirst for God's House

A thirst for God's Word

A. A thirst for GOD (Psalm 42:1-4; 63:1)

1. A thirst that preoccupies our thoughts (v. 1)

Ps. 42:1

The imagery is of a hart (hind or deer) longing for a stream of water to satisfy its thirst during a time of drought.

A deer (or most any animal) cannot hide its thirst. It pants (meaning breathes quickly, with its mouth open and tongue hanging out, as the animal seeks water).

Neither could the Psalmist hide his thirst (NOTE: Others saw his yearning for god but did not share the same desire - v. 3b).

A thirst develops out of a need.

The human body is amazing, how it tells you when your body liquids are low (your mouth gets dry).

--A physical thirst exists when a person realizes he has a need for water (when this need is realized, all the person can think about is "water")

--A spiritual thirst exists when a person realizes he has a desperate need for God.

My "soul" = the spiritual (inner) aspect of the psalmist.

Ps. 63:1-2 - "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary."

David's whole being is deeply restless and unsatisfied without God (Kidner, p. 225).

The psalmist is far from home (Jerusalem and the Temple, where he met with God). He is up north in the Mount Hermon mountain range (v. 6), either in exile, or occupied by a military campaign.

While he is miles from the Temple, he misses the worship he once experienced.

He was consumed with the thought: "I need God; I long to be close to Him; I yearn for His fellowship!"

This week was God in all your thoughts? Was He in your thoughts at all?

God desires that we know Him more than we desire to know Him.

God does not want to remain separated from you! James 4:8. A one-sided relationship is no relationship.

God said that He desired man to have a knowledge of Him, more than He desired burnt offerings (Hos. 6:6).

2. A thirst for <u>something real</u> (v. 2a)

One who is genuinely thirsty for God will not settle for less.

"For the <u>living</u> God" - no substitute will do.

The psalmist yearns to have the "real think" - fellowship with the true and living God.

Many today are satisfied to have a religion; many are satisfied to have artificial Christianity. It has the sounds, sights, and reputation of being real, but it is not.

Many times people, like the Pharisees, are self-deceived into thinking they are full. However, it's only a temporary satisfaction. Jesus said, "Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger." (Lk. 6:25)

Why do not more people thirst after God?

--They have been told (by Satan) other substitute thirst quenchers, cheap alternatives, pacifiers.

Man has an empty spot that he tries to fill with drugs, alcohol, illicit sex, materialism, food, social acquaintances, religion, etc.

--What were we made for?
To know God
--What should be our aim in life?
To know God

--Why did Jesus save us? That we might have a real, intimate, personal knowledge of God.

We need <u>more</u> than a superficial knowledge about God, a shallow awareness of God, a hollow theological conception of God.

God needs to be our closest companion, dearest helper, and best friend!

"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And besides thee, I desire nothing on earth." (Ps. 73:25).

3. A thirst that will <u>not be quenched</u> by God's adversaries (v. 3)

While the world sits back and mocks ("Where is your God?"), we must keep our confidence firm in Him and our heart fixed on Him.

This week, when it seems like God is far away, disinterested or impotent, will your thirst be quenched?

This week, when the atheists, agnostics, evolutionists, and skeptics cry out via the media, public school system, etc., "Where is your God?" will they quench your thirst for Him?

Attitudes about God characteristic of the Last Days:

1. A cold love for God (Mt. 24:12)

2. Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God (II Tim. 3:4)

3. Blasphemy (II Tim. 3:2)

4. Scoffing about the Lord's return (II Pet. 3:3, 4 - "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.")

4. A thirst to <u>meet with God</u> (v. 2b, 4)

V. 2b

"When shall I come and appear before God?"

In the O.T., a believer met with God at a central location - the Temple. (Deut. 12:5ff)

The Temple was the place God chose to meet with man. It was the place to bring sacrifices, offerings, have fellowship meals with God, a place to pray, and to rejoice!

Today, however, we are not restricted to a place to meet with God (Jn.

4:21-24), yet with the blessings of being able to meet with God anywhere, do you take advantage?

We need to set apart a time and times to meet with God. To do nothing, but talk with Him and meditate on Him.

V. 4

Why don't many professed believers have a thirst for a closeness to God?
ANSWER: They don't know what they are missing because they never had it before. You don't miss what you never had or knew before.

The psalmist remembers how sweet His fellowship was
(v. 4)

NOTE: The tremendous joy the psalmist remembered having when he had gone to the House of God. It was not a bore, not drudgery, because his heart was in it.

B. A thirst for "GOD'S HOUSE" (Psalm 84:1-4, 10; I Timothy 3:15)

READ v. 1-4, 10 - the focus in this chapter is on a Son of Korah's desire to be in the house of the LORD - the Temple.

Today the house of God is not the Temple, but is the House or assembly of believers. I Timothy 3:15 - "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how they

oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

Peter said it this way, when he described believers as "living stones, that are built up into spiritual houses." (I Pet. 2:5).

"How amiable are thy tabernacles" = how lovely (dear, beloved) is your dwelling place. The Christian equivalent of this is "love of the brethren" (Kidner, p. 303).

While the dwelling place of God is not a building today, the Lord is dwelling in believers: "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost..." (I Cor. 6:19). "You are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (II Cor. 6:16)

"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20)
God dwells in and with His people today!

V. 2

To a godly O.T. Jew, having a thirst for God and His house are synonymous.

"The courts of the LORD" = the various sections of God's Temple

"My heart and my flesh" = the inner man and outer man.

It was spiritually and physically refreshing for the psalmist to be with the living God.

"...for the living God" - the true object of the psalmist's longing is not an attachment to a place, however hallowed, but to God Himself (Kidner, p. 303).

V. 3

The psalmist considers the birds privileged to build a nest or lay their young on the Temple grounds (In NY, pigeons tend to occupy our roof tops).

READ v. 4 & 10

Contrast this attitude with Amos 8:5, where the people are saying: "When will the

new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? And the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat..."

Like many today who say, "When will this service be over so that I can go home and watch football?"

Cp. the early church's excitement about gathering together -Acts 2:42, 46-47.

When someone is right with God, you can't keep him away from God's household of believers! It's the greatest time of the week!

If there was ever a year when it will be important to assemble, it will be is these last days -- the day of the Lord's return is near! (Heb. 10:24-25 - "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.")

C. A thirst GOD'S WORD (Psalm 119:131; I Peter 2:2)

A thirst for God, and a thirst for His Word are inseparable. If you have one, you will have the other ("With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments." Ps. 119:10).

NOTE: David's attitude toward God's Word in Ps. 119 -

--God's Word was something he rejoiced in (v. 14), meditated on (v. 15), and delighted in (v. 16, 24, 92).

--To David, God's Word was a longing (v. 20, 40) and a love (v. 47, 97).

--It was better "than thousands of gold and silver" (v. 72), something he could not get out of his mind (v. 16, 83, 93); something sweeter than honey to his mouth (v. 103; cp. Ps. 19:10).

--God's Word was the rejoicing of his heart (v. 111), and it was wonderful (v. 129), so wonderful that David rejoiced in God's Word like someone who had just found great spoil (a million dollars) (v. 162).

Do you love God's Word like you love receiving letters in the mail?

What is the comparison between the time you spend reading the Word and the time spent reading the newspaper, "Readers' Digest," "Sports Illustrated," or "TV Guide?"

Why don't people love reading their Bibles?

ANSWER: They don't love the Author!

1. Maybe you don't know Him (unsaved) (you don't love to hear from someone you don't know -- I would be bored to death reading a letter from

someone I did not know).

2. Maybe you are "on the outs" with Him (saved but backslidden) (not on talking terms because of sin in your life).

SEE I Peter 2:1-3.

Before you will desire God's Word:

1. There are some things that must be laid aside (v. 1)

2. There must have been a time in your life when you tasted (fully experienced) the grace of God (v. 3)

Conclusion:

Your spiritual thirst can be quenched at no charge (Is. 55:1ff; Rev. 22:17).

Your spiritual thirst can be quenched only by Jesus Christ.

Jesus can satisfy your spiritual thirst.

EX: Woman at the well - Jn. 4:13-14 - "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

EX: The multitude who ate of the 5 loaves and 2 fish -
Jn. 6:35 - "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

EX: Jews at the Feast of Tabernacles - Jn. 7:37-38 - "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

Is. 44:3a - "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." Cp. Isaiah 41:17, 18

V. Blessed are those who
HOLD BACK PUNISHMENT FROM PEOPLE WHO DESERVE IT

("Blessed are the merciful..." - v.7)

To the Romans, mercy was a sign of weakness.

A popular Roman philosopher called mercy "the disease of the soul."

ILLUS: Father - Thumbs up, thumbs down
Slave-owners - could kill their slave for any reason

"A society that despises mercy is a society that glorifies brutality." (MacArthur, p. 188-189)

Perhaps the best way to define "mercy" is to compare it to "grace." What is the difference?

Mercy - is when you withhold what someone deserves

Grace - is when you give them what they don't deserve

In other words, when God is merciful to us - the result is no Hell.
When God is gracious - the result is Heaven.

Mercy withholds the bad we deserve
Grace gives the good we don't deserve

Mercy is a characteristic of God

Lam. 3:22 - "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not."

Jesus said: "Be ye merciful, even as your Heavenly Father is merciful."

Justice gives exactly what is deserved. Whereas mercy does not give what is deserved.

The reason why God could be both just and merciful at the same time is because His justice was satisfied by the death of Christ (Rom. 3:23, 26).

Mercy shows pity on those who don't deserve it, but desperately need it ("Father, forgive them..." - Lk. 23:34; Acts 7:60)

Many today, like in Jesus' day, only love those who love them, only greet those who greet them (Mt. 5:46, 47), only give to those who give to them, only show mercy to those who show mercy to them.

SEE: Luke 6:31-37 (**v. 36)

*They forget to see their own need for mercy.

Those who show no mercy to others have failed to recognize how merciful God has been to them; They fail to see how God has withheld His judicial punishment from falling upon them.

Mercy is sympathy. You cannot sympathize unless you have experienced a similar situation.

ILLUS: The Unforgiving Servant (Mt. 18:21-35)

*The unmerciful have higher demands for others than they have for themselves (Mt. 23:3-4)

They are very concerned that others are stringently dealt with according to the Law. They are rigid, unbending, bitter, "prune-faced." People who are anxious to see judgment executed on others, but fail to see their own need (ILLUS: the woman caught in adultery - Jn. 8:3-11)

Mercy is the opposite of being hard and unfeeling.

Mercy stems from compassion (Eph. 2:4-5) and reveals itself in forgiveness (Titus 3:5)

The basis of mercy is compassion. Someone without mercy is someone without compassion. Compassion is the driving force of mercy.

"Mercy is compassion in action."

"For they shall obtain mercy."

The concept of the merciful receiving mercy is similar to the forgiving receiving forgiveness (Mt. 6:14-15)

James 2:13 - "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment."

Why wouldn't the unmerciful obtain mercy?

They do not understand mercy; therefore, they do not have the capacity to accept God's mercy through Christ.

God is not teaching that mercy is earned or deserved by being merciful.

In other words, He is not saying that your mercy is the means to God's mercy; rather, your mercy is the result of God's mercy. Just as "we love because He first loved," (I Jn. 4), so we show mercy because we have understood and accepted God's mercy.

Those who show mercy will receive it in this life because God's law of sowing and reaping applies to every area of life. "Whatsoever a man soweth..." (Gal. 6:7)

VI. Blessed are those who are <u>CLEAN ON THE INSIDE</u>

("Blessed are the pure in heart. . ." v. 8)

A car may have a beautiful body, but if under the hood you have a greasy-grimy, blown-broken motor, you don't have much.

A girl may be a "knock out" with unblemished external beauty, but if in her heart purity is absent, she is nothing more than an empty shell, vain veneer, hollow plastic.

This mighty statement of Jesus in verse 8 was a rebuke to the mere outward, superficial, hypocritical religion of the Scribes and Pharisees.

The call to "purity in heart" perfectly conforms to the theme of the Sermon on the Mount - namely: "True Righteousness" (Mt. 5:20).

"Blessed" = to be fortunate, well off, in a state of divine favor.

"Heart" = kardia (Eng. cardiac, etc.) - "the chief organ of physical life ("for the life of the flesh is in the blood - Lev. 17:11), occupies the most important place in the human system. By an easy transition, the word came to stand for man's entire mental and moral activity, both the rational and the emotional elements. In other words, the heart is used figuratively for the hidden springs of the personal life." (Vine, p. 206-207).

"The heart is the center of the inner life of the person where all the spiritual forces and functions have their origin" (TDNT)

Our heart (kardia) is that inner aspect of man that **<u>thinks</u>** (Lk. 9:47), **<u>reasons</u>** (Mk. 2:6, 8), **<u>ponders</u>** (Lk. 2:19), **<u>imagines</u>** (Lk. 1:51), **<u>remembers</u>** (Lk. 1:66), **<u>purposes</u>** (II Cor. 9:7), **<u>wonders</u>** (Lk. 3:15), **<u>determines</u>** (Lk. 21:14), **<u>questions</u>** (Lk. 24:38), **<u>believes</u>** (Lk. 24:25; Acts 8:37; Ro. 10:9, 10), and **<u>motivates</u>** (Mk. 7:21).

The heart encompasses man's intellect (Mt. 13:15; Prov. 23:7); emotion (Jn. 16:22), and will (Ro. 6:17, Col. 3:15). It enables him to think, feel, and do.

The heart is your "hidden man" (I Pet. 3:4); the real you that lies deep beneath that part of you that everyone sees.

"Pure" = katharos (i.e. Katherine) to be clean

The phrase "pure in heart" has great significance!

It shows that:

--Internals are more important than externals (EX: the Pharisees of Jesus day majored on the externals (Mt. 23:25-28)

--What you think does matter to God

--True happiness is being cleansed from sin ("blessed. . .")

Jesus' statement shows that not everyone's heart is pure (clean).

By nature, our hearts are depraved. Such depravity is evidenced by sin.

Because of the inner, deep-rootedness of our hearts, we often do not even know our hearts (Jer. 17:9).

"There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness" (Prov. 30:12).

"The problem that caused God to destroy the earth in the flood was a heart problem" (MacArthur, p. 202). (Gen. 6:5 - *"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.")*

The signs of "heart disease" are revealed by the Great Physician in Mark 7:21-22.

One's fruit is an indication of one's heart (Lk. 6:45 - *"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh").*

--Religion is no substitute for being pure in heart.

--Knowing Bible facts is no substitute for being pure in heart.

Living in a "glass bubble" (in isolation from the "rif-raf" of society) is no substitute for a pure heart (Monasticism does not eradicate our problem).

What is a pure heart?

1. It is a sincere heart

   I Pet. 1:22 - *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently"*

   The word "pure" (katharos) was a Greek term "often used of metals that had been refined until all impurities were removed, leaving only the pure metal. In that sense, purity means unmixed, unalloyed, unadulterated" (MacArthur, p. 204)

2. It is a righteous heart

   God's standard for purity of heart is perfection of heart (Mt. 5:48).

   100% purity is God's standard (MacArthur, p. 205). Such a standard can only be met if God gives us a heart transplant!

Being pure in heart is the opposite of:

--Lustful thoughts (Mt. 5:28 - *"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart")*

--Materialistic thoughts (Mt. 6:21 - *"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also")*

We need a pure heart in order to truly love *(I Tim. 1:5 - "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned") (Cp. I Pet. 1:22 - "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently")*

We need a pure heart in order to truly call on God (II Tim. 2:22 - *"Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.")*

Our only means of cleansing is Christ's blood shed on Calvary (I Jn. 1:7 - *"the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin")*

ILLUS: the hymn - "There is a Fountain" - "Sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains"

God purifies people's hearts by faith (Acts 15:9) after He opens their heart (Acts 16:14).

The Holy Spirit resides in the "heart" of the believer (II Cor. 1:22; Gal. 4:6) and makes an indelible impression on our hearts (II Cor. 3:3).

"They shall see God" - Such a promise is eschatological (future). No one living sees God now!

"Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face" (I Cor. 13:12).

"Whom having not seen ye love" (I Pet. 1:8).

"And they shall see his face" (Rev. 22:4).

Now, the pure in heart see God through eyes of faith (I Cor. 13:12; Heb. 11:27), but throughout eternity, the pure in heart will see God literally (I Jn. 3:12 - *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.")*

(Psalm 17:15 - "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.")

"They shall <u>see God</u>" - A promise of entering His holy presence and viewing His splendor and glory forever (SEE: Ps. 24:3-4)

Absolute pure if heart is the prerequisite for seeing God.
REASON: He is holy (Is. 6)

VI. Blessed are those who <u>SEEK TO RECONCILE man to GOD and men to MEN</u>

("Blessed are the peacemakers. . ." v. 9)

"Scripture contains over 400 references to peace. . . The Bible opens with peace in the Garden of eden and closes with peace in eternity" (MacArthur, p. 209)

I saw a bumper sticker yesterday which said: "Imagine world peace"

There will be no true world peace until the prince of peace comes to establish it.

Man's nature since the fall has been opposed to peace (EX: Cain killed Abel).

Because man is basically selfish, conflict generally occurs whenever someone else gets in the way of what we want.

". . . the popular philosophy of the world, bolstered by the teachings of many psychologists and counselors, is to be put self first. But when self is first, peace is last." (MacArthur, p. 210)

Our natural, unregenerate proneness is toward war not peace; conflict not

cooperation; violence not serenity; antagonism not unity; racial discrimination not social harmony; bloodshed not protection of life; hate not love.

The opposite of peace is turmoil, discord, confusion, fighting, and war.

Despite the clamor for peace (as evidenced by marches, rallies, protests, demonstrations, and riots), our society really is opposed to true peace.

Our society exalts violence and war. "The model man is not meek but macho. The model hero is not self-giving but self-seeking, not generous but selfish, not gentle but cruel, not submissive but aggressive, not meek but proud."

If you don't believe that man's natural tendency is bent toward violence, then ask why TV and the movies have so much blood and gore. People pay big money to go to a professional boxing match for the sheer enjoyment of seeing two men attempt to knock the brain out of each other. The main attraction of hockey games has become the brawls and fights.

Because so often our world is characterized by fighting and unloading ammunition at others in a vain quest for sovereignty (power), the scarcity of peace has prompted someone to suggest that "peace is that glorious moment in history when everyone stops to reload" (cited by MacArthur, p. 209).

In a fallen world where tempers flare easily, where selfish ambition quickly becomes the driving force, where many live looking for a fight, anyone can make war (fight). It takes a <u>real man</u> to make peace.

"Peacemaker" = eirene - peace; poieo - to make

"Peace<u>maker</u>" - Note: Jesus is <u>not</u> saying: "Blessed are the peace<u>ful</u>"

To be peaceful is not always virtuous, if it is a non-confrontational, passive attitude that never seeks to correct, confront error, expose evil, or lovingly rebuke a straying brother.

Some people are so "peaceful" that they never say anything or do anything that might cause waves or stir up things.

Such passivity was not characteristic of our Lord Jesus, nor is it expected of us. We will cause waves when we beam as light, sting as salt (v. 13-16).

To be a "peacemaker" is simply to be a maker of peace; someone who does more than talk about peace, someone who does more than promote peace; rather, he produces peace.

A peacemaker is a "bridge-builder" - he himself acts as a mediator as he stands in between the two people at odds with each other, stretching out his hands as it were and grasping both parties and pulling them together.

A story is told of a couple at a divorce hearing who were arguing back and forth before the judge, accusing each other and refusing to take any blame themselves. Their little four-year-old boy was terribly distressed and confused. Not knowing what else to do, he took his father's hand and his mother's hand and kept tugging until he finally pulled the hands of his parents together (cited by MacArthur, p. 213).

A "peacemaker" is one who realizes that some fellow Christian is struggling and is at war with God's will, but because he is controlled by the spirit of God he says just the right words, at the right time, in the right way, and restores the erring brother.

A "peacemaker" knows about a marriage that is going to fall apart, and rather than passively doing nothing, he prays fervently for the husband and wife, then does all that he can to mend the problem.

A "peacemaker" sees a brother get bitter against another and seeks to replace the bitter attitude with a sweet one.

A "peacemaker" senses disunity among the brethren and seeks to unite them around Christ and His cause.

Being a "peacemaker" requires involvement, work, concern, spiritual diplomacy (divine wisdom).

A Godly peacemaker does not pursue peace at the expense of purity! He will not compromise convictions to maintain or restore peace. "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable..." (James 3:17)

NOTE: In the Beatitude context, purity in heart precedes being a peacemaker (cp. Spurgeon, Morning and Evening, p. 155)

Peace cannot be divorced from holiness. "Righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. 85:10)

Peace cannot co-exist with wickedness. "There is no peace for the wicked, says the Lord" (Is. 48:22)

A "peacemaker" does not believe in "peace at any price" nor protecting the "status quo" if it is sinful.

A true peacemaker: confronts problems and seeks to solve them.

*Follow God's principles for peacemakers:

How can you become a "peacemaker"?

1) You must belong to the Maker of peace

True peace with others begins with peace toward God

(II Cor. 5:18-20)

You can't give what you don't have.

"God is not the author of confusion but of peace."

Being a "peacemaker" is a very noble occupation.

Peacemakers are truly Godly people - Reason: They take after their Heavenly Father, who is called, "The God of peace" (Rom. 15:33; II Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9).

Because God gave His Son, you can now have peace with God (ILLUS: Peace Child by Don Richardson, cited by MacArthur, p. 213-214)

2) You need to love God and others

"Speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15)

Rom. 14:19 - "Follow after the things which make for peace

Eph. 4:3 - "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace"

Heb. 12:14 - "Follow peace with all men"

3) You must be <u>righteous</u> (you can't sincerely call people to righteousness if you are not)

Basically, if you fulfill the first 5 beatitudes, you qualify for # 6

4) You need <u>courage to get involved</u>

(Willing to confront, not avoid all conflicts)

Beatitude # 7 (persecution) is sometimes the result as you are misunderstood and your work is misinterpreted.

We must follow matthew 18:15-17.

"If it be possible. . . live peaceably with all men" (Ro. 12:18).

It is not always possible (Mt. 10:34; cp. Lk. 12:51). "I came not to send peace, but a sword."

5) Depend upon God for <u>wisdom</u>

Only those who "make peace" will produce righteous fruit

SEE: James 3:13 - 18

Ja. 3:18 - "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

This verse means that the fruit that righteousness produces can only be sown by peacemakers.

"Sown in peace" - the manner in which we speak is just as important as the message we speak.

"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Prov. 15:1)

Col. 4:5-6 - "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

Eph. 4:2-3 - "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

"Right relationships are the soil in which the reward of righteousness alone can grow. . . nothing good can ever grow in an atmosphere where men are at variance with each other" (Barclay, James, p. 62)

The best peacemaker is the Godly mother, who resolves her children's daily quarrels.

--She hears both sides of the story

--She encourages them to admit wrong

--She encourages them to ask God's forgiveness

--She encourages them to ask the person they wronged for forgiveness and make restitution if needed.

You cannot be carnal and be a peacemaker. Carnal people tend to be factious, divisive, clichish (EX: the church of Corinth - I Cor. 1).

"They shall be called the children of God" - The blessing of being a peacemaker is the impression you will make on the watching world. They will know you are different, that you belong to God, by the peace that you make between the brethren.

A peacemaker realizes that when God's people are unjustifiably at odds with each other, they are destroying the work of Christ and the testimony of Christ.

My whole life as a Christian and pastor is to be a "peacemaker."

--To see the lost gain peace with God (Rom. 5:1)

--To see the saved know the peace of God (Phil. 4:7)

--To see those who are at odds with each other gain peace with each other.

The future ministry of Elijah (like that of John the Baptist 0 Lk. 1:17) will be to "turn the heart of the father to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (Mal. 4:6)

We need people who are. . .

--Christian "firemen" - they don't start fires, they put them out

--Christian "architects" - they don't plan evil schemes, but plan for God-honoring interpersonal relationships

--Christian "carpenters" - they don't tear apart relationships but build them.

The hymnwriter said it best:

"Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace!
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy. . ."

VIII. Blessed are those who are TREATED WRONG BECAUSE THEY DO RIGHT

("Blessed are they which are persecuted. . ." v. 10)

INTRODUCTION: Verse 10

A. The REAL REASON for Persecution (v. 10-11)

(*Be aware* of why you will be treated wrong)

1. ***"For righteousness sake"*** *(v. 10)*
2. ***"For My*** *[Jesus]* ***sake"*** *(v. 11)*

B. The VARIED TYPES of Persecution (v. 11)

(*Be ready* for different kinds of oppression)

1. ***You may be the object of insult***
2. ***You may be the object of injury***
3. ***You may be the object of lies***

C. The OPTIMISTIC ATTITUDE of the Persecuted (v. 12)

(*Be joyful*, not discouraged)

1. ***"Rejoice!"***
2. ***"Be exceeding glad!"***

D. The END RESULT for the Persecuted
(*Be expectant* because something great is in store for you)

1. An Eternal Kingdom *(v. 10)*

2. A Great Reward *(v. 12)*

E. The SWEET CONSOLATION for the Persecuted (v. 12b)
(*Be encouraged* because you are not alone)

CONCLUSION:

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INTRODUCTION: Verse 10

"Some years ago a popular national magazine took a survey to determine the things that make people happy. According to the responses they received, happy people enjoy other people but are not self-sacrificing; they refuse to participate in any <u>negative feelings</u> or <u>emotions</u>" (MacArthur, p. 219)

V. 11

"When" - not "if" It is unavoidable.

Many would say: But it's not fair; it's not just! Did God always promise us fair and just treatment by the world?

"Blessed are <u>ye</u>" - Jesus moves from third person, to now second person, to specifically

apply truths to his disciples. This applies to you and me.

A. The REAL REASON for Persecution (v. 10-11)

(*Be aware* of why you will be treated wrong)

1. "For righteousness sake" (v. 10)

"For righteousness sake" - because you do right (justly)

There is no blessing in being persecuted if you did wrong and are getting what you deserve (I Pet. 4:15 - "But let non of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.")

Two basic reasons why those who live righteously would be opposed:

a. Righteousness is a rebuke to unrighteousness

The reason people would persecute the righteous is because their righteousness is a rebuke to their unrighteousness.

Doing good is a rebuke to their doing bad.
Holiness is a rebuke to impurity.
Honesty is a rebuke to lying, fraud, and theft
Light is a rebuke to darkness.

Lost men, in an effort to extinguish the light that exposes their darkness, strike out at the light.

Do you ever wonder why when you seek to help some people, they get angry? EX: Acts 7)

It is because you have struck a tender nerve. You have hit a sore spot; you have opened a closet; you have exposed a secret. You have uncovered the truth; often the truth hurts.

Righteousness by its very nature is confrontational; it cuts across the grain of the world.

Godliness will generate antagonism, hot emotions, and hostility from the world. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33)

EX: Savanarola (MacArthur, p. 221)

b. Satan hates righteousness

We have an adversary (I Pet. 5:8) who wants to keep men blind to the truth (II Cor. 4:4), so he incites lost men (who are at his disposal) to stir up opposition to the truth in order to turn men away from the truth (EX: Elymas the Sorcerer - Acts 13:8, 10) (EX: The masters who exploited a demon-possessed girl - Acts 16:19-20) (EX: The unbelieving Jews - Acts 17:5) (EX: The Ephesian craftsmen - Acts 19:27-29)

Persecution is an earmark of Godly living (II Tim. 3:12 - "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.")

It is an inevitable "gift" (Phil. 1:29 - "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake")

ILLUS: The Secret Christian (MacArthur, p. 220)

2. **"For My** [Jesus] **sake"** (v. 11)

"For my sake" - to be persecuted for Jesus' sake is synonymous with being persecuted for righteousness sake, because he is righteousness personified.

If they persecuted the Master (Christ), they will persecute His servants (Christians) (Jn. 15:18-21)

Because of opposition, many who have a shallow profession of Christ fall away when the pressure is on (Mt. 13:20-21 - "But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while:

for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended")

For fear of persecution, many deny Christ (often by default)

EX: Peter

Mt. 10:33 - "But whosoever will deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

"When we are hated, maligned, or afflicted as Christians, the real animosity is not against us but against Christ. Satan's great enemy is Christ, and he opposes us because we belong to Jesus Christ, because He is in us" (MacArthur, p. 228)

EX: Rome's persecution of Christians (MacArthur, p. 223-224)

Persecution may often come from those closest to us - family (Mt. 10:34-39; Lk. 12:52-53)

B. The VARIED TYPES of Persecution (v. 11)

(*Be ready* for different kinds of oppression)

1. You may be the object of insult

"Revile" - to reproach; to insult; to mock and ridicule (EX: "Virgin Vinny"; "The Preaching Printer")

"Bible-banger" "Funny-mental-ist" etc.

EX: How Jesus was insulted (Mt. 26:67-68; Mk. 15:19-20)

2. You may be the object of injury

"Persecuted" - to pursue after; to hunt down

Like a dog would hunt a pheasant or rabbit; like a hunter would pursue and lie in wait for a deer.

The most intense opposition that Christians will ever face will come from the Antichrist in the Tribulation.

How will we overcome?

1) By a confidence in God's Word (Rev. 12:11)

2) By a sacrifice of self (Rev. 12:11b)

Our awareness of the eternal doom of those who receive the mark of the Beast will prevent us from receiving it (Rev. 14:9-13)

3. You may be the object of lies

"All manner" - all sorts of; every kind of; vicious words come in a wide variety.

"Evil" - to accuse of wickedness and sin

"Falsely" - the lost will lie and hypocritically seek to defame a Christian and ruin his testimony.

Don't give Satan any ammunition! (Titus 2:5, 8, 10)

Jesus was lie about; accused of being "gluttonous and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners" (mt. 11:19)

C. The OPTIMISTIC ATTITUDE of the Persecuted (v. 12)
(*Be joyful*, not discouraged)

1. "Rejoice!"

"Rejoice" - our response of faith (James 1:2)

2. "Be exceeding glad!"

"Be glad" - like Peter and John who rejoiced at the privilege to suffer for Jesus (Acts 5:41) and like Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25).

How does gladness come? Suffering for Jesus is a confirmation to us that we are saved (I Pet. 4:14 - "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified")

D. The END RESULT for the Persecuted
(*Be expectant* because something great is in store for you)

1. An Eternal Kingdom *(v. 10)*

"Theirs is the kingdom of Heaven" - Jesus ends the Beatitudes with the same blessing He promised when He began (v. 3)

To suffer now is nothing by contrast with the glory later (Rom. 8:18 - "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us")

If you are opposed for righteousness, keep you head up and your eyes on eternity. And realize that what they say is not true and it does not alter your destiny (SEE: Isaiah 51:6-8)

2. A Great Reward *(v. 12)*

"Great is your reward" - Much is your payback

A "Crown of life" is what Jesus promised to the suffering church at Smyrna (Rev. 2:10-11)

ILLUS: John Chrysostom (MacArthur, p. 232-33)

E. The <u>SWEET CONSOLATION</u> for the Persecuted (v. 12b)
(*<u>Be encouraged</u>* because you are not alone)

God does not call his people to be "sanctified celebrities" but often to be suffering martyrs.

The prophets from <u>A</u> to <u>Z</u> (Abel to Zecharias) were persecuted (Mt. 23:37)

When you are persecuted for righteousness sake, you are stepping into the shoes of great men of the past (II Chron. 36:16 - "But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.")

We enter the ranks of men like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; Jeremiah; Michaiah (I Ki. 22:8, 14, 24, 26-27), Paul; Stephen; John, etc. (SEE: Heb. 11:36-38)

CONCLUSION:

SEE: I Peter 4:12-16

CONCLUSION:

"God knoweth your hearts" (Lk. 16:15)

God will expose what is really on the inside of men's hearts (I Cor. 4:5 - *"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts; and then each one's praise will come from God" NKJV)*

What lost sinners need is a spiritual heart transplant (Ezek. 36:25-26)

Rather than patching your exterior to hide the interior, why not ask God to create in you a clean heart? (Ps. 51:10).

We should spend more time on being what we ought to be, rather than hiding what we are."

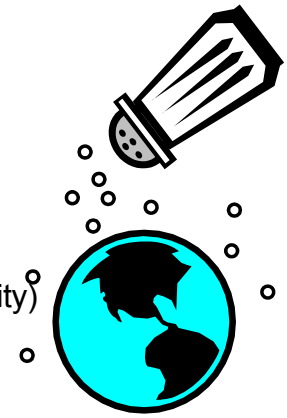
Applic. for Christian - Just as one would remove dirt, filth, and contamination from a glass or drinking container before filling it and drinking out of it, so God must purify a heart before He can fill it or use it.

"Be Salt! Be Light!"

Matthew 5:13-16
3/19/2017

INTRODUCTION:

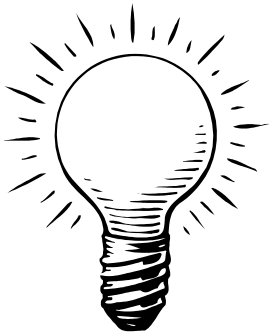
***Make an impact on this world! BE SALT! BE LIGHT!**



How?

I. **Don't lose your <u>savor</u>!**
(The world needs to <u>taste</u> the <u>distinctiveness</u> of Christianity)

II. **Don't hide your <u>light</u>!**
(The world needs to <u>see</u> the <u>brilliancy</u> of Christianity)



CONCLUSION:

"Be Salt! Be Light!"

Matthew 5:13-16

3/19/2017

INTRODUCTION:

At the moment of salvation, God delivers us out of the domain of darkness, and transfers us into the Kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1:13). We become children of light (Eph. 5:8).

"By definition, an influence must be <u>different</u> from that which it influences" (MacArthur, p. 240).

Those who are worldly cannot influence the world.

God saved us to be different. I Peter 2:9 - "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light"

We are <u>not</u> to <u>reflect</u> the world (I Jn. 2:15) but to <u>impact</u> it!!

Jesus prayed: "I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. . . as Thou didst send me into the world, I also have sent them into the world" (Jn. 17:15-16, 18)

What kind of <u>influence</u> will you be in this world?

"No human being can come into this world without increasing or diminishing the sum total of human happiness, not only of the present but of every subsequent age of humanity. No one can detach himself from this connection. There is no sequestered spot in the universe, no dark niche along the disc of nonexistence to which he can retreat from his relations with others, where he can withdraw the influence of his existence upon the moral destiny of the world. Everywhere his presence or absence will be felt. Everywhere he will have companions who will be better or worse because of him. It is an old saying, and one of the fearful and fathomless statements of import, that we are forming characters for eternity. Forming characters? Whose? Our own or others? Both." (Elihu Burrit, cited by MacArthur, p. 236)

"Ye" - Plural. <u>Every</u> disciple of Christ is to be salt and light.

By stating that we are salt and light in the world, Jesus implies that the world needs salt and light.

"The world needs salt because it is corrupt and it needs light because it is dark" (MacArthur, p. 237)

"The Biblical world view is that the world is corrupted and decayed, that it is dark and darkening" (MacArthur, p. 237)

"Evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived" (II Tim. 3:13)

"A college student once reported that his professor told the class that marriage was on the decline because man was evolving to a higher level. Marriage was something that man needed only at the lower stages of his evolutionary development. Now that man had ascended farther up the evolutionary scale, marriage was falling off just as his prehensile tail had done millions of years ago" (MacArthur, p. 238)

It is significant that believers are called "salt" and "light" after the admonition regarding "persecution for righteousness sake" (V. 10-12).

Because of the distinctiveness of "salt and light," because salt stings and light exposes the darkness, persecution will often accompany such a lifestyle which is a rebuke to unrighteousness.

***Make an impact on this world!**

How?

I. Don't lose your savor!
(The world needs to taste the distinctiveness of Christianity)

Mark 9:50 - "Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another."

Being "salt" means being 100% for Jesus and 100% against that which displeases Jesus (SEE: Lk. 14:33-35).

Salt creates a:

preserving effect - Salt preserves that which is prone toward decay and ruin.

seasoning effect - Salt adds a desirable flavor so as to induce others to want what we have

thirsting effect - Salt makes thirsty those who are not saved.

"Have lost his savor" (morantha) - lit. to play the fool, to become foolish, of salt - to become tasteless, insipid (Robertson)

Don't be a "bland" Christian! Have "spice" in your lifestyle! Godly spice!

If salt loses its distinctive saline flavor; if it loses its sharp, tart useful taste, what good is it?

What can put a salty savor back into a grain of salt that has lost it? Nothing! By what can it become salty again? Nothing!

"It is . . . good for nothing" - tasteless salt is useless!

A Christian who loses his/her distinctive, sharp, pure, invigorating savor is useless to God! Satan would love for you to lose your effectiveness, usefulness, and fruitfulness. His goal is to use his people (unbelievers) to dilute or eradicate the pungency of God's people so that they become rubble under the shoes of the world.

In ancient days when salt was found to be contaminated "it would not be thrown on a garden or field because it would kill whatever was planted. Instead it would be thrown onto a path or road, where it would be gradually ground into the dirt and disappear" (MacArthur, p. 245).

"Cast out" - thrown out into the street.

It is a fearful thing for a Christian who loves God to become a "castaway" (rendered unusable for God). Paul feared being a castaway (I Cor. 9:27) - not meaning that he feared being rejected by God, but rendered disqualified (unusable) by God.

Don't throw away that which makes you distinct in this world!

Don't throw away your:

--moral purity
--integrity
--righteousness
--distinctive fruits (Gal. 5:22)

Don't let anyone or anything rob your saltiness! Don't let your life become tasteless, blah, lukewarm, common, etc.

Sin de-savors salt!

II. Don't hide your light!

(The world needs to see the brilliancy of Christianity)

Just as the moon has no light of itself but is a reflector of the sun, so the Christian has no light of himself, but is a reflector of the Son of God.

Jesus is the Light. SEE: John 1:4-9
John 8:12
John 12:35-36a
II Cor. 4:3-7
Ephes. 5:6-14

The light that we have does not originate with us!

If it did, we would get the glory and not God! (v. 16)

Just as NYC depends upon Con Edison, we depend upon God to give us light!

A Christian who unashamedly shines on the mountain peaks of life cannot be hid.

ILLUS: Children's hymn - "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. . . Let it shine all over New York. . . Won't let Satan blow it out. . . Let it shine till Jesus comes. . . Hide it under a bushel -- No!"

"A hidden light is still light, but it is useless light"

What the world needs is more light! Not more candles! Our city has plenty of candles (Christians), the problem is that not too many are lit in public!

"Earth. . . world" - so that we would not miss the point Jesus uses two terms synonymously. Christians must not merely be "salt" and "light" when they congregate, but must be so before the eyes of the unregenerate lost world of mankind.

"Earth...world" - we can only influence earth, not heaven! Now not later!

The salt must "get out of the salt shaker"

The light must shine where it is needed most - in the darkness.

ILLUS:s See: Humorous illustration depicting the Christian's avoidance of the lost.

Jesus didn't save you so that you could be a secret Christian or an undercover believer. Don't conceal your identity. Don't be ashamed. The only thing we should be ashamed of is sin!

"Candlestick" - lampstand

"It giveth light" - that is its purpose! What is your purpose?

"unto all" - in a dark house, all benefit from the light.

Light reflects
Light exposes
Light guides

"So shine" - to shine in this way

"Before men" - Balance this statement with Matthew 6:1-6. There is a sense in which we do good works to be seen of men.k

Our goal is not to be seen by men, but the result of doing good for men will be that you are seen by them.

"See your good works" - The Christian life is not mere talk that can be heard but it is work that can be seen!

"Works" - plural; God desires more than Easter morning Christians.

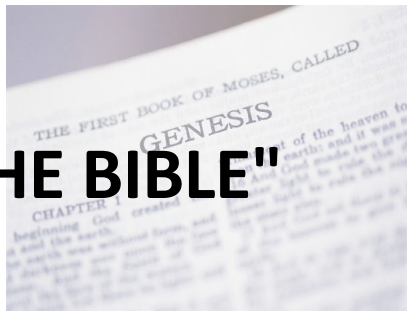
"Glorify" - to cause to shine or glow. Does your life cause men to praise and esteem God?

CONCLUSION:

ILLUS: Robert Murray McChayne's influence on others (MacArthur, p. 247)

Why do not some professing Christians shine? They have no light to reflect (never have been saved)

Christians are to leave behind "the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Christ in everyplace. . ." (II Cor. 2:14)



"JESUS UPHOLDS THE BIBLE"

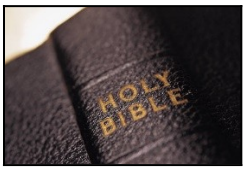
Matthew 5:17-20
3-26-2017

INTRODUCTION:

To be serious about Jesus is to be serious about the Bible - for Jesus upheld the Scripture as the permanent, relevant, and absolute authority.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ taught two vital truths about the Scriptures:

I. ALL of God's Word WILL BE FULFILLED (17-18)



There are 2 aspects to Christ's fulfillment of the O.T. -

1. He "fulfilled all righteousness" (Mt. 3:15) [precept]

2. He fulfilled and will fulfill all promises and predictions [prophecy]

II. All of God's Word IS IMPORTANT (v. 19-20)


CHAPTER 1
IN the beginning God created
heaven and the earth.
2 And the earth was without form,
void; and darkness was upon the
of the deep. And the Spirit of
moved upon the face of the water
3 And God said, Let there be lig

"JESUS UPHOLDS THE BIBLE"

Matthew 5:17-20
3-26-2017

INTRODUCTION:

SING Psalm 19:7-11

Quote - Harold J. Berman, professor of law at Harvard (SEE: MacArthur, p. 249-250)

Everyone has a point of reference or a basis upon which ideals are founded. Everyone who espouses a principle or idea supports it by some type of authority or backing.

Some people's belief system (world view) is based upon what:

--The parents said [what their parents held as true]

--The teacher said [what their teacher told them (Harvard, Columbia, Yale)]

--The philosopher said [what the famous philosopher thought (Plato, Socrates)]

--The society said [what the society accepted]

--The media said [what the newspapers, TV, radio, and magazines presented]

--Their religion [what their particular religion espouses]

--They think [they are their own authority)

I choose to base my world view and beliefs on what GOD has said in His trustworthy Word.

All of our Christian beliefs are based on the Bible
"The Bible is our only rule for faith and practice"

Can God produce a Book so that people might know who He is, what He has done, what He is doing, and what He will yet do?

2 Tim. 3:16
All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Definition of Inspiration: ***Inspiration describes the unique process of the Holy Spirit in which He controlled and directed the hearts, minds, and wills of chosen men as they wrote exactly and totally what God wanted, so that the original manuscript was without error or omission.***

False Views of Inspiration:

1. Liberal view - the Bible is not inspired by God.

They would say:
"The Bible is only a remarkable human book - authored by men."

*The term used to describe this view would be "Natural Inspiration." The Bible was produced by religious men who followed their intuition in collecting and piecing together good religious statements.

They would say: "The Bible is `inspired' in the same sense as Shakespeare's writings or Beethoven's music."

2. Neo-Orthodox view - the Bible can become inspired by God.

They would say:
"When the Scriptures speak to an individual, it becomes the Word of God to him at that point."

*The term used to describe this view would be "Potential Inspiration."

Carl Barth, the father of neo-orthodoxy, believed that the Bible uniquely reveals God to man--not in propositions about God, but as a means of personal encounter by God with man in an act of revelation. In this existential experience--crisis encounter--the meaningless ink blots on the pages leap from the Bible to speak to man concretely and meaningfully. At this "moment of meaning" the Bible becomes the Word of God to the individual. (Geisler & Nix, p. 40).

3. New-Evangelical view - the Bible is partially inspired by God.

NOTE: Not all new-evangelicals deny the Biblical doctrine of inspiration, but many do.

*The term used to describe this view would be "Partial Inspiration."

This view has many varieties:

a. **Illumination theory** - God gave illumination (insight or an intensified religious perception) to the writers of Scripture so that at certain points of their writing, they wrote God's Word (what points? No one knows).

b. **Demythologizing theory** - God inspired the truths found in the Bible. They say that the true Bible is found by removing the cultural myths (EX: miracles) (Bultmann).

c. **Concept theory** - God inspired the ideas, thoughts, or concepts but not the words.
Each writer was free to record it in his own words. The Spirit did not guide him in his choice of words.

d. **Essential portion theory** - God inspired only portions of Scripture which describe salvation. This view, also held by the Roman Catholic church, says that the Bible is without error in matters central to the Bible, but has errors in "peripheral matter."

Biblical View of Inspiration

2 Tim. 3:16
All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

1. **Definition of Inspiration:** ***Inspiration describes the unique process of the Holy Spirit in which He controlled and directed the hearts, minds, and wills of chosen men as they wrote exactly and totally what God wanted, so that the original manuscript was without error or omission.***

2. **A Breakdown of this Definition:**

--Inspiration was the unique process of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:26).

--The Holy Spirit controlled and directed the hearts, minds, and wills of chosen men (II Peter 1:20-21).

--Chosen men wrote exactly and totally what God wanted (II Tim. 3:16).

--The result was that the original manuscript was without error or omission (Mt. 5:17-18; Jn. 10:35).

Even though Scripture came from the very mouth of God, He in His wisdom used the instrumentality of men. God, in using men, controlled and directed them, not stifling their own personalities or using them as machines or robots but as conscious, sober instruments.

On the one hand, while it can be said that man had nothing to do with the production of Scripture (he was passive), on the other hand, he did have an active part in its production.

This is a paradox.

[NOTE: However, man's part was also controlled by God - what occurred was "passive activity," in which God so worked in the writers that He gave them the will and the ability to write what He wanted (cp. Phil. 2:12-13).]

Throughout the entire life of a prophet or apostle, God's providential control prepared him with the particular talents, education, and experience which would be needed for the message which he was to give orally or by writing (Boettner, p. 24).

--God used the extensive education and patience of Moses to write the Pentateuch.

--God made use of the worshipful tender heart of David to write most of the Psalms.

--God employed the wisdom of Solomon to write Proverbs.

--God utilized the heavy heart of Jeremiah to write Lamentations.

--God applied the loving heart of John to write the Gospel and Epistles of love that bear his name.

--God exercised the detailed thinking of Dr. Luke to write Luke and Acts.

--God put into service the logical mind and appropriate religious background of Paul to write Romans and his other deep epistles.

[Remember, however, that it was God who equipped these men with the qualifications and personalities which they had.]

"God is One who in His infinite power can use as His agents and instruments fallible human beings, who can bring into His employ all the gifts, talents, and characteristics of those human beings, and yet can cause them to pen His own Word, and keep that Word utterly separate and distinct from their own sinful nature and the consequent imperfections which are the result of that nature" (Young, Thy Word is Truth, p. 74).

No one can believe that Jesus spoke the truth who denies that the Scriptures are the truth, because Jesus said they were. He defended the Scriptures and affirmed their authority.

Christ's Declaration of Inspiration

1. **Christ accepted the Old Testament as fully authoritative (Lk. 24:44; Mt. 5:18; Lk. 16:31).**

Luke 24:44

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

Luke 16:31

And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

2. **Christ stated that the Scriptures cannot be broken (Jn. 10:35).**

John 10:35

"...the scripture cannot be broken"

3. **Christ regarded prophecies of Scripture as being certain of fulfillment (Mt. 24:15).**

Matthew 24:15

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

4. **Christ stated that His own words possessed absolute <u>authority</u> (Mt. 24:35; cp. Mt. 7:29).**

Matthew 24:35
Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.
Matthew 7:29
For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

5. **Christ <u>pre-authenticated</u> the words of His apostles as being the authoritative, trustworthy words of God (Jn. 17:20).**

John 17:20
Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

He is either Liar (He knew the Scriptures were not absolute truth, but said they were)
Lunatic (He thought the Scripture were absolute truth, but was mistaken) or
Lord (He knew the Scripture were absolute truth (by virtue of Who He was) and boldly stated it)

To be serious about Jesus is to be serious about the Bible - for Jesus upheld the Scripture as the permanent, relevant, and absolute authority.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ taught two vital truths about the Scriptures:

I. ALL of God's Word WILL BE FULFILLED (v. 17-18)

V. 17

"Think not that I am come to destroy the Law" - Jesus, before explaining the O.T. Law and its true meaning, qualifies what He is about to say so as to let everyone know that He was not against the O.T. but 100% for it.

You see, Christ's teachings were radically different (superior) to that of the Scribes and Pharisees. When His message would be compared with that of the religious leaders of the day, the distinctiveness (uniqueness) of Christ's emphasis and application might lead some to the wrong conclusion that He was against Moses and the Prophets.

The repeated phrase "Ye have heard..." followed by "But I say unto you" (v. 21-22, 27-28, 31-32, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44) might lead the spiritually illiterate to err in thinking that Christ was opposed to O.T. teaching, when in fact He is for it -- He authored it!

"Destroy" - to abolish, do away with, tear down, annul.

Christ's purpose was definitely not to eradicate the Law (the Pentateuch and the O.T. historical books) and the Prophets, but to show the true meaning of them; i.e. to divinely interpret the O.T.

Jesus had all authority on the matter of interpreting the O.T. because He was the Author of the O.T. ("In the beginning was the Word" - Jn. 1:1), the Theme of the O.T. ("He [Moses] wrote of Me"], and (as He says in this verse) the Fulfillment of the O.T.!

"I came to fulfill" - My purpose in coming to this earth (a hint at Christ's pre-existence) was to fulfill the Law and prophets (i.e. the entire O.T.).

"To fulfill" means to accomplish or carry out. Christ in every way did what the O.T. required in the matter of righteousness and prophetic fulfillment.

There are 2 aspects to Christ's fulfillment of the O.T. -

1. He "fulfilled all righteousness" (Mt. 3:15) [precept]

2. He fulfilled and will fulfill all promises and predictions [prophecy]

1. Christ fulfilled all of the precepts of the O.T.

--He was sinlessly perfect!
--He was morally impeccable
--He was in absolute conformity to the O.T. in every jot and tittle
--He could never be accused of violation of truth or transgression of principle

Jesus could boldly ask and challenge the entire world with this question, "Which of you convinced me of sin?"

Heb. 4:15 - He was "without sin"

Heb. 7:26 - He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens"

II Peter 2:22 - He "did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (cp. Is. 53:9)

Jesus was the only one who could point out sin in the lives of others without a finger of accusation being pointed back at Him. He was the only one who could rebuke hypocrisy, lawlessness, disobedience, and lies without a guilty smitten conscience

2. Christ fulfilled and will fulfill all of the prophecies of the O.T.

--All prophetic types and foreshadowings (Ex. the sacrificial system)
--All prophetic details of His incarnation, life and ministry
--All prophetic promises of His second coming and eternal rule

Matthew's Gospel (the theme of which is to validate Jesus as the King of the Jews, the promised Messiah) continually records the phrase "That it might be fulfilled" (EX: 26:56)

V. 18
In verse 18, Jesus is teaching that the Bible is a permanent, relevant Book, not ever outdated, always authoritative and applicable.

"Verily" - truly, absolutely, affirmatively, certainly. The Greek word (aman) is a transliteration of the Hebrew "aman" which was used to strengthen or confirm a statement or promise.

"Jesus did not use the word to apply to others but to introduce is own words. This gives strength and authority to what He says" (Linguistic Key, p. 13).

Everything Jesus said was true and authoritive, but He uses the word "truly" to emphasize the absolute trustworthiness of what He is about to say.

"Till heaven and earth pass" - Until the time when this present kosmos goes away.
Heaven and earth will be removed and replaced after the Millennium (Rev. 20:11 - "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them"; Rev. 21:1 - "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.")

God's Word will be fulfilled right up until the end of time.

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Mt. 24:35).

"Jot" - Greek iota from the Hebrew yod . This word refers to the smallest Hebrew letter - י (SEE: Ps. 119:73 for an example)

"Tittle" - meaning "horn, projection, or hook as a part of a letter" (BAG). The tittle refers to a part of a letter that distinguishes that letter from another one.

A pen stroke. Something as small as a comma (just as the horizontal line on a "L" and "T" distinguishes it from an "I", so the tittle was a small mark that showed the difference between one letter and another

EX: rash = ר daleth= ד

Everything that Moses and the Prophets originally wrote down -- every sentence, indeed every verse, indeed every word, indeed every letter, indeed the smallest letter, indeed the distinguishing feature of a letter -- all will be fulfilled!

"In no wise" - will by no means. A double negative (ου μη) showing the absolute impossibility of something.

"**Till all be fulfilled**" - every jot and tittle will be fulfilled.

Just as all Scripture is God-breathed (II Tim. 3:16), so all Scripture will be fulfilled.

All of the eschatological prophecies of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, Amos, Malachi, etc. will be fulfilled.

Everything will happen just as God promised - Heaven for believers; Hell for

unbelievers

II. All of God's Word IS <u>IMPORTANT</u> (v. 19-20)

V. 19

"Therefore" - Just as everything will be fulfilled, everything <u>should</u> be fulfilled in your life!

"Whosoever" - irregardless of who it is. Anyone! This applies to all believers.

Just as the greatest human leader ever (Moses) faced the stringent consequences for his violation of a command of God, so every infraction of God's moral Law will be rewarded.

"Break" - to release from one's life; to disregard, to dismiss, to ignore and fail to fulfill.

"One of these" - each individual moral command is important. None are insignificant.

"Least" - smallest.

--Even a command which is not frequently reiterated; it may be given only once, yet it is important.

--Even a command which has the least amount of consequences for breaking it.

--Even a command which society views as unimportant or non-essential.

"And shall <u>teach</u> men so" - Both those who <u>violate</u> God's principles and those who <u>teach</u> others to violate them will be culpable.

We must be very careful about what we practice and preach. Teaching is an awesome task! (Ja. 3:1)

"Shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven" -

--Heaven will include people who were <u>saved</u> yet allowed <u>disobedience</u> in their lives while on earth.

--In heaven there will be <u>different</u> <u>ranks</u> of people (Christians are judged to determine reward - I Cor. 3, II Cor. 5)

"He shall be called" - By whom? <u>By God</u>. God determines the esteem (rewards) of people based upon who they obeyed and taught His Word.

Will you be called "least" or "great" in God's Heaven? The answer comes by asking the question, "How serious are you about obeying all of God's Word that you know?"

Those who practice and teach all of God's truth will shine the brightest throughout eternity. This is what Daniel was referring to when he wrote "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

"Greatness is not determined by gifts, success, popularity, reputation, or size of ministry - but by a believer's view of Scripture as revealed in his life and teaching" (MacArthur, p. 272).

What O.T. commands are we obligated to keep? All of the ones that were not limited to a specific person (EX: Abraham) or nation (EX: Israel). EX: If I ask Katie to do something, is Laura responsible to do it? No. So it is with God's commands. I am responsible for what applies to me.

The O.T. contains unchanging moral principles that the N.T. reiterates. These must be obeyed by the motive of love.

Israel's ceremonial Law ended when the veil was rent in two (Mt. 15:38).

Israel's civil (national, governmental) Law ended when she as a nation was temporarily set aside after rejecting Christ as Messiah (Rom. 9 - 11).

But the moral Law of God never ended. We must obey all His moral Law.

Too often we pick and choose which commands to obey. We don't have the liberty to play "Grocery Store" Christianity. Everything is for us to take home.

It is human nature to obey the commands that are in line with what we want and to ignore or violate those that don't line up with our desires. We pat ourselves on the back for keeping some of God's commands, while often omitting the weightier matters of the Law (EX: the Scribes and Pharisees - Mt. 23:23)

"The Scripture cannot be broken" (Jn. 10:35).

No one can ignore, erase, or remove the parts they don't like!

Many seek to obey God by disobeying God. Example:

--"I don't want to keep on committing fornication, so I will marry the unsaved man"

--"I want a Christian home, so I will divorce my unsaved mate and marry a Christian"

--"I need to pay my bills, so I can't give to God"

--"I need to provide for my family, so I'll sell my body (as a prostitute) to do so"

--"I need to serve God, so I don't have time to be with my family"

***God's commands never conflict with each other!**

EX: the chief priests (Mt. 26:47) who paid blood money to "shed the innocent blood of Jesus" [a violation of O.T. Law] yet would not put the money when returned by Judas into the Treasury of the Temple so as to keep the O.T. Law (Mt. 27:6)

V. 20

For your righteousness to exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, it must not be the following kind:

1) Not a hypocritical righteousness - a phony act to please men (Mt. 23)

2) Not a self-invented righteousness - your righteousness standards must come from God

Rom. 10:3 - "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

The Scribes and Pharisees revealed how important they viewed God's Law by nullifying them and inventing their own (SEE: Mk. 7:1-9, Mt. 15:1-9)

3) Not a self-achieved righteousness (works religion)

God's righteousness is imputed to our spiritually bankrupt account by Christ (II Cor. 5:21)

CONCLUSION:

Because the Bible is inspired by God, it is therefore profitable, authoritative & complete. This is Paul's point in II Timothy 3:16-17: "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, **and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: [17] That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."***

THE POWER OF THE BIBLE
The Holy Spirit can use the Bible to totally change (transform) our lives
See how the following word pictures show the unique power of the Bible:

1. The Bible is a Sword (Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:17)

a. The Holy Spirit's offensive and defensive weapon is the Bible (Eph. 6:17). God is speaking by no other means today.
b. According to Heb. 4:12, the Bible as a sword is:
(1) Living ("quick" KJV)
(2) Powerful
(3) Piercing ("sharper...piercing")
(4) Penetrating ("dividing asunder")
(5) Convicting ("discerner [judge] of the thoughts and intents of the heart")

2. The Bible is a Mirror (James 1:23-25)
It reflects the mind of God and the true nature and condition of man.

3. The Bible is a Seed (Mk. 4:1-20 *v. 14)
As a seed, the Bible produces life, growth and fruit.

4. The Bible is water (Eph. 5:26)
The Bible cleanses and quenches thirst.

5. The Bible is a Lamp and Light (Ps. 119:1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 105)
It offers protection from danger and guidance into the right way.

6. The Bible is a hammer (Jer. 23:29)
It has ability to tear down (humble) and build up (edify).

7. The Bible is a Fire (Jer. 20:9; Lk. 24:32).
It convicts, judges, and purifies.

8. The Bible is Milk (I Pet. 2:2)
It causes growth.

9. The Bible is Meat (Heb. 5:14; I Cor. 3:1-3)

It gives strength.

"A MURDERER AT HEART"

(The Seriousness of Unrighteous Anger)
Matthew 5:21-26
4/2/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 21a

***Are you a murderer in your heart?**

How do I conquer anger in my life? Two key steps:

I. See it for what it is -- Murder! (v. 21-22)

II. Settle differences now! (v. 23-26)

A. Solving differences is a prerequisite to <u>worship</u> and <u>service</u> to God (v. 23-24)

B. Solving differences now is the secret to avoiding bigger problems later (v. 25-26)

"A MURDERER AT HEART"

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Matthew 5:21-26
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INTRODUCTION: V. 21a

Over 25,000 known murders are committed in the USA every year (not to mention abortion and suicide) (SEE MacArthur, p. 289-290).

Among the 7 things that God hates most are "hands that shed innocent blood" (Prov. 6:16ff).

V. 21

"It was said by them of old time" - lit. It was said <u>to</u> the ancients (to the people who lived long ago).

"Thou shalt not kill" - future tense imperative. One of the 10 commandments (Ex. 20:13; Dt. 5:17).

The word "kill" means to commit <u>murder</u> (i.e. for someone to take the life of an innocent person).

The command does <u>not</u> apply to <u>capital punishment</u>, which was sanctioned by God in the Law (Gen. 9:6; Num. 35:33; cp. Rom. 13:1, 4; I Cor. 11:7; Acts 25:11; Ja. 3:9).

Examples of Murder:

--manslaughter (premeditated murder)
--abortion (pre-birth murder)
--euthanasia (old-age murder)
--suicide (self murder)

"In danger of" - liable to; murderers who don 't get saved will not inherit God's kingdom (Gal. 5:21; I Jn. 3:15).

"The judgment" - Judgment both by people (Dt. 16:18) and by God would be the fate of murderers.

"It is possible for a model, law-abiding citizen to be as guilty of murder as anyone on death row. It is possible for a person who has never been involved in so much as a fist fight to have more of a murderer's spirit than a multiple killer" (MacArthur, p. 292-3).

What causes people to become angry?

***Are you a murderer in your heart?**

How do I conquer unrighteous anger in my life? Two key steps:

I. See it for what it is -- Murder! (v. 211-22)

NOTE: Christ's repeated formula: "Ye have heard" (v. 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43) . . . "But I say unto you" (v. 22, 28, 32, 34, 38, 44) --

> Christ did not change the O.T. nor nullify it, but rather He showed the true intent and meaning of it. He is confronting the misinterpretation and misapplication of God's Word. He is showing the importance of attitudes as well as actions; internals as well as externals; motives as well as behavior. The Pharisees were notorious for subtracting internals (Mt. 23:233) and adding externals (Mk. 7:89).

God desires truth "in the inner man" (Ps. 51:6). He looks "at the heart" (I Sam. 16:7).

Jesus is confronting the self-righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were trusting in their own righteousness ("I never killed anyone!"). The Lord is saying, "You cannot justify yourselves because you have not committed the physical act of murder. Murder goes much deeper than that. It originates in the heart not the hands. It starts with evil thoughts, regardless of whether or not those thoughts are brought to consummation in action" (MacArthur, p. 292).

ILLUS: The self-righteousness of "Two-Gun Crowley." (MacArthur, p. 293)

"Whosoever" - anyone; no one excluded

"Angry" - in context, a deep-seated, stewing, brewing wrong attitude due to a growing hatred from a personal offense.

Angry - present participle -- The "anger" referred to here is more than a momentary feeling, but is a continuing bitterness and animosity sustained over a period of time. God warns us about allowing a “root of bitterness” to grow (Heb. 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled)

"Without a cause" - though this phrase is not in some manuscripts,s if authentic, it would refer to a cause that is just. To be angry, but not over a righteous cause.

There is an anger that is not sinful; if it is an anger toward sin and unrighteousness (Eph. 4:26).

--Jesus was righteously indignant when He drove out those who turned the Temple into a department store. (Jn. 2:12-17). He also was angry toward those who did not believe it was proper to do good on the Sabbath (Mk. 3:5).

"Murder" - anger is equated with murder because it is a root cause for murder. It is the hot emotion that triggers bloodshed.

1) Selfishness that is not satisfied turns into
2) Anger and anger leads to
3) Murder

Two extremes of sinful anger:

1. Some people bottle up (clam up, internalize it)

2. Some people blow up (cursing - ventilate it)

"Raca" - to call someone this is to call them an "Empty head" (modern expressions -- "Rockhead" "Air Brain" "Stupid")

ILLUS: Simon Ben Eleasar's arrogant ridicule (MacArthur, p. 295).

"The Council" - Lit. the Sanhedrin, which was the highest court of the Jews. This "council" refers to the heavenly Sanhedrin made up of the
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God's verdict is final.

"Fool" - To call someone this is to call them a "worthless scoundrel" or an "idiotic reprobate." This word is a more severe term, a more serious reproach than "Raca."

"Raca" scorns a man's head (mind) and calls him "stupid"; whereas "Fool" scorns a man's heart and character and calls him a "worthless reprobate" (cp. Vine, p. 114).

"Hellfire" - Greek gehenna - the city dump of Jerusalem, used by Jesus as a picture of the final place of judgment for the wicked (Reinecker, p. 14).

1) "Judgment" . . . 2) "the council" . . . 3) "hellfire" = a similar way of saying:

1) court . . . 2) jury . . . and 3) prison OR

1) trial . . . 2) verdict & sentencing . . . 3) incarceration

1) The court judgment = the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11)

2) The Council = the Triune Godhead, who will comprise the "Supreme Supreme Court"

3) The Sentencing = the eternal punishment in fire

How could calling someone a name like "Empty head" or "Scoundrel" condemn a person?

1. Because usually those who point the finger at others fail to see their own need for forgiveness and salvation.

2. Those expressions externalize what is in the heart. They manifest "anger" which is the divinely established equivalent of "murder" No practicing murder has eternal life in him (I Jn. 3:15 - "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murder; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him")

II. Settle differences now! (v. 23-26)

"Therefore" - Jesus is now going to make a concluding application to what He has previously said.

Jesus in verses 23-26 is showing the importance of getting offended human relations reconciled so as to avoid the destructive build-up and effects of anger.

Our Lord gives 2 good reasons why differences must be resolved, and why anger must be removed.

1) Solving differences is a prerequisite to worship and service to God (v. 23-24)

2) Solving differences is a key to avoiding bigger problems (v. 25-26)

V. 23-24

Since anger builds when something comes between people, Jesus is teaching the importance of removing those things which come in between. Resolving problems (not ignoring them) is the key to appeasing anger.

NOTE: Verses 23-24 speak of solving differences with a "brother". V. 25-26 speak of solving differences with an "adversary"

A. Solving differences is a prerequisite to worship and service to God (v. 23-24)

"Gift to the altar" - refers to the sacrifice that would be brought to the altar at the Temple.

"Thy brother hath ought against thee" - NOTE: It does not say that you have something against your brother, but that He has something against you. This is an easy time to justify anger in your life. To say, "Well, he has the problem" I will not bother with him until he resolves it."

"First be reconciled" -

"First" - shows the priority of us being right with each other before we can worship God. You can't worship until your conscience is clear; and your conscience is not clear when you know that someone has a problem with you.

"Be reconciled" - shows God's desire that we be at peace with each other

The word "reconciled" (diallossomai) refers to a mutual hostility being replaced by a mutual concession (Lightfoot)

B. Solving differences now is the secret to avoiding bigger problems later (v. 25-26)

Verses 25-26 give an example of what retaliation is like and how important it is to resolve it.

"Agree with thine adversary quickly" - come to an agreeable settlement with your opponent without delay! Jesus is saying it is better to settle the difference on the way (road) to court privately, than in court publically.

It is better to settle a matter early than late, now rather than later.

Jesus is giving some wise advice: "Make friends quickly with the one who is angry with you and is taking you to court. The reason is simple: If you do not appease his wrath, he in anger will have you "tried and fried"!

V. 26

This passage has been misunderstood and misapplied by Roman Catholics, who in a desperate attempt to proved the existence of "Purgatory" use this passage to substantiate that people do come out of a temporary place of suffering when a sufficient payment has been made.

Jesus, however, in this example is not describing hell or a place of spiritual judgment, but is simply talking about a human "judge," a human "officer," and a earthly, literal, physical "prison" (v. 25).

CONCLUSION:

Steps to Overcome Anger (See: Problem Counselling notes)

1. You must clearly see your anger

2. You must call it what it is - sin (murder)

3. You must confess it to God

4.You must counter it with God's solution (SEE: Col. 3:8-13)

"AN ADULTERER AT HEART"

Matthew 5:27-30
4/9/2017

INTRODUCTION: Verse 27

***Are you an adulterer in your heart?**

How can I conquer lustful thoughts?

I. By Realizing That a Lustful Heart is the Equivalent of Committing Adultery (v. 28)

II. By Removing From my Life Anything That Causes Me to Stumble (v. 29-30)

"AN ADULTERER AT HEART"

Matthew 5:27-30
4/9/2017

INTRODUCTION: Verse 27

"It was said by them of old time" - lit. It was said to the ancients. This command came from God to the O.T. Israelites.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery" - The seventh commandment (Ex. 20:14), restated in Deut. 5:18 and Lev. 18:20 - "Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her."

The Old Testament penalty for adultery was death (Lev. 20:10 - "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.")

SEE: Lev. 20:10-13 - God's Law against sexual immorality.

Those who practice an unrepentant lifestyle of adultery will not inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19, 21)

Why is adultery wrong?

1) **It is contrary to God's plan for marriage** (Heb. 13:4 - "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge")

2) **It is destructive to marriages**

a) It is a violation of the marriage covenant (Prov. 2:17 - "Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God")

b) It results in guilt and sorrow and misery (Prov. 5:4, 11-13)

c) It results in illegitimate children (Prov. 5:17) [Today it is a prime cause of abortion]

d) It results in deep hurt and vengeance on the part of the adulterer's spouse (Prov. 6:27-35)

e) With all of the sexually transmitted diseases prevalent today, it often leads to permanent illnesses or a premature death (Prov. 7:21-22; 25-27)

3) It is stealing what is not yours! (I Thes. 4:6 - "That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified")

***Are you an adulterer in your heart?**

How can I conquer lustful thoughts?

I. By Realizing That a Lustful Heart is the Equivalent of Committing Adultery (v. 28)

"Whosoever" - No one is exempt

"Looketh" - (present tense) - a long look, or a second look

When an immodestly dressed woman crosses your path, that first look is not sin, but it's that second look or the prolonged look that indicates a sinful heart.

"You can't keep birds from flying overhead, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair."

The look is not a casual glance, but a planned stare "for the purpose of feeding his inner sensual appetites as a substitute for the act" (Wiersbe, p. 24)

"On a woman" - the same principle applies to women who lustfully look upon men.

The reason why Jesus singled out the male looking at the female is because He knew that men are more prone toward being aroused by the appearance of a woman than a woman is toward a man. Depraved men take notice of the external looks of a woman, whereas women tend to take notice of a man based on his intelligence, strength, wit, charm, romance, etc.

Ladies, beware of how you dress (I Tim. 2:9-10 - "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.")

If lustful looking is so grievous a sin, then those who dress to expose themselves with the desire to be looked at and lusted over are equally or more sinful.

"Looketh on a woman" - This look does not have to be in real life, but may be:

1. on TV/videos/movies
2. in pornography
3. in peep shows at Times Square

"to lust after her" - The word "to" (pros) shows the intention or purpose of the look. It is not wrong to look at women. It is wrong when your "look" has as its goal a selfish, lustful, covetous gratification.

"Lust" - (epithumeo) = to have a strong desire for something. Desire is not wrong. But misplaced desire or desire outside of the will of God is wrong.

The word "lust" in this verse refers to a vain, base, immoral selfish craving or longing for that which is not yours. "Lust" is essentially "covetousness" (the tenth commandment), which is a desire to have that which does not belong to you.

"Hath committed adultery . . . already" - At the very moment that one entertained selfish, lustful thoughts, God up in heaven registers an act of "adultery."

"Jesus is not saying that lustful desires are identical with lustful deeds and therefore a person might just as well go ahead and commit adultery. The desire and the deed are not identical, but, spiritually speaking, they are equivalent." (Wiersbe, p. 24)

"In his heart" - Sin goes deeper than an act. God weighs the thoughts and intents of the heart. He looks at the heart. One can be free of committing the act of adultery, yet be guilty of adultery 10,000 times!

What we are in our heart is what we really are - in God's sight.

True righteousness is a heart matter. "You are what you think." "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7).

Every act of adultery started out as a "heart problem" (Mk. 7:21 - "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders.")

Real sin flows from and takes place first in the heart (or thoughts) of man.

"In his heart" - Since people are not animals, we have an aspect of our nature that goes deeper than our carnal flesh. People sin against their body by committing sexual sin (I Cor. 6:18) and sin against their "spirit" when they entertain evil thoughts.

Christian, remember, both your "body" and your "spirit" are God's (I Cor. 6:20)

Satan today is placing an overemphasis on sex to cause people to become obsessed with it. Once he can obsess a person with such thoughts, he can then provide a setting at the wrong place and at the wrong time to tempt that individual to experiment and gratify that obsession that he has caused.

Immoral sexual lust is not a biological need (like the need for food and sleep), but a perverted obsession.

In a child's life, sexual lust does not exist until fuel is supplied; books are read, pictures are seen, etc. The more fuel you feed a passion, the more it grows.

Jesus is not teaching that sex is a dirty thing, but it is a holy thing (It is to be sanctified and preserved for marriage).

II. By Removing From my Life Anything That Causes Me to Stumble (v. 29-30)

"Offend" - to cause to stumble and fall. The greek word referred to a stick in a trap that would spring and close the trap when an animal would touch it (Reinecker, p. 15).

Jesus is saying that if your eyes should look upon something that would trap you and detract your sight from ever seeing God's plan of salvation, it would be better off if you had no eyes than to forever end up in hell fire.

"Whole body" (cp. v. 30) = even unbelievers will be resurrected, only to be judged at the Great White throne and then to be hurled physically into a literal lake of burning fire (Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:13-15). Their body will never consume.

"Hell" (cp. v. 30) = gehenna (meaning "the land of Hinnom" - II Kings 23:10). A reference to the continual place of burning ("where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched")

Why does Jesus mention hell in a context of sexual sins? Because of all the sins that enslave the mind and body and remove one's interest from spiritual matters, sexual sins are at the top of the list.

"Sin is like a whirlpool. It sucks you down very quickly. And sexual sin is the quickest way down!" (Prov. 2:18, 19 - "For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.")

The "eyes" are that body part which triggers the lustful thought, and the "hands" are that which grasp that which is forbidden resulting in a sinful act.

Jesus on more than one occasion spoke of plucking out the eye and cutting off the hand that would cause you to stumble (cp. Mk. 9:43, 47; cp. Mt. 18:8, 9).

He also made mention of the "foot" (Mk. 9:45=-46 - "And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off, it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Jesus is not really encouraging bodily dismemberment. But he is saying that you

would be better off losing anything in this life that would keep you from Heaven in the next life.

Victory does not come by amputating certain parts of your body, but by purifying the desires of the heart.

"The eyes and the hand are usually the two 'culprits' when it comes to sexual sins, so they must be disciplined" (Wiersbe, p. 24) (I Cor. 9:27)

CONCLUSION:

What disciplines should be incorporated into your life to avoid such sin?

1) **Turn off the sexual sewage drain**

(sexually explicit TV, video, magazines, music; don't go to certain beaches)

In 1988 TV averaged "at least one sensual-arousing scene for every 40 minute segment" (Ronald E. Johnson, Fund. Journal). And according to Dr. James Dobson, this new TV season will be the worst ever.

Job 31:1 - "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?"

Ps. 119:37 - "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way."

2) **Don't be idle; be busy serving Christ**

II Tim. 2:22 - "Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

3) **Realize that women are not sex objects but people with an eternal soul who**

need Christ

It is vain to lust after external flesh.
"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh…" (2 Corinthians 5:16)

4) **<u>Read God's Word</u> every day to purify your mind**
Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. (Psalm 119:11)
And be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Ephesians 4:23)

5) **When you do have a wrong thought, confess it to God as soon as you are convicted**

Don't let sin build up in your life.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

6) **When tempted to take an indiscreet "look" counter the temptation by praying** for your family and friends to be pure (if married, thank God for your spouse)

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. (James 4:6-8)

7) **Seek to satisfy your spouse's sexual desires so he/she will not be driven to "look" elsewhere** Prov. 5:18-19)

"Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." (I Corinthians 7:3-5)

Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times;

and be thou ravished always with her love. (Proverbs 5:18-19)

The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet. (Proverbs 27:7)

"What Jesus Taught About Divorce"

Matthew 5:31-32

4/30/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 31

***What did Jesus teach about divorce?**

I. Divorce is allowed for "<u>fornication</u>" (v. 32a)

What is meant by "fornication"?

A. View #1 – Adultery

B. View #2 - Unfaithfulness during the "betrothal" period

II. Divorce results in "<u>adultery</u>" (v. 32b)

*Marriage is permanently for life!

The permanence of marriage is evidenced by:

1. The meaning of "<u>covenant</u>" (Mal. 2:14)
2. The bonding of <u>wedlock</u> (Gen. 2:24)
3. Christ's relationship to His <u>bride</u> (Eph. 5:22-32)
4. God's attitude toward <u>divorce</u> (Mal. 2:16)

God wants us to be content with our current marital status! See: 1 Corinthians 7:10-17

"What Jesus Taught About Divorce"

Matthew 5:31-32

4/30/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 31

God's plan and purpose for marriage.

"Marriage is a unique union of one man and one woman. It is so intimate that on the earth nothing is its equal." God saw that it was not good for man to be alone, and that man needed a "Help meet" or a helper suitable to himself, his counterpart. Man needed someone to fellowship with him, someone to rejoice with him, someone to plan, share and experience with him the wonders of God and His creation. In Genesis 2:23-24 is presented the ideal which God intended in the marriage relationship. Eve was "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," said Adam. I Corinthians 11:8-9 states that "Man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man--neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." A principle that started in the Garden of Eden has gone down through the ages: Man was to leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and the two became one flesh (Gen. 2:24). This "leave and cleave" principle illustrates that God instituted marriage and that it was to be a monogamous, heterosexual and complete union of two persons.

God instituted marriage for four basic reasons:

Before the fall -

1) To complete the man which He had created ("help meet" - Gen. 2)

After the fall -

2) To promote sexual purity (I Cor. 7:2)

3) To begin a new family unit (Gen. 2:18-24)

4) To propagate truth and godly principles from one generation to the next (Deut. 6:67)

What makes a marriage?

1. A covenant (a vow before witnesses - Mal. 2:14). This is the premiere essence of a marriage

2. A consummation (sexual union - Gen. 2:24; I Cor. 6:16)

*In the "vow" the two become one by verbal commitment, whereas in the consummation the two become one by a holy physical act.

One of the most plaguing menaces of all time is divorce.

Two major views (schools of thought) toward divorce (two interpretations of Deut. 24:1 - "some uncleanness"):

--Shammai (conservative) - only grounds for divorce was adultery
--Hillel (liberal) - anything that could be interpreted as uncleanness
(if the wife spoiled his dinner, or went out with unbound hair, or was caught speaking to men in the streets, or if she became overweight or unattractive and he found someone more beautiful)

In the context of Matt. 5, Jesus is showing the popular misinterpretations and wrong views prevalent in His day. He is countering such views with teaching that is radically different.

Hence, whatever Jesus is saying in Matt. 5:32 is radically different than what people taught in His day.

SEE: Matt. 19:3ff

V. 3 - "Every cause" - Pharisees wanted to tempt Jesus to contradict his previous statement (Mt. 5:32)

V. 4 - "Have you not read" - a statement proving their ignorance; note this statement put the authority on the Scriptures, not tradition, custom, or religious interpretation of the Law.

Jesus purposely skips over the dispensations, Mosaic Law (Dt. 24), etc.

v. 5 - "cleave" - to glue, cement, or permanently bond together

v. 6 - what God does man is not to undo

V. 8 - "IN this verse, Jesus takes the word "commanded" used by the Pharisees (v. 7) and changes it to "suffered" (Meaning: tolerated, put up with.

Deut. 24:1ff - The reason a written bill of divorcement was required was not to make divorce easier but to put a "legal check upon reckless and tyrannical separation. Divorce was getting out of hand so Moses was regulating an existing practice."

V. 9 - "And I say unto you" (Jesus' disciples - v. 10) When this verse is compared with Mark 10:10, you discover that Jesus' discussion with the Pharisees ended with verse 8. They never heard verse 9, which was given privately to Jesus disciples "in the house" (Mk. 10:10). So Jesus left the Pharisees with the conclusion that there was no allowance whatsoever for divorce.

V. 10 - The reaction of the disciples proves that Christ did not allow divorce.

***What did Jesus teach about divorce?**

I. Divorce is allowed for "fornication" (v. 32a)

"Whosoever" - the most general, inclusive, unconditional term that Christ could have used. This verse applies to everyone who is married. No one is excluded.

"Put away" = divorce

"His wife" - under Jewish law, only a husband was allowed to do the divorcing.

"Saving for the cause of fornication" - those exempt from the verdict of "adultery" are those whose spouse has committed "fornication."

What is meant by "fornication"? Two popular, plausible views:

A. View #1 - Adultery

I do not believe that Jesus meant "adultery". Why not?

1. He did not say "adultery"; he said "fornication."

2. Those words are two totally different words with totally different meanings.

"Adultery" = moicheia (extra-marital sex)

"Fornication" = porneia (pre-marital sex) - I Cor. 7:2; Jn. 8:41)

The two words are distinguished - Gal. 5:19; I Cor. 6:9

3. If Jesus meant adultery, it would have been most natural for Him to say it, since he uses the word adultery 2 other times in this verse!

4. The penalty for adultery was death not divorce

Under the Mosaic Law, one would not need to divorce his wife if she had committed adultery, because the penalty for this was death (Deut. 22:22) (he could not be going to a divorce court, but to a grave yard)

5. Such a view says that "one wrong justifies another" ("sin justifies sin") Where is forgiveness in this view?

B. View #2 - Unfaithfulness during the "betrothal" period

I believe Jesus is referring to unfaithfulness during the betrothal period.

> Marriage was never to be entered into carelessly or lightly by a Jew who wanted to honor God. They did not rush into a marriage, but did formulate a binding agreement known as the "betrothal"

What was the betrothal period? SEE: paper on Divorce, p. 16, Pentecost

Proof of Betrothal view:

1. Grammatical Proof - the word "fornication" refers to pre-marital sex

2. Historical context - the exception clause is only found in Matthew's gospel, written to Jews (mt. 5:32; 19:9) and not in Mark 10:11-12 and Luke 16:18, written to Gentiles who didn't understand the Jewish concept of the betrothal (Mt. 5:32; 19:19; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18)

3. An example: Joseph was called a "husband" (Mt. 1:19) "espoused [betrothed] to Mary (1:18), who found out that she was pregnant before their marriage, so he decided to "put her away [divorce] privily" (1:19)

--How did Paul interpret Christ's teaching about divorce? (SEE: I Cor. 7:10-11)

--How did Paul interpret the Law's teaching about divorce? (SEE: Rom. 7:1-3)

A believer is never justified to pursue a divorce.
If the unbeliever departs, that's one thing (I Cor. 7:15), but a believer is never to leave his/her
unbelieving spouse.

II. Divorce results in "adultery" (v. 32b)

NOTE: Those who are guilty of "adultery":

--The wife (divorcee) - "causeth her"
--The man who marries her (her new spouse)
--The original husband (Mt. 19:9

"Adultery" - I believe that the "adultery" committed is an "adultery" in the eyes of God (who views marriage as permanent).

The adultery would have to be a "spirit of adultery" and not the "letter of adultery". In other words, if the adultery was literal, then the second marriage would have to be dissolved, since they would be "living in adultery."

The real sin was in the divorce itself, more to than the remarriage. The remarriage prevents reconciliation.

CONCLUSION: *Marriage is permanently for life!

In order to have a stable and secure home - Both husband and wife must have a conviction that their marriage is permanent!

In God's Word, the Bible, -
The permanence of marriage is evidenced by:

1. The Meaning of a "COVENANT" (Malachi 2:14)
(Marriage is a Covenant)

--Definition of a "Covenant"

--Examples of "Covenants" in the Bible
a). Gen. 15:6-18 - Abrahamic Covenant (cp. Jer. 34:18-19)
b). Matt. 26:28 - The New Covenant

a. The marriage covenant is an irrevocable Vow

Observe the nature of vows:
1). Numbers 30:2 - Your words are extremely important
2). Deuteronomy 23:21 - God holds you accountable
3). Example: Jephthah's vow - Judges 11:30-39

b. The marriage covenant is an unconditional Vow
"For better or for worse, for richer or for poorer"

2. The Bonding of "WEDLOCK" (Gen. 2:24)
(Marriage is an inseparable union)

a. The Cleaving of Marriage (v. 24a)
b. The Oneness of Marriage (v. 24b)
c. "Till death do we part" (Romans 7:2-3)

3. Christ's Relationship to His BRIDE (Eph. 5:22-32)
(Jesus will never forsake His wife, the Church)

a. The Church is one with Christ (Eph. 5:30; I Cor. 6:17)
b. The Church is the "Bride of Christ" (Rev. 19:7-9)
c. The Church has the promise of eternal security (Mt. 16:18; Jn. 10:28-29; Titus 1:2; Heb. 13:5)

4. God's Attitude about <u>DIVORCE</u> (Malachi 2:16)
(God hates divorce)

a. "He may not put her away all his days"
(Deut. 22:19, 29)

Suppose you were to pursue a divorce and you received a letter in the mail. It read: "I hate divorce. Signed, Jehovah God"

SEE: last paragraph p. 23 <u>Divorce</u> paper

Don't even think about divorce!

God wants us to be content with our current marital status! See: 1 Corinthians 7:10-17

"A PROMISE IS A PROMISE"

Matthew 5:33-37
5/7/2017

INTRODUCTION:

***Be a man/woman of your word! Realize the sacredness of every promise you make!**

I. All promises are sacred; therefore,
ALL PROMISES <u>MUST BE PERFORMED</u> (v. 33)

II. All promises are sacred, because
ALL PROMISES ARE <u>MADE IN GOD'S PRESENCE</u> (v. 34-36)

III. All promises are sacred; therefore,
ALL PROMISES <u>SHOULD BE STRAIGHT-FORWARD AND SINCERE</u> (v. 37)

"A PROMISE IS A PROMISE"

Matthew 5:33-37
5/7/2017

INTRODUCTION:

Daniel Webster wrote: "There is nothing as powerful as truth and often nothing as strange."

So much in our society is a facade or a mirage. Is anyone for real? Many, like Pilate in despair ask the question: "What is truth?"

Without truth you cannot have efficient law; you cannot have fair business; you cannot have a good marriage; etc. All of us depend on others telling us the truth (EX: the labels on packages and medicines).

"Even gangs of criminals and conspirators, who use lying and cheating as their stock-in-trade, demand the truth among themselves, because it is necessary to their own survival" (MacArthur, p. 320).

Satan is a liar and the father of lies (Jn.8:44). Since he is the prince of this world's system, it is no wonder that lying is so much a part of our world. Credibility often seems to be non-existent. This "credibility gap is widened even further by popular novels, movies, television, music, and advertising--in which truth, fantasy, and outright falsehood are blended into mixtures impossible to unscramble. Truth is so scarce that nearly everyone is suspect. Business people, advertisers, commentators, clerks, salesmen, lawyers, doctors, tradesmen, teachers, writers, politicians, and even many, if not most, preachers are suspect. Our whole society is largely built on a network of fabrication, of manufactured "truth." We shade the truth, we cheat, we exaggerate, we misrepresent income tax deductions, we make promises we have no intention of keeping, we make up excuses, and betray confidences--all as a matter of normal, everyday living." (MacArthur, p. 320)

Because of man's tendency toward lying, society requires certain safeguards to protect against falsehood --

People need references because people are liars.

People need I.D. because people lie.

People need to be finger-printed because people lie.

People need to sign contracts and co-sign because people lie.

People need secret P.I.N. (personal identification numbers) because people lie.

If everyone were honest, many of the jobs in NYC would be non-existent (people could use their lives for more productive things). EX: You would not need lawyers, judges, all anti-fraud professions would go out of business. The program "Shame on You" would not be part of the CBS local city news. Drug testings would not be needed if everyone told the truth. Business auditors, consumer protection agencies, inspection agencies, etc.

***Be a man/woman of your word! Realize the sacredness of every promise you make!**

I. All promises are sacred; therefore,
ALL PROMISES MUST BE PERFORMED (v. 33)

What is an oath? The book of Hebrews defines it perfectly. "For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute" (Heb. 6:16).

The name of something or someone greater than the person making the oath is involved to give great credibility to what is said. Any oath calling on God invites Him to witness the truthfulness of what is said, or to avenge if it is a lie. (MacArthur, p. 321)

"Forswear" = To falsely swear; to make a false vow. To vow that you will do something under the pretense that you will perform it, but having no desire to do it at all. (Lev. 19:12 - "And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.").

To "forswear" also means to make a promise and then un-do it.

Thou "shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths."

Deut. 23:21-23 - "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; even a freewill-offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth."

To be a false witness had stiff penalties in O.T. days (Deut. 19:16-21).

Scripture teaches that it is better not to vow than to vow and not pay (Eccl. 5:4-5). The reason is clear. A vow makes a person a debtor. The person is in debt to fulfill his vow or promise.

Num. 30:2 - "If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth."

Note: Interesting point in context - If a woman made a vow and her father or husband overheard it, she being under their authority, could have her vow annulled (Num. 30:4-5, 12-13)

Example of rash oaths:

- Joshua (Josh. 9:15 – An oath with the Gibeonites without seeking Counsel from God);
- Jephthah (Jud. 11:30-31 – Vowed to Sacrifice whatever first met him after victory over Amalekites);
- Saul (I Sam. 14:24 – Pronounced a curse on anyone who eats food after victory);
- Herod (Mt. 14:7 – To Herodius' daughter – "I'll give you whatever you ask").

It is not by accident that Jesus preaches about the subject of vows (v. 33-37) after giving His sermon about the issue of divorce and the permanency of marriage (v.31-32). If any vow is to be kept it is especially the marriage vow!

"Unto the Lord" - The Jews would respect the vows made to the Lord, but would often view other vows as insignificant or non-binding. "The command 'You shall not swear falsely by My Name' (Lev. 19:12) was conveniently interpreted to mean that swearing false by any other name was allowed" (MacArthur, p. 323).

The Jews in Jesus' day thought that they could make an oath (vow) and not be obligated to keep it just as long as "God's Name" was not mentioned in the oath. So they, to get around using the name of God, would take oaths by Heaven, the earth, the Great city Jerusalem, or even by their own life.

II. All promises are sacred, because
ALL PROMISES ARE <u>MADE IN GOD'S PRESENCE</u> (v. 34-36)

What does the Bible mean by swearing?

EX: of things people say when they swear that they are telling the truth -
"Cross my heart and hope to die..."
"So help me God"
"I swear to God"
"May God strike me dead"

The words "swear not at all" - do not specifically refer to "profanity" or "vulgar" language (but Ephes. 4:29 does!).

"Swear not at all" - This does not mean that all oaths or promises or wrong.

Taking oaths is not wrong (indeed God legislated oath-taking - Lev. 19:12 - and many O.T. saints followed this practice – Abraham - Gen. 14:22-24, 21:23-24, 24:1-4, 10; David - Ps. 132:2)

What is wrong was the abuse of oath-taking whereby people would excuse themselves of being responsible to carry out their oath, just so long as it was not made in the name of God.

Therefore the phrase "swear not at all" means that we must never flippantly swear by anything or anyone (outside of the Lord).

"There are differences of opinion about legal oaths. Some believe they should never take an oath even for the sake of justice (EX: the Quakers). Others feel they can be called upon to swear for the sake of justice; but they should never swear of themselves; that is, take the initiative in verifying their word." (Outline Bible, p. 88)

SEE: Mt. 23:16-20 - How the Pharisees illogically viewed certain oaths as "<u>nothing</u>" (v. 16) - no big deal, no need to worry about fulfilling them.

Jesus' point: Since God is in Heaven and on earth, the owner of Zion and the controller of man's very life and existence, to profane any vow, is to profane God Himself.

God <u>sits</u> in Heaven (Is. 66:1); He <u>rests</u> His feet on earth (Is. 66:1; Acts 7:49); He <u>owns</u> Jerusalem (Ps. 48:2), and He alone <u>controls</u> life (Mt. 6:27; 10:29-30)

"Thou canst not make one hair white or black" - This was stated before hair coloring!

Just as one does not have control over such a little thing as permanently changing your hair color, so we cannot say "You have my life on it" because we don't know how long we will even live! God controls the length of our life (Ja. 4:14-15)

Any power or strength we have is given by God and can be taken away at any moment by God. Therefore, man does not have the power to guarantee oaths. He can be disabled or snatched away at any instant. The recognition of this reality should cause man to live so honestly and straightforward that his word alone is acceptable. Oaths and vows should not be necessary (The Preacher's Outline and sermon Bible, Matthew, p. 88)

"To dishonor and compromise any truth is to dishonor and compromise His truth. Heaven God's; the earth is God's; Jerusalem is God's; and every person's head is God's. It is therefore wicked and sinful to use anything of God's, whether His name or part of His creation, as witness to anything that is dishonest, deceitful, insincere, or in the least way knowingly false. God has no separate categories of sacred and secular. Everything that pertains to Him is sacred, and all truth is His truth, just as all creation is His creation. Every lie is against God, and therefore every false oath dishonors His name." (MacArthur, p. 325).

"Here is a great eternal truth. Life cannot be divided into compartments in some of which God is involved and in others of which He is not involved" (Barclay, Matthew, Vol. 1, p. 160).

Many in Jesus Day thought they could LIE as long as God was not involved in the vow.

Today, all radical Islamists think that LIEING is OK as long as it is for Allah's benefit.

It is wrong to have one kind of language at church and another at home.

It is wrong to have one kind of ethics at church and another in business.

It is wrong to have one kind of morals at church and another in society.

III. All promises are sacred; therefore,
ALL PROMISES <u>SHOULD BE STRAIGHT-FORWARD AND SINCERE</u> (v. 37)

"Your communication" refers to your <u>words</u> (logos) whether written or spoken.

"Yea, yea; nay, nay" = "Yes, yes or No, no"

If you mean yes, say "Yes"; if you mean no, say "No."

"Yes, that is true; yes, I will do what I say" "No, that is false; no, I will not do . . ."
"Yes, I stole the tool" or "No, I did not."
"Yes, I will be there" or "No, I will not be."
"Yes, I will do _____" or "No, I will not."
"Yes, I erred, sinned, was wrong" or "No, I was not."

Jesus' point by the phrase "**Whatsoever is more than these"** is this: Don't elaborate by saying, "Yes, I promise, I hope to die, I swear on the Bible, I'll give you my photo I.D. as a pledge, May I drop dead if I don't keep my word, etc."

"Swearing and cursing do not make a matter more believable; they really make it more suspicious." (Outline Bible, p. 89)

ILLUS: of people who continually come up to the church door begging for money and giving phoney reasons why they are so desperately in need. EX: The man whose mother was in a certain hospital in the Bronx dying. He had to get to her. I asked the name of the hospital and then called up. They did not even know of such a person. Caught in his lie, he sheepishly walked out of our church.

An oath is only as trustworthy as the person who makes it. EX: Peter who "began to curse and swear, 'I do not know the man!'" (Matt. 26:69-74)

"Cometh of evil" = lit. "<u>the</u> evil [one]". Elaborations of "truth" usually are lies and come from the Father of lies, the devil.

"The evil one" - cp. Mt. 6:13; 13:19, 38; Jn. 17:15; II Th. 3:3; I Jn. 2:13; 3:12; 5:18, 19

James 5:12 - "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation."

All conversation should be straight and to the point. WE must be "speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15)

Say what you mean and mean what you say."

CONCLUSION:

God desires truth in the inner man (Ps. 51:6).

He hates a "lying tongue" (Rev. 6:16-17).

"Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord" (12:22)

The eternal destiny of all unrepentant, unregenerate liars is "the Lake of fire" (Rev. 21:8).

EX: Ananias and Sapphira came to understand the seriousness of lying too late (Acts 5:1-11).

"Truth has no degrees or shades. A half truth is a whole lie, and a white lie is really black." (MacArthur, p. 326)

Is your word absolutely dependable? Is your word believable? Reliable? Are you know for your honesty and faithfulness?

The next time you say, "I will..." remember, God will hold you to it!

Be known for truth! Be known as a man of your word!

A promise is a promise! Keep your promises!

"CIVIL RIGHTS!"

Matthew 5:38-42
5/21/2017

INTRODUCTION:

Sometimes, for the cause of Christ, WE MUST SURRENDER CERTAIN RIGHTS!

I. Be Willing to Lay Aside Your Own <u>DIGNITY</u> (v. 39b)
(Sometimes I must suffer the loss of my right to <u>respect</u>)

II. Be Willing to Lay Aside Your Own <u>SECURITY</u> (v. 40)
(Sometimes I must suffer the loss of my right to <u>necessities</u>)

III. Be Willing to Lay Aside Your Own <u>LIBERTY</u> (v. 41)
(Sometimes I must suffer the loss of my right to <u>freedom</u>)

IV. Be Willing to Lay Aside Your Own <u>PROPERTY</u> (v. 42)
(Sometimes I must suffer the loss of my right to <u>possessions</u>)

NOTE: The four key words in this outline "Dignity, security, liberty, and property" were adopted from John MacArthur's commentary on Matthew.

"CIVIL RIGHTS!"

Matthew 5:38-42
5/21/2017

INTRODUCTION:

V. 38

"Probably no part of the Sermon on the Mount has been so misinterpreted and misapplied as 5:38-42. It has been interpreted to mean that Christians are to be sanctimonious doormats. It has been used to promote pacifism, conscientious objection to military service, lawlessness, anarchy (the dissolving of government), and a host of other positions that it does not support" (MacArthur, 329). Still others explain away these verses by saying these are "Kingdom standards" that do not apply to us today (Walvoord, p. 50).

This quotation of Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20; and Deut. 19:21 "reflects the principle of lex talionis, one of the most ancient law codes. Simply put, it required that punishment exactly match the crime" (MacArthur, p. 329)

This law was given as a:

1) Restraint - to limit retaliation. So people in a passionate rage would not do more to someone than was done to them.

2) Deterrent - So others would hear and fear

V. 39

But I say unto you - shows the authority of Christ (cp. Mt. 7:29)

"Resist not evil" - Don't oppose the evil one (i.e. the one who is doing you wrong)

"Resist" - lit. to stand against; to oppose

Proverbs 24:29 - *"Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work."*

This law of non-resistance does not apply to:

1) Immorality or Doctrinal Deviation - We are to stand against the devil (Ja. 4:7), false teaching (Gal. 2:11), immorality (I Cor. 5:13), and offensive sin (Mt. 18:15-17).

2) Governmental Authorities (Ro. 13:4; I Pet. 2:13-14)

V. 38

The "eye for eye, and a tooth for a tooth" law was not given by Moses to be a way of settling private disputes. Rather, it was the government that would execute justice (SEE: Lev. 24:16-22; Deut. 19:18, 20-21).

Both the O.T. and N.T. validate capitol punishment (Gen. 9:6; Num. 35:33; Acts 25:11; Rom. 13:1, 4)

V. 39

"But I say to you . . . ye" - Jesus is saying that we, as private citizens, must have a different way of settling problems.

In this context, Jesus is not describing public matters, but private interpersonal relationships.

NOTE: God's Law was not to be taken into the hands of individuals, "yet this is exactly what rabbinic tradition had done. Each man was permitted in effect, to become his own judge, jury, and executioner." (MacArthur, p. 330).

SEE: Romans 12:17-21

Paying back evil with evil is wrong on three counts:

1. Someone who "pays back" evil with evil is Saying that SIN JUSTIFIES SIN (Romans 12:17-18)

V. 17

The world's way of dealing with people is returning "evil for evil" and "good for good". . . "you stab me, I stab you" . . . "You tip me, I tip you."

"Evil for evil" - the word "for" ("anti") means "in the place of."

We are not to return evil to replace the evil that someone else gave to us.

Those who fight evil with evil are saying: "You sin gives me a right to sin" (one wrong deserves another).

Of all sinful tendencies, this one is the easiest to give in to, and justify.

We think: "He stabbed me, I'll stab him. He gossiped about me . . . robbed . . . cheated . . . slandered . . . spoke against my child . . . I will do the same to him. He didn't give to me, I won't give to him."

EX: Divorce - "You committed adultery . . . I'm going for a divorce."

EX: Lawsuits - "You ruined my reputation (injured my character),etc., so I am going to sue you!"

EX: Cheating an employer - "He doesn't pay me or treat me like he should, so I'm not going to do my best on the job."

Rather than seeking to justify evil for evil:

A. Seek to show SINCERE GOODNESS toward your enemies
(Romans 12:17b)

I Thes. 5:15 - "See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."

Even though they may have treated us with unfairness, deceitfulness, maliciousness, we are to return their evil with honest-goodness.

EX: If someone does you "dirty" or "stabs you in the back," you don't invite them over for dinner and then slip some arsenic in the food.

We are not to have any pretentiousness or false motives (of revenge) behind our good treatment of others.

"In the sight of all men" - what they see is what they get. We are not to get revenge by covering up our hidden feelings and acting like all is OK, when really we are seeking occasion to "move in for the kill."

B. Seek to live PEACEABLY with your enemies (Romans 12:18)

"If it be possible" - if you are able, do what is in your power to maintain peaceful relations with others.

"As much as lieth in you" = from your standpoint, seek to be peaceful.

We cannot control whether or not someone else will be peaceful but we can control the peace from our end, from our side of the problem.

Too often you worry about the other side of the problem; you are concerned about their attitude and action toward you, and fail to remember you will not answer to God for them, but for you. Pay attention to how well you are doing to promote a peaceful relationship.

"Live peaceably with all men" -

Do your best to be what you should be to promote harmony and tranquility with:

- your spouse
- your in-laws and relatives
- your employer
- those who "hate your guts"
- your neighbors

V. 18

You cannot influence anyone for righteousness unless they can feel at rest (at ease) in your presence.

James 3:18 - "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

Mark 9:50 - "Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? have salt in yourselves and have peace one with another."

2. Someone who "pays back" evil with evil is
Taking God's PREROGATIVES in their own hands (v. 19)

"Avenge" - lit. to "take out justice"; to seek to make a matter right by taking out revenge toward someone. To take justice into your own hands.

"Give place unto wrath" - it is not "our place" to vent anger; it is God's place; it is His prerogative.

When we seek to make right a wrong done to us by retaliating, we have entered into God's place as judge and executioner.

[NOTE: Government does have the right as "the minister of God" to judge and pay back evil doers - See following context, especially v. 4b. But we are not to take the law into our own hands.]

Why should we "give place to wrath"?

Answer: Because the Bible says so!

And because "For [because] it has been written: Vengeance belongs to Me, I will pay back," says the LORD. Paul is citing Deut. 32:35.

Don't be quick to defend yourself. If you do, then the Lord can't defend you. God does a better job at being a prosecuting attorney anyway.

Just as we would be fools to go to the court of law to defend ourselves without a lawyer, so is the Christian who attempts to defend himself.

David said, "Plead my cause, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me." Ps. 35:1

Remember, if God commands us not to "get even," then just the thought or desire to "get even" is wrong (sinful).

3. Someone who "pays back" evil with evil is Not practicing the LAW OF LOVE (v. 20-21)

Note the balance in the context between the negative prohibition and the positive injunction.

God says, "Recompense to no man for evil" (v. 170, "avenge not yourselves (v. 19); "be not overcome (v. 21).

Then in each case, He balances it out by commanding something we are to do. We are not merely to stop the negative (not give evil for evil) but we are to go a giant step further and replace it by doing the positive ("provide" [v. 17], "live peaceably" [v. 18], "feed him" [v. 20], "overcome evil with good" [v. 21]).

EX: How Elisha treated his enemies (a whole host of Syrian soldiers who had come to take Elisha captive (II Ki. 6:22, 23).

EX: Joseph's response to his brothers.

"Heap coals" = to pile up fiery coals of conviction.

Each good deed is another coal, a re-confirmation of the inexcusability of your enemy's behavior and attitude toward you.

When you do good in return for the bad that someone else did to you, you cause the other person to be ashamed or embarrassed because of their wickedness. Such shame, brings conviction, and conviction, if responded to correctly, will bring about repentance!

Observe how God treated us when we were enemies (Rom. 5:6-10; Eph. 2:3-4).
The goodness of God has as its goal to bring man to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

Paul is quoting a Proverb (a portion of true wisdom) - Prov. 25:21-22 - "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee."

Doing good to an enemy will not only have an effect on your enemy, but will have a benefit for you.

Prov. 25:22 adds this phrase: "...and the LORD shall reward thee."

I Peter 3:9 - "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."

God sees how you treat those who are your enemies. Though your enemies may never repay you, God will!

Jesus promised in Matt. 6:4 that our Father who sees our alms (righteous deeds) [though they are done in secret, with no one else knowing] "shall reward thee openly."

The best way to fight fire is not to add fuel to the fire, but to pour on that which robs the fire of its fuel.

"One element of the great American philosophy of life is that we all have certain inalienable rights. Among the most important privileges that our Declaration of Independence espouses are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" (MacArthur, p. 327).

We live in a day and age when everyone is quick to defend their rights.

Today, we hear alot about rights, but not a whole lot about responsibility.

It is a day when everyone wants their rights!

The gays want their rights, the feminists, union workers, the whites, Indians, blacks, Hispanics, etc. The prisoners, animals, etc.

The only ones who really deserve rights but don't have the ability to ask for it are the unborn.

In a world of wrong, not everyone can always have every right.

An over-concern for one's own rights stems from a preoccupation with self.

"Selfishness is at the core of people who live to get their own way." (Ja. 4:1-2 NKJV - *"Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.")*

When our # 1 goal in life is to get and keep what is "rightfully ours", then whoever or whatever gets in our way becomes the object of retaliation.

Much ungodly legislation has been signed into law by evil people under the guise of "civil rights" (EX: pornographic "art" which blasphemed Christ).

Paul willingly set aside his rights for the sake of the gospel and the welfare of others.

"Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? . . . Do we not have a right to eat and drink? Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working? . . . If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ" (I Cor. 9:1, 4-6, 12).

Sometimes, for the cause of Christ,
WE MUST SURRENDER CERTAIN RIGHTS!

I. Be Willing to Lay Aside Your Own <u>DIGNITY</u> (v. 39b)
(Sometimes I must suffer the loss of my right to <u>respect</u>)

Human beings ought to be treated with dignity and respect, since we have been created "in God's image."

"Whosoever (v. 39) . . . any man (v. 40) . . . whosoever" - We are to apply Christ's teaching to anyone (saved or lost).

"Among Jews, a slap or other striking in the fact was among the most demeaning and contemptuous of acts (cp. Mt. 26:67-68; Mk. 14:65; Jn. 18:22). To strike someone elsewhere on the body might cause more physical harm, but a slap in the face was an attack on one's honor and was considered to be a terrible indignity. It was to be treated with disdain, as being less than a human. Even a slave would rather have been struck across the back with a whip than be slapped in the face by his master's hand." (MacArthur, p. 333).

"<u>Right</u> cheek" - In order for someone (assuming he is right-handed) to slap you on the "right" cheek would require a "back hand" - Such action was considered an insult, more so than an attempt to injure.

Many times in our lives, we will have to swallow had and patiently endure ridicule, mistreatment, insult, and injury.

Jesus did not retaliate when humiliated and unjustly treated (mt. 26:67-68; Lk. 23:34; SEE I Pet. 2:20-23)

Too often, people want their deserved "pound of flesh" more than they want God to be glorified.

Turning the other cheek requires love and faith -

<u>Love</u> for the one who hurts us
<u>Faith</u> that God will right all wrongs and work everything out.

"It is the <u>strong</u> man who can love and suffer hurt; it is the weak man who thinks only of himself and hurts others to protect himself. He hurts others, then runs away to protect himself." (Wiersbe, p. 24)

II. Be Willing to Lay Aside Your Own <u>SECURITY</u> (v. 40)
(Sometimes I must suffer the loss of my right to <u>necessities</u>)

Lawsuits are rampant in the USA (there are "more lawsuits than people").

Being a lawyer is big business today.

In ancient days, often penalties were paid by clothing.

"Coat" = tunic, your under-garment

"Cloak" = your outer garment

It's like saying, "If you wrong someone and it was proven in court, then to show remorse, you not only give him your 3 piece suit, but your overcoat as well!"

"If a legal judgment is fairly made against us for a certain amount, we should be willing to offer even more in order to show our regret for any wrong we did and to show that we are not bitter or resentful against the one who sued us" (MacArthur, p. 334).

It is better to suffer loss than to shame your testimony by being vengeful (I Cor. 6:1-8).

III. Be Willing to Lay Aside Your Own <u>LIBERTY</u> (v. 41)
(Sometimes I must suffer the loss of my right to <u>freedom</u>)

"Compel" = to force; i.e. for someone to violate your liberty or freedom, by forcibly coercing you to do something.

"Roman law gave a soldier the right to <u>force</u> a civilian to carry his pack for a Roman <u>mile</u>, which was slightly shorter than our modern mile. The law, designed to relieve the soldier, not only caused great inconvenience to civilians but was made more despicable by the fact that the oppressed were made to carry the equipment and weapons of their oppressors. Outside of combat, the Roman soldier was probably never more hated than when he forced someone to carry his pack." (MacArthur, p. 334-5).

IV. Be Willing to Lay Aside Your Own <u>PROPERTY</u> (v. 42)
(Sometimes I must suffer the loss of my right to <u>possessions</u>)

This statement implies that the person has a real <u>need</u>.

Psalm 112:5 - *"A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion."*

Giving should always be done with discretion (to meet genuine needs)

We can justify our stingy-ness by saying, "It's mine! I worked for it! I earned it! I own it! And therefore, I am not obligated to share it! Who really owns it? Remember, we are only stewards."

ILLUS: A missionary in Papua New Guinea had a small garden next to his house. After trying many different vegetables without success, he finally discovered that pineapples would grow there. He had to wait 3 years for the plants to bear fruit, and he eagerly looked forward to tasting the delicious juicy pineapples. Unfortunately, he lived among natives that were the worst thieves in the world (including stealing the baby's diaper pins to use as earrings, the man's ball-point pen to put in place of the bone in their nose!). Before he could taste a single pineapple, they were all stolen. This happened again and again. He continually scolded, yelled at and rebuked the people. They in turn called him "Angry White Man." During furlough, he listened to a message about giving up all his rights to God, putting everything (even his pineapples) into God's hands. He returned to the field, telling God that the pineapple field was now His and he, the missionary, wouldn't even look at it anymore. The stealing continued as before, but the people noticed the difference in the missionary's attitude. Coming to him, they said, "Missionary, we see that you have become a Christian! You always used to preach to us about Christianity and we longed to really meet a Christian in person. Now you have become one!" Although humiliating to the missionary, this was the first step that led to the salvation of most of the tribe. (taken from "Pineapple Story" video)

CONCLUSION:

The only one who can suffer insult, injury and loss and never carry a grudge is the person who has died to self (Gal. 2:20 - *"I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life that I now life in the flesh, I live by the faith of the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."*

"George Mueller wrote, 'There was a day when I died, utterly died to George Mueller and his opinions, his preferences, and his tastes and his will. I died to the world, to its approval and its censure. I died to the approval or the blame of even my brethren and friends. And since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God.'." (MacArthur, p. 336)

The one who surrenders his rights is like:

--Abraham, who gave the best to Lot

--Joseph, who blessed his brothers

--David, who honored King Saul

--Elisha, who fed his enemies (the Assyrian army)

--Daniel, who graciously entered the lion's den

--Stephen, who prayed for his executioners

Doing good to those who do evil to you does <u>not</u> come <u>natural</u>.

But whoever said, we as Christians were to do what comes natural?
We are to live above the world, according to supernatural (Holy Spirit) promptings and impulses, not according to the flesh.

This is life on the higher plane!

Who is it that has done you wrong. Call that individual (or individuals) to mind.

Determine in your heart, right now, what good thing you are going to do for them. Maybe write a card, letter, mail a gift, invite them over for dinner, etc. Pray for them also.

<u>Hymn</u> - "All to Jesus I Surrender"

NOTE: The four key words in this outline "Dignity, security, liberty, and property" were adopted from John MacArthur's commentary on Matthew.

"How to Treat an Enemy"

Matthew 5:43-48
5/28/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 43

We need to know how to respond to our enemies.

How do I respond?

I. Our Response Should be <u>RADICALLY DIFFERENT</u> Than How We Are Treated (v. 44)
(The <u>Method</u> of how to treat an enemy)

II. Our Response Should be Like Our <u>HEAVENLY FATHER</u> (v. 45)
(The <u>Model</u> of how to treat an enemy)

III. Our Response Should be a <u>HIGHER STANDARD</u> Than the <u>WORLD</u> (v. 46-48)
(The <u>Measuring Stick</u> of how to treat an enemy)

"How to Treat an Enemy"

Matthew 5:43-48
5/28/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 43

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor" -

SEE: Lev. 19:17-18

"Love thy neighbor" -

According to Jesus, this is the second most important command (Mark 12:8-31; cp. Mt. 22:36-40)

"And hate thine enemy" -

The Bible in no place said this. This phrase is not in the O.T., but was something made up and quoted as if it were Law (the Jews of Jesus' day did this often - Mk. 7:7-9. V. 7 - *"Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."*)

****We need to know how to respond to our enemies.***

How do I respond?

I. Our Response Should be <u>RADICALLY DIFFERENT</u> Than How We Are Treated (v. 44)

(The <u>Method</u> of how to treat an enemy)

"But I say" - Again, Jesus speaks with independent authority (cp. 7:29)

"Love your enemies" - This demands a special kind of "love." The word love is "agape." This is a unique love, a love that not everyone possesses.

This is the same love God had for his enemies (Rom. 5:8, 10)

This love <u>cannot</u> be "<u>feeling</u>" orientated because it is impossible to feel good about those who practice evil and set themselves against you.

This love is "<u>will</u>" (decision) orientated. It is a decision of the <u>will</u>. It is a choice to love, even when one's emotions would not choose to do so.

Many justify grounds for divorce today by the statement: "I just don't love him anymore." I ask such people this: "Isn't he/she like an enemy to you?" They quickly respond, "Yes." To which I say: "Let's see how Jesus said we were to treat our enemies."

You can love anyone you <u>choose</u> to love! If you do not love anyone, it is not their fault. You are the one in sin!

How do you love your enemies?

1) You realize that <u>God</u> loves them (Jn. 3:16)

2) You realize that what they do to you, they do out of <u>spiritual blindness</u>

"Blindness" -

"The god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (II Cor. 4:4)

"Their minds were blinded" (II Cor. 3:14)

"The whole world lieth in wickedness" (I Jn. 5:19) (i.e. - the entire world of

unregenerate people lie in the lap of the Wicked One).
The unsaved are *"dead in trespasses and sins"* (Eph. 2:1) and are living their lives under the influence of Satan (Eph. 2:2)

3) You realize that you are no more worthy of God's love than they are of your love

He loved us when we were enemies of Him, under His wrath (Eph. 2:3-4)

ILLUS: The Christian who saved the life of his pursuing enemy who fell through the ice (MacArthur, p. 346).

Job said, *"Have I rejoiced at the extinction of my enemy, or exulted when evil befell him? No, I have not allowed my mouth to sin by asking for his life in a curse"* (Job 31:29-30)

Solomon said: *"He who rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished"* (Prov. 17:5); *" not say, Thus I shall do to him as he has done to me"* (Prov. 24:29).

The admonition to *"bless"* and *"do good"* is not found in the critical text.

"Bless them that curse you" -

"Bless" = to say a good word about

"Curse" = to come down on someone with an evil wish. lit. "the ones who are cursing you" - It's one thing to say something good about someone who cursed you out 20 years ago; it's another to say something good about someone who did it yesterday; and has been doing it continually.

"Do good" - SEE: Rom. 12:20 (cp. Prov. 25:21)

"Pray for them...which persecute you" - EX: Jesus - *"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"* (Lk. 23:34)

EX: Stephen - *"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*" (Acts 7:60)

"Persecute" - Certainly someone must have prayed for one of the chief persecutors--Saul-- who was wondrously saved and actually ended up preaching the same faith he once tried to destroy (Gal. 1:23)

It's hard to be enemies with someone you are praying for!

"Pray for them" - Often Christians fail to pray even for their family, loved ones, and closest friends; this exhortation to pray for our enemies shows the depth of our prayer life that Jesus expects us to have.

Pray that they will see the error of their ways. Pray that they would come to know about God's grace and mercy. Pray that God would grant them repentance. Pray that they would be forgiven and saved.

"Our 'enemies,' of course, do not always come in such life-threatening forms. Often they are ordinary people who are mean, impatient, judgmental, self-righteous, and spiteful--or just happen to disagree with us. In whatever personal relationships we have, God wants us to love. Whether a conflict is with our marriage partner, our children or parents, our friends and fellow church members, a devious business opponent, spiteful neighbor, political foe, or social antagonist, our attitude toward them should be one of prayerful love." (MacArthur, p. 346).

Our reactions should be 180 degrees opposite of how our enemies treat us.

The words: "Love. . . bless. . . do good. . . pray" express the whole gamete of our attempts to win them to Christ.

"Love" = our attitude
"Bless" = our words
"Do good" = our actions
"Pray" = our spirituality

II. Our Response Should be Like Our HEAVENLY FATHER (v. 45)
(The Model of how to treat an enemy)

"So that ye may be the children of your Father" -

*NOTE: the phrase "your Father" shows that the people whom Jesus is addressing already had a relationship with God, since He is called their "Father." However, responding to one's enemies is the way Jesus says that will show that we "take after" our Father. We will be like true children of His.

The word "become" points not to us attaining a relationship with God by works, but to us attaining a character like God by such good works.

The phrase "like father, like son" should apply not merely to human relationships, but spiritual. We behave like sons of God when we respond to our enemies the way our Heavenly Father does.

Certain actions and attitudes identify us with God. Others know your relationship with God when you have certain inexplicable virtues that the world does not have (EX: Mt. 5:9)

Love for others is the greatest manifestation of our sonship (new birth) (Jn. 13:35; I Jn. 4:16, 20).

"His sun" - God owns all of creation!

"Sun. . . rain" - Our Heavenly Father has a "common" grace that extends to the lost as well as to the saved.

God commands us to do *"good to ALL men, especially those of the household of faith"* (Gal. 6:10)

III. Our Response Should be a <u>HIGHER STANDARD</u> Than the <u>WORLD</u> (v. 46-48)
(The <u>Measuring Stick</u> of our to treat an enemy)

"What reward have ye?" - To some extent, our rewards in Heaven will be determined by the degree of contrast between our love and the ones we love. In other words:

<u>Their Attitude toward You</u>	<u>Your Attitude toward Them</u>	<u>Your Reward</u>
Love	Love	None
Mild dislike	Love	Good
Hatred	Love	Great

"Salute" - greet, say hello to

To greet only those of your faith, ethnic background, language, skin color, means nothing with God! We should offer the same loving response to all! People in our city need such warm greetings!

"What do ye <u>more</u> than others? - the theme of this Sermon requires us to do more than others (Mt. 5:20)

The tax collectors are quick to greet other tax collectors.

"Perfect" - Complete, mature. This injunction by Jesus is not meaning that we can be without sin, but that we should at least strive for that. We should make every effort to be like our Heavenly Father. To share the same qualities that He possesses so that we can deal with our enemies like He dealt with us when we were at enmity with Him.

Perfect" - lit. "to reach the goal." We should reach God's goal and not the one established by the publicans! His standard for human relationships should be ours, not the standard that others have set.

CONCLUSION:

How one responds to an enemy reveals the depth of his spirituality.

Loving an enemy does not come natural, but supernatural. As J. Oswald Sanders comments, "The Master expects from His disciples such conduct as can be explained only in terms of the supernatural."

You can't do it in your own power.

"BE REAL"

(The Need to Be Genuine)

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

6/4/2017

INTRODUCTION:

***Be real!** Beware of fake and phony religiosity!

Jesus warns us about the danger of being phony in 3 spiritual activities.

I. Beware of hypocritical <u>giving</u> (v. 1-4)

II. Beware of hypocritical <u>praying</u> (v. 5-6)

III. Beware of hypocritical <u>fasting</u> (v. 16-18)

"BE REAL"

(The Need to Be Genuine)

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

6/4/2017

INTRODUCTION:

We often have a picture in our minds that a sinner is someone who is living in the gutters of life, someone who spends his time boozing it up, shooting it up, snorting it up; some sexaholic, serial criminal, child molester, rapist; Satan worshipper; someone trapped in the slime and filth of the world.

But did you know that someone could give money, pray, and fast and never do the above mentioned sins. . . and yet be no better in God's evaluation. The most deceitful, hideous, elusive sinner is the one who practices religion with the evil motive of pleasing men.

Doing the right thing for the wrong reasons is worthless!

"The story is told of an eastern ascetic holy man who covered himself with ashes as a sign of humility and regularly sat on a prominent street corner of his city. When tourist asked permission to take his picture, the mystic would rearrange his ashes and give the best image of destitution and humility." (MacArthur, p. 352).

In Mt. 6:1-18, Jesus Christ exhorts his disciples to not make a <u>theatrical show</u> of their spiritual activity. In verse 1, the phrase ***"to be seen"*** is the Greek word "theomai" from which we get our English word "theater." The word "hypocrite" (v. 2, 5, 16) originally referred to a play actor--one who wore a mask to pretend he was somebody or something he was not.

Examples of religious hypocrites:

1) Judas
2) Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8)
3) The Pharisees (See: Mt. 23:14; 25-28)
4) Ananias & Saphira (Acts 5:1-10)
5) Satan and his messengers (*"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end*

shall be according to their works.") (II Cor. 11:13-15)

ILLUS: Aesops' fable of a wolf that disguised itself as a sheep (MacArthur, p. 353)

To summarize this context, Jesus is basically commanding us to:

1. Give without hypocrisy (6:1-4)
2. Pray without hypocrisy (6:5-6)

& 3. Fast without hypocrisy (6:16-18)

***Be real!** Beware of fake and phony religiosity!

Jesus warns us about the danger of being phony in 3 spiritual activities.

I. Beware of hypocritical giving (v. 1-4)

V. 1

"Take heed" - Be careful, beware. This abrupt, serious warning shows us the danger we all face of being insincere.

"Alms" - Acts of righteousness; any righteous deed (whether by word or action)

"Before men" - Since many righteous things are done in the presence of people (it can't be avoided), Jesus is quick to clarify by the words: *"to be seen of them"* (i.e. with a goal, intention, or purpose of having them notice).

Paul's testimony is this: *"For do I not persuade men or God? or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."* (Gal. 1:1-10

Cp. Eph. 6:5-7 - Workers are to work as unto Christ not with *"eyeservice as men pleasers."*

Sometimes when someone does something publicly when they could have done it privately, it may indicate a desire to be noticed (Ex: people who purposely gave me their

offerings, rather than putting it in the offering plate).

Don't try to impress others with your religiosity.

"No reward" - Why not? Because God rewards motives not just mere actions!

Why should God reward someone who did something good, but did not do it for Him?

V. 2

"Alms" - ("elamosune" from "eleamon") meaning "merciful."

Alms giving refers to a merciful benevolence. A charitable giving. A pity that effects the wallet.

"Hypocrites" - those who "play act"; to hide under a mask. To perform under pretence.

The sounding of a ***"trumpet"*** would be so as to get everyone's attention.

"In the synagogues" - where they would give to God

"In the streets" - where they would give to the needy

"Glory of men" - that they might be glorified (honored, credited, extolled, exalted, praised) by men

It is so vain (empty, worthless) to live for men's applause, pat on the back. Those who do so had better savor it and enjoy it because they are going to get nothing from God. --***"They have their reward"*** - They already have received their reward from men.

They wanted man's award and they got it; therefore, when the eternal, incorruptible awards are given out in Heaven, they will not get one.

V. 3

"Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" - a figure of speech describing how we do not need to inform others about our giving.

Since most of the world is "right handed", perhaps it is usually done by that hand. Don't let the right hand brag to the left.

When we give, we should keep it as anonymous as possible so that only God gets the glory.

V. 4

"Jewish tradition said that there was in the Temple a "Chamber of Secrets" into which the devout used to put their gifts in secret so that the poor could receive support there from in secret" (Ryrie note).

The only eyes we should seek to impress are God's.

He sees every move we make, every check we write, every dollar we give. When no one else sees, God keeps accurate books and He will reward in His time and in full view of others. (His reward will be evident [visible] so as to prove to men that He is faithful.

II. Beware of hypocritical praying (v. 5-6)

V. 5

"They love to pray" - They get a certain emotional thrill about being known as "Godly."

"Synagogues to street corners" - were places where they could be easily seen.

*In the synagogues they would impress the religious crowd
*In the street corners they would impress the social crowd (everyone who passed by)

Note: The greek word translated "street" refers to a very wide, major street -- where they would have a large audience.

Even today the religious Hasidic Jews pray in public view at their times of prayer.

Don't do anything to merely impress men (people). What matters is what God thinks of you.

*NOTE: This verse does not mean that public prayer (Ex: in church) is wrong. See: Lk. 3:21, 11:1; Mt. 14:19; Jn. 11:41, 42; Acts 20:36; I Cor. 14:16. (Ex: Solomon's public prayer at the dedication of the Temple - II Chron. 6).

There is nothing wrong with leading others in public prayer just so long as you are not praying to impress men!

Public prayer is not wrong; wrongly motivated prayer is.

When we pray in public (Ex: at church, at home, etc.) be very careful to pray what you mean, and mean what you pray.

--Use God's name sincerely. To utter the Lord's Name insincerely or without meaning is to take His name in vain! (Exod. 20:7)

--Use your language sincerely. Don't turn on a "prayer language."

Examples:

--1611 "Thee's & Thou's"
--super "spiritual" lingo
--a different tone and inflection than your natural voice
--an extra long prayer (Mk. 12:40)

Beware: Sometimes we are unconsciously tempted to increase the eloquence and length of our public prayers while we decrease in sincerity (ILLUS: One time a preacher in Boston said after praying an ornate and elaborate prayer, "That was the most eloquent prayer ever offered to a Boston audience." Obviously he was more concerned about impressing the audience, than he was in making contact with God.

"The hypocrites' sin was pride, a desire to uplift self, (Note: such prayer is actually prayed to no one but themselves -- See: Luke 18:11)

They wanted the recognition of men, and that is ALL they would receive! *The rewards of men are cheap and hollow.

"Closet" - an inner room; any small room or storage closet. Jesus' point is "pray in the most private room available."

NOTE: Again it must be noted that Jesus is not condemning public prayer; rather, the wrong practices of the Pharisees. The problem is not location but attitude.

Christ is saying: "Go to a private place where you will not be tempted to show off!

V. 6

"After you shut the door" - Don't have devotions just so that others in your family can see or hear

"Reward thee openly - God desires others to see His answers to your prayers, not for other to see you pray.

III. Beware of hypocritical fasting (v. 16-18)

V. 16

"Fast" - The Greek word translated "fast" is nesteia (ne = a negative prefix; and esthio = to eat); hence, the word means to "not eat"

"Fasting" was (and is) a voluntary abstinence from eating food so as to spend the time normally spend in preparing and consuming food in prayer.

Note: Food preparation was a process which demanded more time than in our instant-microwave society.

"Fasting" and "Prayer" are constantly tied together (Ezra 8:23; Neh. 1:4; Mt. 17:21; Mk. 9:292; Acts 13:3; I Cor. 7:5)

You can pray without fasting, but you cannot fast Biblically without praying. Fasting is an affirmation of intense prayer, a corollary of deep spiritual struggle before God. It is never an isolated act of a ceremony or ritual that has some inherent efficacy or merit" (MacArthur, p. 404).

"Fasting" is most often practiced when someone is so burdened (upset) with something that food has no appeal. Their heart is focused on an urgent need so the person mourns and cries out to God for help. Ex: David for his son (II Sam. 12:16, 22); Nehemiah for God's city (Neh. 1:4).

"Fasting" is the response of a burdened or broken heart that is so absorbed with the interests of others or the will of God that one sets aside his own needs and desires and humbles himself and cries out to God with a sincere heart for mercy.

"Fasting" is never a command for a N.T. believer. Jesus said men ought "*always to pray"* but not men ought "always to fast." The words ***"When ye fast"*** assume that believers will do so in their life, but does not command it.

"They disfigure their faces" - they perhaps would frown, such in their cheeks, giving themselves a gloomy appearance.

"They would wear old clothes, sometimes purposely torn and soiled, dishevel their hair, cover themselves with dirt and ashes, and even use make-up in order to look pale and sickly" (MacArthur, p. 401).

(Ex: how some people love to complain about how much they "suffer for Jesus"; some love to act tired or weary so as to impress others of their diligence or hard work)

Our Lord rejects "fasting" that centers on outward appearance.

CONCLUSION:

Leave the bookkeeping to God! He will not miss giving a single reward.

"The greatest reward a believer can have is the knowledge that he has pleased his Lord." (MacArthur, p. 360)

God is interested in the heart, not mere external, insincere displays of piety.

Phony "spiritual" practices cannot fool the Lord.

"You are what you really are when you are all alone."

What you do when no one is watching you reveals your true character.

Too many today, like the ancient Pharisees love "*the praise of men more than the praise of God"*

Christianity is not theatrics, it is not an act, it's not a game of pretending; it's to be a real, genuine relationship with God that results in real, genuine works for God.

In a world of facades, fake appearances, false impressions, deceitful image, masks, artificiality, we can make our greatest impact by just simple being REAL (genuine)!

Whatever you do, do it for God! Let Him be your Reason, your motive, the one you aim to

please! Do it for God! When you do, you are real!

"THE PATTERN FOR PRAYER"

Matthew 6:7-15

10/25/92

INTRODUCTION:

***Let Jesus teach you about prayer.**

I. Don't pray . . . this way (6:5-8)

A. Don't pray to impress men (v. 5-6)

B. Don't pray to impress God (v. 7-8)

II. Pray this way (6:9-15)

Follow Christ's model, example, outline, or pattern of prayer:

A. Pray for God to be glorified (v. 9-10) [Adoration]

1. God's pre-eminence (His Name) (v. 9 - "*Hallowed be Thy Name"*)

2. God's program (His Kingdom) (v. 10 - *"Thy Kingdom come"*)

3. God's plan (His will) (v. 10b - *"Thy will be done"*)

B. Pray for God to meet our needs (v. 11-15) [Petition]

1. God's provision (Pray about the needs of our present)
"Give us this day our daily bread" (v. 11)

2. God's pardon (Pray about the failures of our past)
"Forgive us our debts" (v. 12)

3. God's protection (Pray about the dangers or our future
"Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil"

CONCLUSION: God's Praise (*"Thine is the Kingdom. . . power. . . glory. . . forever, Amen."*) Verse 13b

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B. Don't pray to impress God (v. 7-8)

Prayer for the Jew had become a ritual in Christ's day, a routine. The words of prayers were written out and then simply read or repeated from memory.

EX: A typical faithful Jew would repeat the "Shema" ("hear"), which consisted of Deut. 6:4 and other verses two times a day. They would also repeat the "Shemoneh Esreh" ("the eighteen"), which consisted of 18 prayers which were recited in the synagogue.

Their errors:

1) They had limited the content of their prayers
2) They had limited the time of their praying (they only prayed at specific times and occasions; EX: third, sixth, and ninth hours (9 a.m., 12 noon, and 3 p.m.). Cp. Acts 3:1)

"Vain repetitions" - meaningless chatter; babbling.

"Vain" - empty, hollow

"Repetitions" - to repeat over and over. NOTE: Since God is our "Father," we should speak to him like a child speaks to his father. Would any child recite a vain formula over and over and expect to communicate?

"Heathen - Gentiles; the Jews picked up this practice from the Gentiles who believed that quantity of words in praying was more important than quality of prayer.

EX: Prophets of Baal (I Kings 18:26-29; and the unbelieving Ephesians (Acts 19:34), who said for two hours straight "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

EX: Catholics, who 1) light prayer candles (they believe that their requests will continue to ascend repetitiously to God as long as the candle is lit); and 2) use Rosary beads (they count off "Hail Mary's" and "Our Father's", 'which is totally contradictory to this context which includes "The Lord's Prayer (v. 9-15). The Catholics acquired this practice from the Buddhists by way of the Spanish Muslims in the Middle Ages (cp. Broadus, "Matthew" p. 30)

When you pray:

1) Every word should count!
2) Don't repeat "Lord", "God," etc. in prayer unless you mean it. This is taking His name in vain otherwise.
3) Don't pray same words at every meal, etc. Think before you utter any syllable before God! Be sincere! Don't try to impress others or God by your religiosity! God wants your heart and mind. Give Him your full attention when you come into His presence!

NOTE: Again, we must remember that Jesus is not forbidding our meaningful, sincere repetitious asking. As a matter of fact, this is what he commands (SEE: Luke 18:2-7)

*Paul asked for his thorn to be removed 3 times (II Cor. 12:7-8)
*Christ asked for the cup of suffering and separation to be removed 3 times (Mt. 26:39-44)

Sincere repetition is not wrong - **vain** repetition is!

1) Engage your brain when you pray (put your mind into it! Cp. I Cor. 14:15 - *"I will pray with the understanding also"*)

2) Don't recite spiritual-sounding words or "magical formulas." "When a man begins to think more of how he is praying rather than what he is praying, his prayer dies upon his lips" - Barclay, p. 197

Remember: God knows your needs (v. 8)

"Father knows" - By our praying, we are instructing ourselves (we are simply acknowledging our needs before God so that when He answers us He is glorified). We are not telling God something He does not already know!

God knows all things - He does not need you to remind Him (cp. 6:32)

God hears all things - He does not need you to repeat yourself over and over.

Even though God knows you needs, He wants you to ask! When God responds to your asking, it gives the opportunity for Him to manifest His power, majesty, love, and providence (SEE: John 14:13)

God is more willing to answer than you are to pray!

He does not have to be coaxed, pestered, battered, or impressed before He will answer our prayers!

Before you pray, don't worry about the choice of words, worry about having the right heart behind the words. Make sure you are right with God!

D. L. Moody once felt so overwhelmed by all the blessings God was showering on him that he prayed, "God stop!" Many of us, sad to say, need to say "God start." But He can't if you pray with out pure motives, or without a proper mind-set!

II. Pray this way (6:9-15)

Follow Christ's model, example, outline, or pattern of prayer:

Intro: This actually is not the "Lord's prayer" but the disciple's prayer" Reason = The Lord never needed to ask forgiveness because He never sinned (v.12).

In verses 9 - 13 our Lord gives a succinct (to the point) but complete outline of what true prayer should be.

"In fewer than 70 words we have a masterpiece of the infinite mind of God, who alone could compress every conceivable element of true prayer into such a brief & simple form." (MacArthur - Matthew p.374)

This prayer was not meant to be repeated as a prayer itself.

1. This would contradict the previous context (v.7 "vain repetitions")
2. He uses the words "after this manner" which means "in this way"; "along these lines"
3. No where in the N.T. do we ever find this prayer repeated.

This sample prayer was never to be a substitute for our own prayers but a guide for them.

Its like an outline, or a skeleton that we are to flesh out with our own words of praise, adoration & petitions.

A. PRAY FOR GOD TO BE GLORIFIED (v. 9-10) [Adoration]

"our Father" = pater (gk.); Because Jesus spoke Aramaic He most likely used the term *"abba"* - daddy (aramaic) which is transliterated in the Greek in Mk.14:36; Ro.8:15; Gal.4:6.

The word "father" shows:

1. A close, intimate relationship

(note: Dads - Your children are forming their concept of God by how you live & treat them)

2. An end to all fear (ex. Pagan deities were unapproachable)

3. An end to all worry (He will provide Mt.7:11; Jn.10:29)

4. An end of all loneliness (He will never leave nor forsake us - though our earthly father or friends may)

5. An end of all selfishness - *"**our** father"* (note: The whole prayer is unselfish - no singular personal pronouns - no "I, me, my" (cp. Daniel's prayer Chap.9)

6. The necessity of our submissive obedience.

7. He only will give us what is best for us. *"If you being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children how much more..."* (Mt. 7:7)
He won't give everything you ask.

The phrase *"Our Father which art in Heaven"* shows:

--Our God is personal ("Our Father")
--Our God is approachable ("Our Father")
--Our God is powerful ("in Heaven")
"Heaven is not His postal address--it is an indication of His supremacy, exaltation, and power" --Doug MacLachlan

You pray for God to be glorified when you pray for His pre-eminence, program and plan. (note: outline taken from MacArthur - Matthew)

In this sample prayer we also see by implication what our relationship should be to God, what our Attitude should be, and explicitly what our prayer should consist of.

1. GOD'S PREEMINENCE - (HIS NAME) *"hallowed be thy name"*

1. OUR RELATIONSHIP -

we see His deity (the fact that He is God)
we see ourselves as worshippers

2. OUR ATTITUDE - reverence

3. OUR PRAYER
God's "name" represents all that He is. His character, plan & will. (ill. of our names & the meaning they have; ex. "Vincent" means conqueror or victorious one.)

Jesus = Savior
Christ = Anointed One, Messiah

God's titles show His character and attributes:
Yahweh - the eternal one; the one who is
Elohim - the powerful creator
Jehovah-Jireh - the Lord will provide
Jehovah-Shalom - the Lord our peace

The phrase *"Hallowed by Thy Name"* means "May your reputation (of your character, plan, and will) be held up as sacred, holy, reverenced.

"hallowed" = to uphold as holy, sacred, set apart. We need to revere, honor, glorify His name. Ps. 111:9 - *"Holy and reverend is His name"* (reverend = to fear, stand in awe of, reverence)

Cp. Israel's profaning of God's holy Name - Ez. 36:16-27; cp. Ez. 20:9, 14, 22, 39, 44)

We hallow His name by obeying Him.
We hallow His name by not taking it in vain.

"O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together" Ps.34:3

Our prayer should be: "Lord, help me to bring honor to Your

reputation."

2. **GOD'S PROGRAM** - (HIS KINGDOM) *"Thy kingdom come"*

1. OUR RELATIONSHIP -
   He is sovereign (He is king),
   we are His subjects.

2. OUR ATTITUDE - loyalty

   This phrase shows that His kingdom has <u>not</u> come yet! (Rev. 20:1-10) But one day it will. Today we (via soul-winning) are building a <u>constituency</u> for that future Kingdom. Are you burdened for lost souls?

3. OUR PRAYER -
   "Thy kingdom come" - We should desire to see Him reigning. His program should be the preoccupation of our lives & prayers.

   Satan rules this present system.

   It will "come" suddenly, when the king of the kingdom comes. Cp. I Cor. 13 *"When that which is perfect shall come..."*

   Man's efforts (through social programs etc.) will not bring the kingdom in (contrary to the post-Millennial viewpoint)

   We should pray, "Lord, help me to honor your program that You have set up for today - the local church" (I Tim. 3:15).

3. **GOD'S PLAN** - (HIS WILL) ***"thy will be done"***

1. OUR RELATIONSHIP -
   He is in authority (He is Master)
   We are His servants

2. OUR ATTITUDE - submission

3. OUR PRAYER -
   "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven"

   a. Pray that His will will <u>become your will</u>.
   (to be dedicated to God's will is to be opposed to 1) your own independent will, and 2) Satan's will.

   To pray for God's will is to pray:
   1) for righteousness to win & sin to lose

   2) for souls to be saved. *"God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"*

   b. Pray that His will will prevail over the earth as it (does) in Heaven:

   How is God's will done in Heaven?
   It's done <u>completely</u>

It's done immediately
It's done constantly
It's done joyfully

(Doug MacLachlan)

God's ultimate will is changeless - Is. 14:24
God's permissive will is alterable - the fact that we must pray that His "will be done on earth" indicates that it is not always done on earth.

While every unbeliever does not do His will, the believer certainly should!

God's will for you is not hidden! His will is His word. The commands of the Bible that apply to you must be obeyed because they are God's will.

The greatest enemy of God's will is pride.

*We should pray: "Lord, may Your will be my will"

B. PRAY FOR GOD TO MEET OUR NEEDS (v. 11 - 13a)

My needs, and the needs of others! Note plurals (*"give us"*)

1. GOD'S PROVISION - (pray about the needs of our present)

1. OUR RELATIONSHIP -
   He is the Giver
   We are dependent

2. OUR ATTITUDE - trust (reliance upon)

3. OUR PRAYER -
   "Give us this day our daily bread"

   a. *"Give us this day"* - Prayer is daily.
   Someone has said that "Many Christians offer their prayers like sailors use their pumps -only **when the ship leaks**." Riches have a way of taking wings and

flying away. Paul calls them "uncertain riches."

b. It is a sin of indifference or ingratitude not to recognize daily that our physical needs are met by God.

c. God's promise to those who trust Him: Psalm 37:25.

d. Daily - we must rely on the Lord one day at a time. Don't worry about the future. God's provision is daily, not weekly, monthly, or yearly.

e. To pray for our daily bread in a land of such abundance seems needless. However, this request extends beyond asking for (what we call) "bread." We must request God to meet our physical needs -- everything which is necessary for the preservation of life.

f. Although you work to earn money to "put bread on the table," be careful not to be deceived into thinking you are carrying your own load. See Deut. 8:18.

*Our prayer: "Lord, help me to never take any of your blessings for granted, nor worry about how my needs will be met. I trust you to provide."

2. GOD'S PARDON (pray about the failures of the past)

1. OUR RELATIONSHIP -
   He is the Savior
   We are the sinner

2. OUR ATTITUDE - sorrow for sin

3. OUR PRAYER -
   "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"

   a. These "debts" are debts that we owe God because of our sin (Luke 11:4 in the same context has the word "sins" instead of debts).

--The words are used synonymously. To sin against God is to be in debt to Him. ("We owed a debt we could not pay; He paid a debt He did not owe")

b. Sin is man's greatest problem, therefore his greatest need is forgiveness.

c. Our need for continual forgiveness is more important than our need for daily bread.

d. God has already forgiven the believer judicially (as Judge) the day he trusted Christ, which gave us a relationship with Him. Now, we need God's forgiveness daily (as our Father) to keep in fellowship with Him.

e. I Jn. I:9 - Confession is essential to forgiveness.
It takes real character to admit you are wrong.

f. *The prerequisite for God's forgiving you, is your forgiving others (if you have not forgiven your husband, friend, etc., then you (right now) have not been forgiven by God).

g. The power of a home, the power of a church, etc., is short-circuited if there is unforgiveness (unresolved conflicts). See v. 14, 15.

NOTE: This "forgiveness" refers to God's parental forgiveness, rather than judicial forgiveness (cp. Mt. 18:21-35)

*Our Prayer: "Lord, cleanse me from my sin, so that I can be close to You and used by You."

3. GOD'S PROTECTION - (pray about the dangers of our future)

1. OUR RELATIONSHIP -
He is the guide
We are vulnerable, "prone to wander" like sheep

2. OUR ATTITUDE - humility

3. OUR PRAYER -
"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"

a. The Greek word "temptation" can be translated "test" or "temptation" James 1:13 says that God is <u>not</u> even remotely connected with tempting anyone to do evil. So the word "temptation" must be understood as a test (from God's point of view) that might lead to a temptation (from Satan's point of view)

b. We know that trials (tests) are a means for our growing (Ja. 1:2-3), but we should have <u>no desire</u> to be in a place where even the <u>possibility</u> of sin is increased.

This prayer is just pious hypocrisy if we go deliberately into situations which we know are enticements to sin. This prayer will cause us to search our bookshelves, judge the music we listen to, and dictate the company we keep.

c. What we are to pray is this: "Lord, don't ever lead us into a trial that will present such a temptation that we will not be able to resist it." *"God is faithful . . ."* I Cor. 10:13.

d. What we need to pray is: "God, guard our eyes, ears, mouth, feet, hands, so that whatever we see, hear, say, or do, or wherever we go, we will be protected from sin."

e. ***"Evil"*** -- "<u>the</u> evil" in Greek. A reference to "the evil one" - Satan. Jesus prayed that we would be kept from <u>the</u> evil (one) - Jn. 17:15.

f. We (in ourselves) are inadequate to battle evil, we need God to deliver (rescue) us.

*Our prayer: "God, guard my eyes, ears, mouth, feet, hands, and heart so that I will be protected from sin.

CONCLUSION: **God's <u>Praise</u>** (*"Thine is the Kingdom. . . power. . . glory. . . forever, Amen."*) Verse 13b

I. After praying for God to be glorified
--pre-eminence --program --plan

II. After praying for God to meet our needs
--provision --pardon --protection

. . . Then conclude with PRAISE! (v. 13b)

"Thine is the kingdom. . . power. . . glory"

This phrase, though not in the ancient manuscripts of the critical text, is a most suited conclusion to this model prayer.

--The Kingdom belongs to God alone
(Man's kingdoms will all end and give way to His kingdom)

--The power (might) belongs to God alone
(Any might, strength, fortitude, ability, etc., that any being [human or angelic] has, has come from the Almighty!)

--The glory (credit, honor, praise) belongs to God alone

"Forever" - God's kingdom, power, and glory are not temporal (like man's) but eternal

"Amen" - so be it. It will be done!

$ TREASURES $



Matthew 6:19-24
7/9/2017

INTRODUCTION:

***What treasures do you value?**



I. *The TREASURES You Value Reveal*
HOW <u>WISE</u> YOU ARE (v. 19-20)



II. *The TREASURES You Value Reveal*
WHERE YOUR <u>HEART</u> IS (v. 21)

III. *The TREASURES You Value Reveal*



WHAT YOUR <u>FOCUS</u> IS (v. 22-23)



IV. *The TREASURES You Value Reveal*
WHO YOUR <u>MASTER</u> IS (v. 24)

CONCLUSION:

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WHERE YOUR _____ IS (v. 21)



III. *The TREASURES You Value Reveal*
WHAT YOUR _____ IS (v. 22-23)



IV. *The TREASURES You Value Reveal*
WHO YOUR _____ IS (v. 24)

CONCLUSION:

$ TREASURES $

Matthew 6:19-24

7/9/2017

INTRODUCTION:

Since the Fall, "human beings are naturally thing-oriented. We are strongly inclined to be wrapped up in seeking, acquiring, enjoying, and protecting material possessions" (MacArthur, p. 407).

***What treasures do you value?**

I. The TREASURES You Value Reveal HOW WISE YOU ARE (v. 19-20)

V. 19

EX: People who buy "The Wall Street Journal" to gain wisdom in investments.

Who is really the wise investor?

The words ***"lay up"*** (thesaurizo) and ***"treasures"*** (thesauros) come from the same Greek root. Our English word "thesaurus" refers to a treasury of words.

"Lay not up" - Don't treasure up; don't stock up; don't live for the vain accumulation of riches.

Present imperative - indicates that Jesus is not against your having a bank account; indeed, Scripture commands this (Proverbs).

He means: Don't have a lifestyle of hoarding treasure (Heb. 13:5 - *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."*). Don't make it your life's ambition. If wealth comes your way, praise God for it and use it for God's glory, but don't give yourself greedily to acquiring it and don't glory in the money (Jer. 9:23 - *"Let not the rich man glory in his riches"*).

We are stewards of our earthly "treasures" (money) -- not owners. All we have ultimately belongs to Him, We simply manage what He has entrusted to us.

Perhaps one reason why many people continually struggle to "make ends meet," is that they are not faithful stewards of what God gave them. He gives you little because He cannot trust you with much (Luke 16:10-11 - *"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"*)

It's not wrong to have possessions; it's wrong when those possessions have you!

"The foundational truth that underlies the commandments not to steal or covet is the right of personal property" (MacArthur, p. 410).

To honestly earn and save is wise and good, but it is wrong when earning and saving become the preoccupation of our lives!

"Moths" - attack rich clothing

"Rust" - attacks precious metals, cars

Thieves" - attack jewelry, amusements products (Ex: TV, VCR, boom boxes, etc.)

The point: Nothing material in this life is permanent! It will either be eaten, corrupted, or stolen. (or if you die, left behind). SEE: I Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19

Reasons to "flee" from covetousness and to be content (satisfied) with what we have: Money is:

1) Temporary - We can't bring it with us (v. 7)

2) Enticing - A trap (v. 9)

3) Destructive (v. 10)

4) Uncertain (v. 17)

--Trust God, not money (v. 17b)
--Give it, don't hoard it (v. 18)

The world's motto: "Get it fast, keep it long, and enjoy it all.

EX: The man who stored up wealth with the goal of an early, lazy retirement (Luke 12:16-21)

Col. 3:1-2 - *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."*

V. 20

The best investment is eternal. The smartest investor is the one who gives his life (his time, talents, and treasure) for the cause of Jesus Christ.

The dividends you earn can't be ripped off, nor can they be taxed by the IRS!

"Many millionaires will be heavenly paupers, and many paupers will be heavenly millionaires" (MacArthur, p. 411). The church of Smyrna was poor (in poverty) but Jesus called them rich" (Rev. 2:9).

One day God's people will rest from their labors, but their works will follow them (right into Heaven). (Rev. 14:13).

How do I lay up treasures in Heaven?

1. Be a Giver (Mt. 19:21 - *"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me."*)

   (Luke 12:33 - "*See that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth")*

2. Be a soulwinner (Dan. 12:3)

3. Be a worker (for Christ) (I Cor. 3:8-15)

--Support your Lord's work!
--Help a brother in need!
--Invest in the Gospel ministry!
--Realize that there is a cause that is greater than your own.

When we get to Heaven and look back over our lives,s I'm sure we will grieve over what could have been. What we could have done!

HYMN: "Must I go and empty-handed? Must I meet my Savior so??

I have found that a person who unselfishly invests in God's work, not only has the guaranteed assurance of rewards in Heaven but the rewards are also received in this life!

Prov. 3:9-10 - *"Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."*

Luke 6:38 - *"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."*

II Cor. 9:6 - *"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."*

II. The TREASURES You Value Reveal WHERE YOUR HEART IS (v. 21)

A person's values reveal the person's heart.

The quality of one's values (priorities) reveals the quality of one's heart.

How we handle our treasure is a sure barometer of our spiritual condition!

One's treasure cannot be separated from one's heart. Some are wealthy, but their wealth is not what they treasure (their heart is right). Some are poor, but they wish they were rich (their heart is wrong).

How do we determine what our treasure is? Your treasure is whatever you spend the most time thinking about. Whatever preoccupies your thoughts is your treasure and reveals the location of your heart. Whatever you spend the most time thinking about is actually--to you-- your "god." *"Covetousness is idolatry"*

Some spend most of their time thinking about:

1) Career advancement - this is their treasure and idol
2) Financial investment - this is their treasure and idol
3) Sexual involvement - this is their treasure and idol
4) House construction or improvement - this is their treasure and idol
5) Fame and fortune - this is their treasure and idol

We should not abuse (through mismanagement, neglect, deliberate destruction) the material things we have, but we shouldn't idolize them either.

III. The TREASURES You Value Reveal WHAT YOUR FOCUS IS (v. 22-23)

V. 22

Much that comes into the heart (v. 21), must first come through the gate of our eyes.

"If. . . thine eye be single" - meaning not double-visioned, at one point focusing on the world and its splendor and wealth, and then looking at our Heavenly Master (v. 24). Just as we can't serve two masters, so we can't focus both on the world and Christ. *"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways"*

V. 23

"Worldly ambition has a strong fascination for us. The spell of materialism is very hard to break" (Stott, cited by MacArthur, p. 409).

Our eyes are like windows. When clear, the radiance of Christ comes beaming through. But when our eyes become evil (symbolizing dirt and filth of the blinding effect of materialism), our whole inner self is darkened; the joy is gone; Christ seems distant, and our life is miserable! Keep your focus! Don't let money impair your vision.

IV. The TREASURES You Value Reveal WHO YOUR MASTER IS (v. 24)

Just as we can't lay up treasure both on earth and heaven (v. 19-20), just as our heart can't be both wrong and right at the same time (v. 21); and just as we can't have clean single vision and blurring double vision at the same time (v. 22-23), we can't serve two masters at the same time (v. 24).

No man can serve two masters (lords). Reason: A master or lord demands total allegiance.

The illustration is of a slave or servant. He cannot be a slave to 2 owners at the same time (ILLUS: of a worker who has 2 bosses, both asking him to do different things. It doesn't work.)

"Serve" - doulos. To be a committed slave. We were once servants of sin (our old master), but not are servants of God (our new master) (Rom. 6:16-22)

Money can't reign as king on our hearts if God is there, and vice versa. There can be only one throne sitter on our hearts. Split allegiance will not be acceptable (James 4:4).

Since there is only one true Lord (Eph. 4:5; I Cor. 8:5-6), there can be only one true loyalty, devotion, commitment.

Just as a marriage is one man being committed to one woman, so the Christian life involves the Bride of Christ being sold out or committed to only one groom - Jesus Christ (cp. Eph. 5).

Because we are each only one person, none of us can (at the same time) be living for money and God.

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon" - (materialism)

You will have to choose whom you are going to serve! Be a Joshua, who said, *"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"* (Josh. 24:15).

CONCLUSION:

Some questions to ask:

Will it matter in Eternity? (v. 19-20)

Is it worthy of my heart? (v. 21)

Will it cause me to lose my focus?

Will it interfere with my Master's will for me? (v. 24)

Illustrations:

A Frenchman who came to the U.S. from Paris met with a very sad mishap. He brought with him to this country 10,000 francs, which was all his fortune. He met a seemingly friendly Spaniard at his boarding-house, and the Frenchman trusted the Spaniard enough to loan him his money. The Frenchman accepted from the Spaniard five gold bricks as collateral for the loan, but when the Spaniard went away, and the Frenchman took his bricks to a jeweler to assess their monetary value, he was sadly informed that they were composed of copper, tin, and zinc, without one particle of gold. The despair of the poor Frenchman when he discovered that he had been swindled out of all his little fortune was very sad to behold. But how many are deceived in a similar manner. Men and women invest all their time and talent in glittering and delusive treasures which promise happiness and peace, but one needs to realize that they are only a base alloy. Many who are deceived in this fashion are crying out that life is not worth the living, and we see stories in the news media every day of those who have wickedly put an end to their lives because they had not the courage to rise out of their defeats. But those who live genuine lives, doing the will of God with honest hearts, and seeking always to please him, do not find life a cheat. These people find life worth the living, and have heaven added as a crown of glory which never fades away.

William Randolph Hearst was a very wealthy newspaper publisher who had an incredible collection of art. The Hearst mansion in northern California is a testament to his insatiable desire for artistic treasures. On one occasion he learned of some artwork he was determined to obtain. He sent his agent abroad to search for the treasure. After months of investigating, the agent reported that the treasure had been found. To further sweeten the find, Hearst learned that the relic wouldn't cost him a dime. He already owned it. The rediscovered piece was in Hearst's warehouse with many other treasures that had likewise never been uncrated. The desire for acquiring more can sometimes blind us from what we already possess.

- Illustrations for Biblical Preaching, Michael Green, editor, 1989, p. 394

Certs, Breath Savers, chewing gum are all big sellers. Americans are conscious about "bad breath," and they spend millions of dollars to hide or change it. The problem is that the remedies do not last long.

There is a bizarre new breath mint on the market now which lasts for two hours. It is a time released pill that sits between your upper gum and cheek and slowly puts out a minty taste for hours. You do not have to chew it, or even suck on it.

The price for a bottle of 200 mints is $30. It seems high, but the selling point is that it is really more economical.

Everybody is interested in things that last. Our cars wear out, so do clothes, shoes, and everything about us. The faces on Mount Rushmore have to be continually repaired. Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:19 that all earthly treasures are beset by risks and finally end in total loss.

The real treasure of wealth is to be found in heaven. We can store truth, love, and faith. Our emphasis must always be on the values that last.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my word;" says Jesus, "shall not pass away" (Mark 13:31).

J. H. Jowett has an illustration that probably hits too close to home for most of us. His subject is that of materialism, and its effect on Christianity:

"The really good things, the big things, are inside and not outside the man. The big thing is not luxury, but contentment; not a big house, but a big satisfaction; not accumulated art treasures, but a fine, artistic appreciation; not a big library, but a serene studiousness; not a big estate, but a large vision. The big things are not 'the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen' (2 Cor. 4:18). 'Seek peace and ensue it' (1 Pet. 3:11). 'Seek the things that are above' (Col. 3:1). 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness' (Matt. 6:33). Such are the goodly pearls."

A man lost his life in a New York City fire through his own foolishness. He lived with his wife on the fourth floor of an apartment building. The fire started in the kitchen of the apartment occupied by him. A woman living on the same floor first saw the flames, and her cries of terror awakened the tenants. The fire was then crackling fiercely near an airshaft and filled the halls with smoke. An officer came to the man and his wife, and was astonished to see that the man was determined to go back while the wife was trying to drag him to safety. The officer went to her assistance, and they soon pulled the man out of the house. A little later, some firemen who were hauling a line of hose through the scuttle in the roof found the foolish fellow near his flat with his clothing almost burned from his body. He had gone back into his room for some papers, which he had secured, only to have them burn in his hands. He got the papers, but lost his life. There are many that are holding on to worldly treasures at the expense of everything that can make life precious. They are losing their souls to obtain gain that must soon be loss.

Chrysostom, the ancient Church Father, was a beautiful example of true Christian courage. When he stood before the Roman Emperor, he was threatened with banishment if he still remained a Christian. Chrysostom replied, "You cannot, for the world is my Father's house; you cannot banish me."
"But I will slay you," said the Emperor.
"No, but you cannot," said the noble champion of the faith again, "for my life is hid with Christ in God."
"I will take away thy treasures." "No, but you cannot," was the retort; "in the first place, I have nothing you know anything about. My treasure is in heaven, and my heart is there."
"But I will drive you away from man, and you shall have no friend left." "No, and that you cannot," once more said the faithful witness, "for I have a Friend in heaven from whom you shall not separate me. I defy you; there is nothing you can do to hurt me."

"DON'T WORRY - BELIEVE!"

MATTHEW 6:25-34

7/16/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 25a

***Don't worry! Believe!**

7 Facts about worry:

I. Worry keeps you from enjoying what is <u>really important</u> in life (v. 25b)

II. Worry is inconsistent with <u>God's care</u> for you (v. 26)

III. Worry <u>accomplishes</u> absolutely <u>nothing</u> at all (v. 27)

IV. Worry <u>fails</u> to <u>believe</u> that God is in control of things (v. 28-30)

V. Worry is characteristic of the <u>unsaved</u>, not the <u>child of God</u> (v. 31-32a)

VI. Worry <u>forgets</u> that <u>God remembers</u> (v. 32b-33)

VII. Worry about tomorrow's <u>troubles</u> leads to failure in solving <u>today's</u> (v. 34)

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III. Worry _____ absolutely _____ at all (v. 27)

IV. Worry _____ to _____ that God is in control of things (v. 28-30)

V. Worry is characteristic of the _____, not the _____ (v. 31-32a)

VI. Worry _____ that _____ (v. 32b-33)

VII. Worry about tomorrow's _____ leads to failure in solving _____ (v. 34)

"DON'T WORRY - BELIEVE!"

MATTHEW 6:25-34

7/16/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 25a

"Therefore" - Jesus builds a conclusion on what He said in verses 19-24.

Since all of us are prone toward laying up treasures on earth and living for the material mammon, the Lord now shows us the foolishness of worrying about the temporal and exhorts us to live for the eternal (v. 33).

The word ***"take no thought"*** actually come from one Greek word "merimnao" which occurs 5 times in this context (6:25, 27, 28, 31, 34).

Our Lord continually made statements like: "*Let not your heart be troubled"* (Jn. 14)
"Fear not"
"Don't be afraid"
"Be careful for nothing"

"Take no thought" - Do not be anxious; don't worry. The Greek word refers to someone who has distracting thoughts; fear (anxiety) comes when our focus is wrong and our faith is weak.

"Worry is the sin of distrusting the promise and providence of God, and yet it is a sin that Christians commit perhaps more frequently than any other. The English term "worry" comes from an old German word meaning to strangle, or choke. That is exactly what worry does; it is a kind of mental and emotional strangulation, which probably causes more mental and physical afflictions than any other single cause. It has been reported that a dense fog extensive enough to cover seven city blocks a hundred feet deep[is composed of less than one glass of water--divided into sixty thousand million droplets. In the right form, a few gallons of water can cripple a large city. In a similar way, the substance of worry is nearly always extremely small compared to the size it forms in our minds and the damage it does in our lives." (MacArthur, p. 419)

Jesus addresses the basic essentials that all of us need (food, drink, and clothing), so as to apply His message to everyone. He warns not about being obsessed with luxuries (which do not preoccupy the minds of many in the world), but He warns about being preoccupied with the necessities of life.

Many view "worry" as not such a big deal. However, "worry is a little trickle that gradually digs such a deep rut that all other things fall into it."

The Examples of Worrying:

Examples of what people fear: People fear the dark, the city streets, heights, getting up in front of people, death, the unknown, financial and other insecurities, etc.

Various phobias -

Acro phobia fear of high places
Agora phobiafear of open or public places
Aichmo phobiafear of sharp or pointed objects
Algo phobia fear of pain
Anthropo phobiafear of men or a particular man
Astra phobia fear of thunder, lightnings, or storms
Claustro phobiafear of closed places
Erentho phobiafear of blushing
Gyne phobia fear of women or a particular woman
Hemato phobiafear of blood
Hydro phobiafear of water
Mono phobiafear of solitude
Necro phobiafear of dead bodies
Nycto phobiafear of darkness (night)
Ochlo phobiafear of crowds
Patho phobiafear of disease or some particular disease
Pyro phobia fear of fire
Thansto phobiafear of death
Toxi phobia fear of poisons (or of being poisoned)
Zoo phobiafear of animals (or some particular animal)

The Symptoms of Worrying:

1.Physical symptoms - disturbed breathing, increased heart activity, inability to accomplish normal tasks, organic problems (aching back, stiff neck, headaches), perspiration.

2.Emotional Symptoms - Nervousness; withdrawal (isolation), etc.

The Focus of Worrying:

Worry is focusing on self rather than on God.
Worry is focusing on the unknown rather than the known.
Worry is focusing on the possible (potential) rather than the actual (real).
Worry is focusing on the negative rather than the positive.
Worry is focusing on problems rather than solutions.

ILLUS: The pop song of the late 1980's, which repeated over and over the lyric: "Don't worry, Be happy." The admonition to not worry is good, but the simplistic solution "Be happy" is absurd! Happy about what? How does happiness remove worry?

Without a doubt the message of Jesus Christ will have more substance in telling you how to gain victory over worry (fear).

***Don't worry! Believe!**

7 Facts about worry:

I. Worry keeps you from enjoying what is really important in life (v. 25b)

The questions expect a "Yes" answer.

Of course there is more to life, and our bodies were created to do more than to be clothed with the best of threads!

II. Worry is inconsistent with God's care for you (v. 26)

Birds do not plant, harvest, nor gather into storehouses, yet they are provided for.

"Your heavenly Father feedeth them" - How does God feed the average bird? Answer: Through natural means. He will through rain or nightfall stir a worm to rise out of the ground, or He will use a boy who, while eating his lunch, throws away the crust, and the birds pick it up.

God feeds the birds not by miraculous supply of food (it does not drop out of the sky) but through natural processes involving the earth and the birds' use of their faculties (Ryrie note).

God providentially provides for His children through normal means. This verse teaches us the principle that **God is in control of natural events**. He has His hand in matters on this earth, even when it is not so evident.

God does not have to do a miracle to be at work. He is at work today!

People are better (of more value or worth) than birds. Birds were created on the fifth day (Gen. 1:21), but His highest creative act was on the sixth day -- man. People are made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26); birds were not. People have a spirit which will never die; birds do not. People were given dominion over the fowl of the air (Gen. 1:26).

Jesus' point: If birds are the objects of God's concern, how much more are His children!

SEE: Mt. 10:29-31 - "*His eye is on the sparrow"*

Jesus is saying: If your Father in heaven cares for birds, will He fail to take care of you?

"God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19)

III. Worry <u>accomplishes</u> absolutely <u>nothing</u> at all (v. 27)

"One cubit" - one length of a forearm (about 18 inches)

ILLUS: How many (particularly young men) worry about how tall they are.

Jesus' point: man's worrying cannot accomplish that which only God can do. A man's height is sovereignly determined by God. Genetics cannot be altered by worrying.

Worry cannot change that which only God can do.

Don't worry about what you can't change. If God could make the whole world and everything on it in 6 days, He can handle my life.

All worry does is <u>harm</u> us!

Dr. Charles Mayo, of the famous Mayo Clinic, wrote: "Worry affects the circulation, the heart, the glands, and the whole nervous system. I have never met a man or known a man to die of overwork, but I have known a lot who died of worry" (cited by MacArthur, p. 423).

IV. Worry fails to believe that God is in control of things (v. 28-30)

V. 28

"Why take ye thought for raiment?" - Why do you worry about clothing?

EX: People who worry about the style and quality of clothing (they are overly concerned about the name brand of their clothes).

EX: People who worry about the "image" they portray by their clothing (Their "Bible" is "GQ" magazine or "Mademoiselle" - their "church" is the mall, etc.)

Don't worry about the fads
Don't worry about the trends
Don't worry about what your friends are wearing

The lily does not work nor spin yarn to dress and adorn itself. God does this for the lily.

NOTE: It is God who truly makes a woman beautiful. True beauty is not measured by the clothes you wear, ladies, but by the sweetness of your heart (I Pet. 3:3-4 - *"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.")*

"They toil not" - "toil" means to labor with wearisome effort. To work to the point of becoming weary. To strain all of our powers so as to sweat and become fatigued. In the rat race of society, so many weary themselves with more than one job, work overtime every time; run, run, run; seek to out-do the competitor. . . all so as to live on a higher standard of living. And they never enjoy life, never enjoy the fruits of their labor, never see their family, and never serve their Lord.

Solomon (one of the riches kings to ever live), when at his height of glory, when he had the best of clothing, was not dressed with the beauty of one of the lilies.

"To morrow is cast into the oven" - Could refer to 2 ideas:

1) The Sirroco winds (which bring in the heat from the Arabian desert and instantly turns Israel into a dry, dusty land. This transition occurs around May.

2) The coming purging of the earth (II Pet. 3:7, 10, 12)

Just as God feeds the birds (v. 26), and just as God clothes the grass and adorns it with flowers (v. 30), so He will (much more) see to it that His children have adequate food & clothing.

"O ye of little faith" - Worry is always the result of unbelief or little faith.

Those who worry much, believe little. Those who worry little, believe much!

Examples of worry being caused by little faith:

1) The tempest at sea (Mt. 8:23-27; *v. 26)

2) Peter walking on water (Mt. 14:27-32; *v. 31)

3) The disciples who worried about a lack of bread (Mt. 16:8), even after Jesus miraculously provided it on two previous occasions.

ILLUS: One day when he was away from home someone came running up to John Wesley saying: "Your house has burned down! Your house has burned down!" To which Wesley replied, "No, it hasn't, because I don't own a house. The one i have been living in belongs to the Lord, and if it has burned down, that is one less responsibility for me to worry about." (MacArthur, p. 420)

V. Worry is characteristic of the unsaved, not the child of God (v. 31-32a)

***"Gentiles"* =** pagans

The unsaved, lost world frets and worries about such things because they do not know the God who is faithful to provide.

VI. Worry forgets that God remembers (v. 32b-33)

This is a conditional promise.

"Seek ye first" -

"Seek" -to zealously look after or earnestly live for (in contrast to what the Gentiles "seek" [v. 32], we are to seek something else).

"First" - a word showing priority. Ahead of seeking for what to eat, drink, or wear (v. 31), we are to prioritize God's kingdom. We are to view the eternal as more important than the temporal (v. 19-20), the priorities of God over the priorities of the Gentiles (i.e. the world).

"The kingdom of God" = seek to live for those things which will advance or benefit the cause of Christ

We advance God's kingdom by 3 ways:

1) Concern yourself with witnessing to the lost (I Cor. 15:3; Jn. 1:41)

2) Concern yourself with assembling with God's people (I Cor. 16:1-2; Heb. 10:24-25)

3) Concern yourself with giving to God's work (Prov. 3:9)

   When your own financial interests come ahead of God and the needs of His work, the result is frustration and loss (Haggai 1:2-9)

"And His righteousness" - Seek to live up to true, Biblilcal righteousness; seek to be right as God counts rightness, not as the world does.

You can seek His righteousness by:

1) Concerning yourself with knowing His standards of righteousness / Make Bible reading your priority (Job 23:12; Ps. 119:72, 97; Mt. 4:4)

   "A Bible which is falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't" (C. H. Spurgeon)

2) Concerning yourself with obeying His standards of righteousness / Internal purity (being clean on the inside) must come first in our lives (Mt. 23:26 - *"Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cub and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also."*)

The cause of worry is seeking the things of this world. The cure for worry is to seek the things of God!

One who is pre-occupied with God's interests will have his physical needs met.

If you take care of God's business, He will take care of yours!

Live for that which you can take into heaven with you. John 6:27 - *"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."*

"All these things (food, water, and clothing) will be added unto you" -

Note: This promise does not apply to everyone! If it did, no one would ever die of starvation. Rather, this promise is for God's children, for those who have God as their "Father: (v. 26) through faith in Christ.

God feeds His kids - Ps. 37:25 - *"I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seek the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."*

VII. Worry about tomorrow's troubles leads to failure in solving today's (v. 34)

"Each day has enough trouble of its own"

Too many times people live in the past, worry about the future, and neglect the present!

Most of what people worry about never materializes. Worry is Satan's way of enslaving us, of taking our eyes off of the provider and focusing ont he provision; it is His way of manipulating people through fear. But *"God has not given us the Spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind"* (II Tim. 1:7).

Our minds and bodies were not made to handle worry. We're supposed to channel it right to our Heavenly Father (*"Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you"*) Cp. Phil. 4:6-7

CONCLUSION:

3 key words to overcome worry:

1. Faith (v. 30)

2. Father (v. 32)

3. First (v. 33)

Worry is a smack against God's love and faithfulness! When we worry, we are showing how small, impotent, disinterested we think God is!

Hymns -

1) "Great is Thy Faithfulness"

2) "Standing on the Promises"

3) "How Can I Fear"

4) "Standing On the Promises"

"HYPO CRITICIZING"

Matthew 7:1-6

11/29/92

INTRODUCTION: V. 1a, 6

Definition: ***"Judge" -*** In context, the word "judge" means to criticize with a hypocritical, nasty, unmerciful, strict, harsh, censorious, and condemning attitude.

***Don't judge unrighteously!**

I. Before you judge others, COUNT THE COST (v. 1b-2)

II. Before you judge others, CRITIQUE YOURSELF (v. 3-4)

A. Beware of what you see (v. 3)

B. Beware of what you say (v. 4)

III. Before you judge others, CLEAN UP YOUR OWN ACT (v. 5)

CONCLUSION:

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"HYPO CRITICIZING"

Matthew 7:1-6

11/29/92

INTRODUCTION: V. 1a, 6

"Judge not" -

Beware of erroneous interpretation.

Our society hates absolutes, especially theological and moral absolutes. Many like to use this passage to provide an easy escape from confrontation. . . and to support compromise (MacArthur, p. 430)

This injunction is not support for the removal of a judicial system (law courts); neither is it evidence for the avoidance of church discipline (Mt. 18:15-17); nor is it proof that we should never be on guard against false teachers (whether on radio, TV, or in a church

somewhere). Indeed, in this context Jesus warns, *"Beware of false prophets"* (Mt. 7:15)

The phrase ***"judge not***" also does not mean that you are to be passive, quiet, non-involved in helping others with their problems. There is a big difference between a critic and a friend (a friend will often do the act of judging for the sake of helping; whereas a critic will judge with the motive of hurting).

A criticizer speaks about someone's sin (Ja. 4:11); a friend speaks to someone about their sin.

"You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor" (Lev. 19:17).

When you run others down with your mouth, or when critical, derogatory, malicious, harsh, unloving speech comes out of your lips. . . when you backbite, pass on juicy rumors, or tantalizing tidbits of gossip, you are doing the Devil's work for him (He is the accuser of the brethren - Rev. 12:10).

The phrase *"judge not"* does not mean that you are to be gullible, naive, or undiscerning regarding the sin of others.

Definition: ***"Judge"*** **-** In context, the word "judge" means to criticize with a hypocritical, nasty, unmerciful, strict, harsh, censorious, and condemning attitude.

To properly balance out Christ's statement about judging, Jesus tells us in verse 6 that there does come a time to exercise proper judgment.

The believer must have discernment to fulfill verse 6!

You need to detect a dog when you see one; the same goes for pigs.

Paraphrase of verse 6: *"Don't give that which is set apart and valuable to those who*

will either defile or devalue it!"

This verse definitely applies to one who would throw his/her sexual virtue out tot he animals of the world! Christians must judge (in the good sense of having moral and doctrinal discernment)

Certain sacred truths and blessings are not to be shared with people who are totally antagonistic to the things of God. When the swine realizes that what you throw to him does not satisfy his carnal, fleshly stomach, he may then attack the one who threw it.

Christians must exercise discernment; for not everyone is a sheep. Some people are dogs or hogs, and some are wolves in sheep's clothing! We are the Lord's sheep, but this does not mean we should let people pull the wool over our eyes!" (Wiersbe, p. 30)

To honor God, we must have Holy Spirit-empowered discernment. Jesus commends the church at Ephesus for this (Rev. 2:2 - *"I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:")*

God commands us to *"prove* (test) *all things"* (I Thes. 5:21). If any teaching or practice fails the test, *"abstain from all appearance of evil"* (I Th. 5:22).

To honor God, we must separate over unrepented moral transgression (I Cor. 5:5-11) and over cardinal doctrinal deviations (Rom. 16:17).

Jesus is not against judgment; He is against hypocritical judgment (to judge someone else for the same sin or lesser sin than you yourself are committing); He is against illegitimate judgment (to judge based on your rules and standards, not God's).

Examples of Illegitimate Judging:

1) We act as illegitimate judges when we:

Pre-judge motives that only God can see
(Illicit application of the law)

"We must not pass judgment on other's motives. We should examine their actions (*"fruits"* - Mt. 7:20) and attitudes, but we cannot judge their motives -- for only God can see their hearts. It is possible for a person to do a good work with a bad motive. It is also possible to fail in a task and yet be sincerely motivated" (Wiersbe, p. 29)

2) We act as illegitimate judges when we:
Make laws that God has not made
(Illicit legislation of the law)

SEE: James 4:11-12

You cannot pass judgment apart from God's Word. When you do, you are:

1. Setting yourself up above God's Word (*"Law"* - v. 11)

   When we set up additional rules that we think up, we are actually criticizing God's Law, implying that it is inadequate.

2. You are forgetting that God is the Law-giver and Judge (v. 12)

   a. He alone has the authority to establish the Law (*"one Lawgiver"*)

   b. He alone has the ability to enforce the Law (he alone can *"save and destroy"*)

   Did you die for them? When you have saved someone, then you can talk about them.

No believer has the right to "play God" in another believer's life.

Whenever we set up standards and rules for people that God has not set up, we ourselves become judges.

The self-made rules of the scribes and Pharisees actually nullified God's

clear commandments (Mt. 15:2, 6).

The Pharisees were extremely judgmental and based their judgments on "appearances" (on the external and superficial) (John 7:24 - "*Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."*)

Only God's Word can judge! (John 12:48 - *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"*).

James 4

When we confront a lost person about his need for Christ, we are not judging him! God's Word is!

When we lovingly confront an erring brother -- again, it is God's Word that is doing the judging (Gal. 6:1 - *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted"*).

Judgment from God's Word (to the person face to face) is not wrong -- it is commanded! (Mt. 18). What is wrong is your criticizing others behind their back.

3. We act as illegitimate judges when we:
Pass sentences that only God has the right to do
(Illicit Execution of the Law)

When we seek to get even or condemn, we are illicit judges.

Whenever a person seeks to "get even" with another person (who did them wrong), they are seizing a prerogative that does not belong to them.

God is the only Judge. Retribution is His! (Rom. 12:9 - *"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."*).

EX: How John Hus (the Bohemian R.C.C. priest who got saved) was pronounced a "heretic" for his Biblical views (which differed from Rome) and was committed to the Devil and to Hell by the RCC cardinal. This is judging!

SEE Romans 14:1-12

* What should you do when you don't agree with a fellow- Christian over a disputable matter?

I. DON'T BE HIS ENEMY (vv.1-3)
(He has been received by God)

II. DON'T BE HIS MASTER (v.4)
(He has his own Master - God)

III. DON'T BE HIS CONSCIENCE (v.5)
(He is to be "fully persuaded in his own mind")

IV. DON'T BE HIS MOTIVE (vv.6-9)
(He is to please the Lord, not you)

V. DON'T BE HIS JUDGE (vv.10-12)
(He will be judged by God, so will you!)

V. 12 -

"Every one" - the universality of the Judgment (no one excluded)

"Shall" - the certainty of the Judgment (future tense)

"Give account" - the content of the Judgment (God's ledgers will be opened)

"Of himself" - the personal evaluation of the Judgment
--I will be held accountable for me

--I will be held accountable for you

--I will not be judgment for your failings
--You will not be judged for mine

Therefore, we ought to judge ourselves, not others (I Cor. 11:31). We ought to fear the scrutiny of God, not others.

There is coming a judgment for the just (to determine rewards - I Cor. 3:13-15; II Cor. 5:10) and for the unjust (to determine punishment [the degree of eternal punishment] - Rev. 20:11-15).

We are commanded by Christ to ***"judge righteous judgment"*** (Jn. 7:24).

***Don't judge unrighteously!**

I. Before you judge others, COUNT THE COST (v. 1b-2)

God's Law of sowing and reaping (Gal. 6:2) applies to all areas of life, including the matter of judging.

"What goes around comes around"

V. 2

Such judgment is a boomerang. Like Haman, who built gallows for the Jews and ended up hanging on them himself (Esth. 7:10), and like cruel Adoni-bezek, who had ordered the thumbs and big toes to cut off seventy other kings and had his own eventually cut off (Judges 1:6-7).

So God will see to it that you are judged in the same way you judged (Cp. MacArthur, p. 434)
This verse deals with both the kind (quality) of judgment and the degree

(quantity) of judgment.

In other words, the word "judgment" points to the criteria we use for evaluating others; whereas the word "measure" points to the cost we demand others to pay (if you show no forgiveness, you will receive none - Mt. 6:14-15; if you show no mercy you will receive none).

God's judgment will be without mercy upon the one who shows no mercy (Ja. 2:13 -*"For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment."*).

ILLUS: The parable of the unforgiving servant - Mt. 18:21-35

The word *"measure"* points to the price you demand someone to pay for violating a law are standard.

How much you demand will be how much is demanded of you!

The Bible teaches the principle that: the more demands you hold against others, the more demands God will hold against you.

The stricter you scrutinize others will determine the strictness of God's scrutiny of you.

"Grudge (gripe) not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned; behold, the Judge standeth before the door" (Ja. 5:9)

II. Before you judge others, CRITIQUE YOURSELF (v. 3-4

A. Beware of what you see (v. 3)

Jesus, having been a carpenter for 30 years while on earth, uses a most fitting illustration.

"Mote" - a wood chip, splinter, or a speck of saw dust.

"Beam" - a large heavy log or wooden plank

The interogatives "why" (v. 3) and "how" (v. 4) are employed by Jesus to quicken the conscience. Questions have a way of probing deeper than any statement ever could.
What Jesus is saying is this: "What you see in others would require a pair of tweezers to remove; whereas, what you fail to see in yourself requires a hydraulic fork-lift tractor!

It's so easy to detect a mouse living in someone else's home, but to forget a rat lives in your own.

It's so easy to sense pride in someone else's life and to forget that your head is so big it won't fit in the mirror.

It's so easy to criticize a brother/sister or a church for not caring enough about you, but to fail to see how little you have done to show your love for them.

Husbands, it's easy to see how your wife does not submit to your headship,b ut difficult to see how you don't love her as your should (you see insubordination on her part, but it never crosses your mind how loveless and apathetic you are at home).

Wives, it's easy to see how unloving he is and yet fail to recognize how rebellious you are.

Wives, it's hypocrisy to demand that your children respect you, if you don't respect the authority of your husband.

Husbands, it's hypocrisy to demand that your children obey you, if you don't obey Christ and love your wife!

If we spent half the time looking at our own faults that we spend looking at the faults of others (EX: our spouse, co-worker, classmate, brother, parent, etc.), we would be revolutionized, revitalized, and revived!

B. Beware of what you say (v. 4)

Question: Why would anyone with a 2 x 4 beam in their eye even be concerned about the microscopic speck in someone else's eye?

Answer: To make themselves look good. To cover up the fact that they themselves have an "eye problem."

III. Before you judge others, CLEAN UP YOUR OWN ACT

While it is easy to "see" (v. 3) and "say" (v. 4), it is not so easy to do! (v. 5)

Rather than seeing what is wrong about others and talking about it, Jesus commands you to do something in your own life first!

"Hypocrite" - play actor; one who pretends to be a doctor when he himself is a critical patient; one who pretends to be qualified to give care, when he needs it the most!

"First. . . then" - Practicing righteous judgment is good and proper, so long as you prioritize your need for such "house cleaning" first.

As Christians, we should practice saw dust removal. But only after we have removed the studs in our lives.

"Then shalt thou see clearly" - Can you imagine what a mess someone would create who tried to do minor eye surgery on someone when he himself is blind?!

When we attempt to straighten someone else out when we ourselves are bent over with sin, not only are we unable, but such an attempt will be received with contempt!

EX: One reason why your children do not respect your advice is because they can see right through your hypocrisy.

EX: One reason why you are ineffective as a witness for Christ is because your life speaks so loud, they cannot hear what you are saying.

We can do more damage than a speck of sawdust can if we cannot see clearly and approach the problem with patience, sensitivity, genuine concern, and God's control.

One practical reason for dealing with our own hang ups is so that we can do a

good job at helping others with theirs.

The blind cannot lead the blind (SEE: the same context in Luke 6:37 and 39-42).

CONCLUSION:

Beware of 2 extremes when you look at yourself:

1) "Shallow examination" (too quick a glance - leading to forgetfulness) (James 1:22-25)

2) "Chronic introspection" (too long a stare - leading to discouragement) (II Cor. 2:7, 11)

It's time to clean house! It's time for spring cleaning! It's time for a full examination!

"*Ask, Seek & Knock*"

Matthew 7:7-12
7/30/2017

INTRODUCTION:

***Pray! Your Father in Heaven is a great giver!**
How does God give?

I. God's Giving is <u>GUARANTEED</u> (v. 7)
(God answers prayer with <u>certainty</u>)

II. God's Giving is <u>GENEROUS</u> (v. 8)
(God answers prayer with <u>impartiality</u>)

III. God's Giving is <u>GOOD</u> (v. 9-11)
(God answers prayer with <u>goodness</u>)

CONCLUSION: ***How do you give? (v. 12)***

"If you expect God to treat you good,
you should treat others in the same way that you want to be treated."

"*Ask, Seek & Knock*"

Matthew 7:7-12
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INTRODUCTION:

***Pray! Your Father in Heaven is a great giver!**
How does God give?

I. God's Giving is _____ (v. 7)
(God answers prayer with _____)

II. God's Giving is _____ (v. 8)
(God answers prayer with _____)

III. God's Giving is _____ (v. 9-11)
(God answers prayer with _____)

CONCLUSION: ***How do you give? (v. 12)***

"If you expect God to treat you good,
you should treat others in the same way that you want to be treated."

"*Ask, Seek & Knock*"

Matthew 7:7-12
7/30/2017

"A Wish List"

Write down as many things as you can think of that you wish would be done for you.

1. I wish God would do this for me:
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

2. I wish my husband/wife would do this for me:
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

3. I wish my friend(s) would do this for me:
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

4. I wish my neighbor would do this for me:
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

5. I wish my co-worker would do this for me:
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

6. I wish the people at our church would do this for me:
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

(Have the people fill out the above form before the message)

God loves fellowship!

He created man in "His own image," giving him a spirit, sot hat man could do what no other animal or creature could do -- namely: intelligently commune or fellowship with the Creator.

God really desires that we rely upon Him daily!

He wants us to come to Him.

He enjoys us asking, seeking, and knocking.

Unlike people who get annoyed at beggars, nosy people, and people banging on our door. God wants it! He delights in it!

"The prayer of the upright is His delight" (Prov. 15:8)

Not only does God want to hear us, He wants to bless us, give to us!

The word "give" occurs 5 times in verses 7 - 11.

***Pray! Your Father in Heaven gives!**

How does God give?

I. God's Giving is GUARANTEED (v. 7)
(God answers prayer with certainty)

Note the emphasis on the certainty of the promise of answered prayer.

V. 7 - ***"shall be. . . shall. . . shall"*** Cp. V. 8 - *"shall be opened"* V. 11 - *"how much more shall"*

Everyone who sincerely asks, seeks, and knocks will receive answers.

This promise, when compared to the rest of Scripture, is not a "blank check" that applies to anyone or any request.
The "anyone" refers to those who have God as their "Father which is in Heaven" (it applies to sons of God, born again believers)

This promise to answered prayer is also conditioned upon your:

1) Closeness to Christ and His Word (i.e. so that you ask according to His will - I Jn. 5:14-15)

2) Obedience to Christ (I Jn. 3:22 - *"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight"*)

3) Faith (Mk. 11:24 - *"Therefore I say unto you, What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."*) (cp. James 1:6, 7)

Very often, the reason we *"have not"* is because we *"ask not"* (James 4:2)

"If I told you that God has promised that if ye will prepare the soil properly and sow wheat in the ground, you would get wheat, you would say, "Of course, If you don't put the seed in the ground, you won't get wheat." In just the same way, if you pray you will have, and if you don't pray you will not have. It is as simply as that. God wants to help you, but this help is extended to those who ask Him for it. He will be found of the people who seek Him, and He will open the door for the people who knock." (Gutzke, Matthew, p. 62).

"Ask" implies a request for provision (for basic needs, for things that would glorify God)

"Seek" implies a request for answers (ex. wisdom cp. Ja. 1:5 - *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.")*

"Knock" implies a request for opportunity (an entrance into something, an "open door" of opportunity). Jesus promised the church of Philadelphia, *"Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it"* (Rev. 3:8) The church at Antioch saw how God *"had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles"* (Acts 14:27)

When you need something from the one who has plenty, ASK!

When you need something of real value, SEEK!

When you are shut out and need or want entrance, KNOCK!

Knocking on someone's door is something I don't often like to do. I feel, "I don't want to be a bother," or "Perhaps my visit is not welcomed."

Sometimes people --ridden with guilt or because it has been so long since they came to God's door in prayer-- are reluctant to knock.

However, unless you knock, the door won't be opened!

The word "ask" alludes to our mouth
The word "seek" alludes to our eyes
The word "knock" alludes to our hands

The words *"seek and knock"* show us that there is more to prayer than just asking. If the request can be accomplished by human effort, we cannot sluggishly or complacently remain passive until the answer drops out of the sky.

Get to it and seek God's will until you find it; go out and knock on every door until the right door opens!

II. God's Giving is GENEROUS (v. 8)
(God answers prayer with impartiality)

Whereas verse 7 emphasizes the certainty of God in answering prayer, verse 8 emphasizes the impartiality of God in answering prayer.

NOTE: The emphasis: "*for everyone . . . he that seeketh* (no matter who he is) . . . *to him that knocketh* (no matter who he is, as long as he is knocking)

The reason why many Christians are discouraged from praying is because they believe the devil's lie as he whispers in their ear: "God isn't interested in you" "God won't answer your prayer."

- God is not reluctant to give.
- He will not mock our requests (Ja. 1:5 - *"He upbraideth not")*
- He does not gve trash or less than the best, but rather "*He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think"* (Eph. 3:20)
- God does not give based upon the color of your skin; the importance you have in the eyes of the world;' the position you hold in this local church.

Some of the greatest prayer warriors have been "ordinary" people! God shows no bias, favoritism. He wants to answer your prayer. The sincere prayers of everyone who belongs to Him.

Note: The present tense of the verbs: "*ask, seek, knock"* (v. 7), and *"ask*eth*, seek*eth*, knock*eth*"* (v. 8) suggests that we need persistence in our praying.

To test the sincerity and earnestness of our requests God will often allow us to come to Him several times before He will grant our request.

It does not mean that He was too busy to hear us the first time, but for our benefit He may delay an answer to test how serious we are!

ILLUS: The Importunity (persistence) of the man at midnight (Luke 11:5-8)

The importunity (persistence of the troubled widow (Luke 18:1-8)

The common phrase: "Seek the Lord" implies spiritual effort! (Dt. 4:29, I Chron. 16:11, Is. 55:6, Jer. 29:13, Ps. 105:4; Prov. 8:17)

Jer. 29:13 - *"And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart."*

III. God's Giving is <u>GOOD</u> (v. 9-11)
(God answers prayer with <u>goodness</u>)

Luke records that Jesus also said, "*If he shall ask an egg, will he offer Him a scorpion?*" (Luke 11:12)

"Being evil" - Jesus asserts the depravity of man. He who knew all men's hearts boldly declares the inherent sinfulness of man.

"Being evil" - Contrary to the thinking of the New Age philosophy, we do not have divinity with in us (for God is not evil); we don't even have a "spark" of divinity.

Though man is evil, he still has a capacity to give what he considers good gifts to his children.

Even unsaved people seek the well-being of their children.

Even some lost parents are concerned that their children are well fed, well clothed, kept protected; receive a good education; have their physical, emotional, and intellectual needs met. Even sinners make plans for their children's future.

"The most naturally selfless relationship among human beings is that of parents their children. We are more likely to sacrifice for our children, even to the point of giving up our lives, than for any other person in the world. Yet the greatest human parental love cannot compare with God's (Mac. p. 446)

"Good things" - Everything <u>good</u> that we have is because of the kindness of God, because of His righteous nature God cannot give anything but good to His children.

James 1:17 - *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."*

Contrary to the devil's lies, God does not withhold or forbid that which is for our good. If He forbids it, it is because it is bad for us.

One of the good things that God gives to all of His children is the Holy Spirit. Ever since the day of Pentecost, the gift of the Holy Spirit has been given to all believers (Acts 10:45; Rom. 8:9) However, before Pentecost, people had to ask for the spirit and His empowerment. For this reason Luke records: *"If ye then, being evil, know h ow to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"*

Jesus' point: If depraved, sinful, selfish, fathers know how to give good gifts to their children, is it possible that our holy, perfect all wise, all knowing, all caring loving Heavenly Father would fail to give good gifts to His children who ask? NO!

CONCLUSION: ***How do you give? (v. 12)***

"If you expect God to treat you good,
you should treat others in the same way that you want to be treated."

"Therefore" - Since God does for us what we ask of him, we should likewise have the same loving attitude and do for others what we would want them to do for us.

This verse commonly known as "the Golden Rule" has been called "the Mount Everest of ethics" (Barclay).

It is love at its highest.

We are to do good to all men, especially those of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10)

Perhaps, also implied by the connection between v. 12 and the previous promises on prayer is this truth: If we do for others what we wish they did for us: God will do for us, (in kind) what we did for others.

How could we expect God to do what we wish if we do not do for others what we wish the would do for us?

If you want God to give you good things, but you are not willing to give others good things, what right do you have to ask God to do for you what you are unwilling to do for others.

Think for a minute: What good things would you like others (your spouse, friend, neighbor, co-worker, fellow Christian) to do for you?

Now that you have it in mind, go and do it for them! (even if they never do what you would like, at least you now know how you must treat them)

--We should not treat people the way <u>they treat us</u> (good for good, evil for evil)

Note: that Jesus does <u>not</u> say "*Do to others what they do to you"* (cp. Mt. 5:46)

He is not teaching Lex Talionis - *"eye for eye"*

But rather, "*Do to others what you <u>wish</u> (desire) that they would do to you.*
"Treat them like you want to be treated"

--We should not treat people the way <u>they think</u> they should be treated

--We should not treat people the way <u>we think</u> they should be treated

Rather, we should treat people the way we <u>want</u> them to treat us
(Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible, Matthew, p. 150)
Other ancient religions and philosophers taught a form of this principle,b ut fell short (they stressed only the negative)

They basically taught: "Don't do to others, what you don't want them to do to you (SEE: MacArthur, p. 447, examples)

However, the motivation for this principle is not love, but selfishness (self-interest, self-preservation). Basically someone could fulfill this one, and yet never have anything at all to do with you.

Someone does not love you just because they don't do you wrong, but because they positively do you right.

If you were <u>lost</u> (unsaved what would you want someone to do for you?

Go and do likewise!

If you were <u>lonely</u>, what would you want someone to do for you?

Go and do likewise!

If you were <u>financially struggling</u>, what would you want someone to do for you?

Go and do likewise!

If you were <u>living in a convalescent home</u>, what would you want someone to do for you?

Go and do likewise!

If you were a new Christian in need of fellowship, what would you want someone to do for you?

Go and do likewise!

"For this is the law and the prophets" This command being synonymous with the greatest command, "to love your neighbor as yourself" (mt. 22:39; Lev. 19:18) is a condensed, concise, precise, secret to fulfilling the every requirement in the Bible (in terms of human relationship). The key to fulfilling the Law is to love others like you would want them to love you.

Love fulfills every commandment God has given.

Rom. 13:8 - "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."
Gal. 5:14 - "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

"A Wish List"

Write down as many things as you can think of that you wish would be done for you.

1. I wish God would do this for me:
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

2. I wish my husband/wife would do this for me:
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

3. I wish my friend(s) would do this for me:
   a.
   b.
   c.

4. I wish my neighbor would do this for me:
   a.
   b.
   c.

5. I wish my co-worker would do this for me:
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

6. I wish the people at our church would do this for me:
   a.
   b.
   c.
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   b.
   c.
   d.

"RELIGIOUS DECEPTION"

Matthew 7:13-23
8/6/2017

INTRODUCTION:

Do we have a religion, or righteousness? Which way is right?

The Lord Jesus warns us to: ***Beware of religious deception!**

I. Let us not be deceived by <u>RELIGIOUS POPULARITY</u> (v. 13-14)
(The right way is <u>straight</u> and <u>narrow</u>)

--Jesus contrasts <u>2 roads</u>

II. Let us not be deceived by <u>RELIGIOUS PRETENSE</u> (v. 15-20)
(The right way bears <u>good fruit</u>)

--Jesus contrasts <u>2 fruits</u>

III. Let us not be deceived by <u>RELIGIOUS PERFORMANCE</u> (v. 21-23)
(The right way does <u>God's will</u>)

--Jesus contrasts <u>2 professions</u>

CONCLUSION:

"RELIGIOUS DECEPTION"

Matthew 7:13-23
8/6/2017

INTRODUCTION

There is a big difference between having a religion and having a relationship with Jesus Christ!

Examples of modern deception & deceivers

Verses 13-27 unfold perhaps some of the most sobering, serious, important warnings in the Bible.

V. 13-14 - Jesus gives warning by contrasting two roads (wide & narrow)

V. 15-20 - Jesus gives a warning by contrasting two fruits (good and bad)

V. 21-23 - Jesus gives a warning by contrasting two professions (those who do God's will and those who don't know God)

V. 24-27 - Jesus concludes his warnings by contrasting two builders (wise and foolish) and two foundations (rock and sand)

Do you have a religion, or righteousness? Which way is right?

The Lord Jesus warns us to: ***Beware of religious deception!**

I. Let us not be deceived by RELIGIOUS POPULARITY (v. 13-14)
(The right way is straight and narrow)

--Jesus contrasts 2 roads

"Strait" = narrow

The *"wide"* gate is the most inviting. Because people are prone to measure goodness by bigness, the "wide" gate has a strong appeal; it appears to be the right choice, the easy choice, the obvious choice.

The *"broad"* road from a human standpoint is the best road. There is much room for travel; it is made for many travellers; therefore, appears to be the most direct, fastest, and smoothest road (after all, if you wanted to drive to Florida, would you opt for Highway 95 or back roads heading south?)

"There is a way that seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov.)

"Many therefre which go in thereat" = The "many" is contrasted with the "few" (v. 14) who find the narrow way.

The word "*destruction"* (v. 13) is contrasted with "*life"* in v. 14; since the "life" in v. 14 refers to eternal life, the *"destruction"* in v. 13 refers to eternal destruction.

"Destruction" = refers ultimately to the doom that awaits the unconverted after death.

This destruction will both be "sudden" (I Thes. 5:3), and "eternal" - (*"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;"* II Thes. 1:8-9)

Contrary to "universalism" (which teaches that all men will be saved); contrary to the idea that hell is reserved for the ministry of people; Jesus teaches that most people; the majority of people, multitudes of people will end up in everlasting destruction.

"Many" will go to Hell! Don't assume that hell fills up after so many enter. "*Hell and destruction are never full"* (Prov. 27:20)

Hell is described as "*wide"* (Is. 5:14) and *"deep"* (Rev. 9:1). Into this bottomless pit, the majority of humanity will inevitably end up.

Like a vast herd, the majority of mankind are presently stampeding toward eternal slaughter.

Like an uncontrollable mob, multitudes of lost, confused, misdirected souls are walking to the end of the cliff--to the brink of eternal ruin; like a flood, billions of people have flowed and are flowing through a wide valley down, down into the Lake of fire.

"Few there be that find it" - Salvation has always involved a "remnant" -

--*"a remnant shall be saved"* (Rom. 9:27)
--*"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace"* (Rom. 11:5)

The obvious applications:

1) ***Not all roads lead to Heaven!**

Contrary to the popular view that since "God is one" therefore all roads lead to the same place -- all roads do not lead to the same place.

Only one road leads to eternal life!

Jesus taught a restricted message! An exclusive message!

"I am the way (not a way). . ."

Jesus said, *"I am the door* (not a door) *by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved"* (Jn. 10).

Acts 4:12 - *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."*

2) ***There are basically only 2 religions in the world**

1- Those who teach you must **"do"** (works religion)

2- Those who teach it is **"done"** (Biblical Christianity)

3) ***You are on either 1 of 2 roads**

You are either on the broad (wide) road or on the narrow road (there are no other choices)

There are only 2 groups of people in the world (those who have the Son and those who do not; those who have eternal life and those who do not - I Jn. 5:11-12)

Other applications:

1. The popular road is not necessarily the best (right) road!

   Just because the crowd is doing it doesn't make it right.

   Just because your peers think its okay does not mean it is.

   Just because "everyone's doing it," does not mean that you should!

   One day most everyone will receive the Mark of the Beast and worship his image (Rev. 13), but a remnant --like Shadrach, Meshach, & Nebednego-- will remain standing strong because they would rather burn than bow!

   Just because something has fame, notoriety, or recognition by public opinion does not mean that it passes God's opinion!

2. Sometimes you will be considered "odd ball" or "back sheep" by the world

   God's people, by virtue of their limited number and unique lifestyles, are a "peculiar people"

3. Many of God's people often have to say "goodbye" to friends and even family (EX: Pilgrim in Pilgrim's Progress) in the sense that they can no longer do what they used to do, go where they used to go, say what they used to say. . . all because they no longer believe what they used to believe

4. The size of something is not the measuring stick of divine acceptance.

   EX: Just because the RCC is the largest denomination does not meat it is true or from God!

II. Let us not be deceived by <u>RELIGIOUS PRETENSE</u> (v. 15-20)
(The right way bears <u>good fruit</u>)

--Jesus contrasts <u>2 fruits</u>

A false prophet is someone who claims to be a teacher, preacher, "healer," or spokesman for God, but is not.

"In sheep's clothing" - Just as Satan himself can transform himself into an angel of light, so his messengers can appear to be very religious, spiritual, and righteous (SEE: II Cor. 11:13-15)

"Sheep's clothing" - These deceivers wear the wool (garb) of a sheep, they have the "Baaa" (voice) of a sheep, they may even appear to follow the right shepherd of the sheep (they profess to follow Jesus Christ), but like Judas of old, they are <u>not</u> true sheep.

Remember, just because someone has the "right" appearance (clean-cut, smooth shaven), the "right" speaking ability or charisma; and professes to believe in Jesus Christ, it does not mean that they are bonified, real, genuine sheep!

"But inwardly" - what is <u>inward</u> is what is most important! *"The Lord looketh on the <u>heart</u>"* - I Sam. 16:7) (Lk. 16:15 - *"And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."*)

"Ravening wolves" - hungry, greedy, selfish, vicious wolves

NOTE: That which is on the <u>inside</u> (v. 15) will evidence (manifest) itself by the <u>fruit</u> that grows on the <u>outside</u> (v. 16-20)

The word *"fruit(s)"* occurs 7 times in vv. 16-20.

"Ye shall <u>know</u> them" - i.e. you will <u>recognize</u> them; you will "<u>see right through</u>" the facade.

Fruit does not grow from thorn bushes or thistles.

"<u>Every</u> good tree" - Each and every Christian will produce good fruit (not everyone will produce the same amount, but all will produce - *"Some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty"* (Mt. 13:23)

"Evil <u>fruit</u>" - <u>morally</u> evil fruit (wicked works)

This does not mean that Christians never sin (I Jn. 1:8); but that their new good nature cannot sin (I Jn. 3:9). This also does not mean that an unsaved person cannot do anything good (by human standards), but by God's measurement, unregenerate man's righteous works are as *"filthy rags".*

The nature of one's fruit (works) reveals the condition of one's heart. People's unbelief is manifested by their works. And their works will one day stand up like a grand jury and will condemn them to the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

V. 20

While we are not to wrongly judge a person (7:1), we are to have the discernment to see a person's fruit and thereby know the false prophets from the true.

One day the "false prophet" (Rev. 16:13; 19:20) will look like a Lamb, but his mouth will speak like a dragon (13:11) and will reveal him to be of Satan.)

III. Let us not be deceived by RELIGIOUS PERFORMANCE (v. 21-23)
(The right way does God's will)

--Jesus contrasts 2 professions

V. 21

Even demons believe that Jesus is Lord.

Judas no doubt referred to Jesus as "Lord."

One day in the Judgment, everyone will bow and "*confess that Jesus Christ is Lord"* yet such a confession by itself does not make one a candidate for Heaven.

Jesus asked the question: *"And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"* Lk. 6:46

What is the will of the Father?

1) Repentance (II Pet. 3:9) (Faith in Christ - Jn. 6:29)

2) Faith that evidences itself by obedience [cp. *"doeth"* (v. 21) with *"doeth"* (v. 24, 26)]

Those who are Christ's disciples do God's will (Mt. 12:46-50).

v. 22

To merely do something "*in the name*" of Jesus is not necessarily the same as doing something for Jesus' glory or through Jesus' power.

EX: Acts 19:13-17 - the sons of Seeva who attempted an exorcism in Jesus' name.

It's difficult to believe that people could do such things and yet not belong to Jesus!

--They preach messages in Jesus' name ("prophesied")

--They perform miracles in Jesus' name ("cast out devils" -- NOTE: Just because some priest does an exorcism does not mean he is of God!)

--They practice mighty works in Jesus' name - (EX: "faith healers"; tongues, those who build large churches)

V. 23

"I never knew you" - the most horrifying words to ever be heard

SEE: Luke 13:23-28

Mt. 25:41 - *"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"*

(cp. Ps. 6:8)

SEE: Job 8:13-18

"Iniquity" - Lawlessness. When someone does not do exactly what Jesus says in the way Jesus commands it to be done, they are practicing lawlessness. The Law is fulfilled by the one word **Love** (cp. Mt. 7:12; Mt. 22:40; Gal. 5:14; Rom. 13:8-10)

This word was not the motive of such people; therefore, they are lawless!

CONCLUSION:

"Build on ROCK"

Matthew 7:24-29
8/13/2017

INTRODUCTION:

***Upon what is your life built?**
(What is the foundation of your house? What undergirds your profession of faith?)

I. The Wise Man Built His House (life) Upon the Rock By HEARING and OBEYING God's Word (v. 24-25)

II. The Foolish Man Built His House (life) Upon the Sand By HEARING and NOT OBEYING God's Word (v. 26-27)

*Your obedience reveals the genuineness of your profession.

III. Observations to Think About:

A. Both men heard the same message

B. Both men built a house

C. One man built the hard way, and one the easy way

D. Both men faced the same storm

E. The wise man's house remained firm when he needed it most

F. The foolish man's house fell when he needed it most

G. The fool's house fell when it was too late to build another one

H. All that matters is the final score (what endures and triumphs in the end)

CONCLUSION: V. 28-29

"Build on ROCK"

Matthew 7:24-29
8/13/2017

INTRODUCTION:

***Upon what is your life built?**
(What is the foundation of your house? What undergirds your profession of faith?)

I. The Wise Man Built His House (life) Upon the Rock By HEARING and _____ God's Word (v. 24-25)

II. The Foolish Man Built His House (life) Upon the Sand By HEARING and _____ God's Word (v. 26-27)

*Your obedience reveals the genuineness of your profession.

III. Observations to Think About:

A. Both men _____ the same message

B. Both men _____ a house

C. One man built the _____ way, and one the _____ way

D. Both men faced the _____

E. The wise man's house remained _____ when he needed it most

F. The foolish man's house _____ when he needed it most

G. The fool's house fell when it was _____ to build another one

H. All that matters is the _____ (what endures and triumphs in the end)

CONCLUSION: V. 28-29

“Build on ROCK”

Matthew 7:24-29

8/13/2017

INTRODUCTION:

On Friday, Dec. 11, 1992, one of the most severe wind and rain storms ever to strike the North East coast of America pummelled New York City.

The storm came suddenly and with unexpected proportion. The city was totally flooded! Rivers flowed through many major streets (EX: The FDR Expy. on the east side of Manhattan was flooded). Cars were completely covered with water. My normal 10-minute ride to get from home to church took nearly 2 hours, as I had to drive through rivers of water 2 - 3 feet deep on College Point and Roosevelt Blvds. Car parts were floating down the street from the junk yard by Shea Stadium.

People all over the city were stranded. The subway system was completely closed down in the morning and early afternoon. LaGuardia Airport was shut down. People were trapped on Manhattan, perplexed wondering how they would get home.

The city was in turmoil! The city was crippled!

Because of the winds causing high tides and because of the abundance of rain, many homes in New York and New Jersey which were located on islands were badly damaged; some were totally destroyed. While some remained intact, others were completely destroyed and carried out to sea!

Some resort and vacation homes on certain islands were completely devastated, while others (due to strong foundations and cement-reinforced walls, etc.) weathered the storm and remained firm.

In Matthew 7:24-27, the Lord Jesus tells of such a rain and wind storm. He tells us about two builders (wise and foolish), two foundations (rock and sand) and two outcomes (security and devastation).

v. 24

Song: “The wise man built his house upon a rock…the foolish man built his house upon the sand…” Question: Why was the wise man wise, and the fool a fool?

"Therefore" - Jesus draws to a conclusion the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5, 6, & 7). This great sermon has as its theme: The nature of true righteousness.

Jesus show what real righteousness is.

Righteousness that surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20).

Jesus taught us that…

- True Righteousness is vastly different that what we might expect (5:1-12)
- True Righteousness has an effect as salt & light that makes an impact wherever it goes. (5:13-16)
- True Righteousness is conscientiously obedient to God's Law (5:17-20).
- True Righteousness resolves conflict with others (5:21-26)
- True Righteousness is purity on the inside (the heart) not merely eternal (5:27-32)
- True Righteousness speaks the truth (5:33-37)
- True Righteousness does not retaliate (5:38-42)
- True Righteousness loves enemies as well as friends (5:43-48)
- True Righteousness gives an offering anonymously (6:1-4)
- True Righteousness prays and fasts to be seen of God, not people (6:5-18)
- True Righteousness lays up treasure in Heaven (not on earth) (6:19-23)
- True Righteousness does not worry about this life, but seeks first God's Kingdom (6:24-34)
- True Righteousness takes the beam out of one's own eye before attempting to remove the splinter from others (7:1-6)
- True Righteousness persistently seeks God in prayer (7:7-11)
- True Righteousness practices the Golden Rule (7:12)
- True Righteousness enters the narrow gate and walks the narrow road (7:13-14)
- True Righteousness bears good fruit, not rotten fruit (7:15-20)
- True Righteousness does not merely acknowledge the Lord in words, but in obedience (7:21-27)

He climaxes His teaching in Chapter 5, 6, 7 with a strong appeal to <u>obedience</u>! (Note the contrast *"doeth"* (v. 24) and *"doeth them not"* (v. 26)

Among the teachings of the Bible the Sermon on the Mount is the most widely known and quoted, yet it's application is foreign to effecting changes in most people's lifestyles.

The context indicates that Christ is illustrating the difference between <u>true</u> believers (hear and do) and <u>false</u> believers (hear and do not do).

Note the contrast of Roads, Fruits, and Obedience described in the previous context.

"The houses represent profession; the foundations represent the <u>basis</u> of their profession. Some build on hypocrisy; others build on the genuine obedience of faith" (Toussaint, <u>Behold the King</u>, p. 118).

***Upon what is your life built?**
(What is the foundation of your house? What undergirds your profession of faith?)

I. The Wise Man Built His House (life) Upon the Rock By HEARING and OBEYING God's Word (v. 24-25)

v. 24

***"Whosoever"* -** Jesus' words apply to all; no one is exempt. God shows no favoritism.

"These sayings of mine" - Jesus' words were His words - He spoke them with independent authority (cp. v. 29). He did not get His message from God like the people and apostles did, but He got it from Himself, for He is God!

"Doeth" - (cp. v. 21) points to a continual or habitual obedience. Not someone who prides themselves in past obedience and uses this to excuse themselves from life-long obedience.

"A wise man" - wisdom is not mere knowledge (theory) but it is knowledge that relates to life; it is the application and practice of knowledge. A wise man is one who responds to life's circumstances with discretion, perception, and prudence.

SEE Prov. 9:8-12

1. A wise man is open to correction and instruction (v. 8-9)

2. A wise man gains his wisdom by having a healthy respect for God (v. 10)

3. A wise man has a long life expectancy

4. A wise man will reap the benefits of his wisdom (v. 12)

"Built his house upon a rock" -

1) Because he was wise he was open to Christ's instruction (he heard His words and practiced them)

2) Because he was wise, he feared God and prepared for the storm (judgment) to come (such preparations demonstrated faith in God's promise of a coming judgment)

3) Because he was wise, his house stood and he endured and reaped the benefits of his wisdom (v. 25)

"Rock" - "petra" - a great big, huge expanse of bedrock. "It is solid, stable and unmovable"

"The Christian life is a life of principled, conscientious obedience to God's will as revealed in the Bible" A.N. Martin Psalm 119:57-60

II. The Foolish Man Built His House (life) Upon the Sand By HEARING and NOT OBEYING God's Word (v. 26-27)

V. 26

"Foolish" - "moro" (from which we derive "moron")

Fools hate (despise) wisdom (Prov. 14:16, 17:10, 16).

--They are too proud to learn. Their pride hardens them against instruction; they can't be taught.

--They are too stubborn to obey

"Sand" - by contrast to the rock, sand is loose, unstable, and extremely moveable. The land agents selling lots on the sand are the false prophets Jesus has just warned about (v. 15-20) (MacArthur)

"The hypocrites hope shall perish. . . he shall learn upon his house, but it shall not stand" (Job 8:13)

One day all of the siding that the pretender erected will collapse! The structure looked impressive, but the storm will reveal its true quality.

***Your obedience reveals the genuineness of your profession.**

The indisputable evidence of whether someone is saved or not is whether or not they obey the Bible.

While believers are identified as those who "obey the gospel," unbelievers are called "sons of disobedience" (Eph. 5:5-6). Peter clearly taught that one's profession of faith is confirmed by his obedience to God's Word (II Pet. 1:10-11 - *"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."*)

Also the doom of unbelievers is confirmed by their lifestyle of disobedience to God's Word (I Cor. 6:9-10 - *"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.")*

False Professions of Faith

Paul's Warning	John's Warning
Titus 1:15-16	**I John 2:3-5**
"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."	*"And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him."*

Those whose lives are unselfish manifest by their works for Christ and their giving to his cause that they are saved. As Paul said they are "laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (I Tim. 6:19)

We should not test our profession of faith by "popularity."

Just as many are on the "wide road" leading to destruction; just as many are depending on mere words "Lord, Lord"; so many have their lives built on nothing but sand!

"The greatest problem in evangelism is not follow-up but conversion . . . Follow-up is the hardest when conversion is the easiest, because easy conversion is frequently no conversion." (MacArthur, p. 486).

Those who make a false profession of faith (perhaps to get the soulwinner off their back) are like "pulling teeth" to get them to become interested in Bible study, prayer, church attendance, doing their follow-up book, etc.. Their lack of spiritual interest is due to a lack of the Spirit! They have never been regenerated (Titus 3:5)

Jesus said, "*If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed* (truly)" (Jn. 8:31).

The implication is that "if someone is does not continue in Christ's word, then he/she is not His disciple."

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they have been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (I Jn. 2:19; cp. Ps. 55:12-15)

III. Observations to Think About:

A. Both men heard the same message

Tragedy! This man heard what the prophets and righteous men of old desired to hear (Mt. 13:17). What a privilege he had, but what an abuse of privilege! Week after week, year after year, he heard but didn't heed.

SEE: James 1:22-25

No blessing is promised to those who know God's will, but to those who do it! (v. 21) (obviously one must know it to do it, but many know it but do not do it)

One who knows the Word but does not obey it is like: a man who is lost while holding a map in his hand; a man who knows what is wrong with his health but odes nothing about it.

"Hearing" is important. You must hear accurately - not selectively, but with a desire to obey

"Hearing" does not profit if it is not mixed with faith (Heb. 4:2)

Some people find a certain security in merely hearing and acknowledging the Word. Until the will is involved mere Bible knowledge is not something to take refuge in, but rather it is something to tremble at; because you are more accountable for the more God teaches you.

There is heightened accountability when we have heard God's Word.

It is truly better to not hear than to hear and not apply and obey. "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Peter 2:21)

Those who know God's will yet do not do it will face a more strict evaluation on Judgment Day than those who did not know!

"To whomsoever much is given, much is required!"

B. Both men built a house

--From external appearance both homes would appear to be the same.

(the difference is what is underneath; the bottom line is that which could not be seen).

Some people have a facade that will crumble when the storm comes.

"Both builders have confidence their houses will stand; but one man's confidence is int he Lord and the other man's is in himself" (MacArthur p. 482)

"There is one who is pure in his own eyes, yet is not washed from his filthiness": (Prov. 30:12)

While both built houses, they both chose different foundations.

The most important part of a building is its foundation! It may not be so attractive or aesthetic; it most often is hidden and no one sees it. Yet it is the most vital part of any structure.

C. One man built the hard way, and one the easy way

Everyone is building on either sand or rock. There are no other alternatives.

Just as everyone is either on the wide road or the narrow (v. 13-14), just as everyone is either bearing good fruit or bad (v. 17-20), so everyone is either foolish or wise!

"Which built his house" - Luke describes an added detail of the building process: *"He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep and laid the foundation on a rock."*

The builder who built on sand no doubt had a house that "looked" just as good as the other. However, he failed where quality counted most; it was too much effort (work) to drill into rock [NOTE: Obedience often takes great effort, great self-denial; it's often not easy, it's never popular nor is it always "fun"]

You can't cut corners in the Christian life.

Quick and easy, hassle free, no trouble "Christian" living is what the fool is after.

It's easier to know what is right than to do what is right. ILLUS: Spiritual obesity - fat and lazy Christians who know everything but do nothing. Arm-chair quarterbacks - have all the answers but have never played the game.

D. Both men faced the same storm

A false profession will last until Judgment comes.

Sometimes this judgment is in the form of the trials of life (cp. Mt. 13:4-9) Many people have professed faith in Christ, only to deny their faith when life becomes spiritually costly and difficult.

But the judgment illustrated here probably refers to the final judgment before God. . . the Lord is illustrating one main point: profession will ultimately be tested before God (Wiersbe, p. 31)

God is impartial and will judge all men fairly and equally.

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" "Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men."

E. The wise man's house remained firm when he needed it most

When life's winds are gentle and life is calm, most any house will suffice! But when the storm hits, that's when we need a solid foundation!

Those who obey Christ do not crumble when:
--pressures come
--tragedies strike
--trials, temptations, and tribulations approach

We tend to think "for complicated problems you need complicated answers" -- not true!

Having a strong foundation for your life, family, ministry, business, etc., is a matter of simple obedience.

God's formula for happiness: "If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them!" John 13:17

F. The foolish man's house fell when he needed it most

You need a solid house most when the storm hits!

The fall of the wicked is demonstrated throughout Scripture:

Psalm 36:12 - *"There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise."*

Prov. 6:15 - *"Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy."*

Prov. 11:5 - *"The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness."*

Jer. 6:15 - *"Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD."*

I Thes. 5:2, 3 - *"For when they shall say peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them. . ."*

Examples of the high cost of disobedience to God:

- Nadab & Abihu – strange fire (Lev.10:1-f)
- Achan – Joshua 6:18; 7:1-f;
- Moses – Num.20:10
- Eli's Sons Hophni & Phineas
- Lot's wife – Gen.19:26
- Uzzah – touched the ark (II Sam.6:6)
- The Disobedient Prophet (1 Kings 13:1-32)

G. The fool's house fell when it was too late to build another one

"Great was the fall of it" - the loss was great because there was no more time to build another. Once you're dead you do not get another chance.

The fool will end up with absolutely nothing!

Be prepared for the future!

--The end of the wise man = stability and security.

--The end of the foolish man = instability (like the chaff - Ps. 1:3ff) and destruction

NOTE: Christ views the end of the lost as destruction (v. 13), fire (v. 19), separation (v. 23), and decimation (v. 27).

H. All that matters is the final score (what endures and triumphs in the

end)

In due time the reality of your walk (Christian life) will be tested and revealed!

There is a storm coming that will try every man's work - for the Christian, this is the Judgment Seat of Christ (I Cor. 3) for the unsaved this is the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

Many claim to be too busy to obey God: "Don't have the time. . ." When we look at eternity, we don't have time NOT to obey!

Some people are "time wise and eternity foolish" ILLUS: A man dropped two pennies on the floor of a department store as he took out his billfold to make a purchase. He stopped to hunt the two cents and left his wallet lying on the counter. When he arose, the wallet containing $50 was gone! How unwise he was!

Not nearly as unwise, however, as those who worry about the insignificant foolishness of this world and forget about the eternity to soon follow.

CONCLUSION: V. 28-29

The listener's amazement was due to:what Jesus said, and

how He said it

Both the content shocked them and the authoritative delivery.

The people were so amazed because they were accustomed to the Scribes merely quoting the rabbi's for their authority, whereas Jesus quotes no one, rather He independently speaks with His own authority.

The people never heard such a strong, fearless, powerful, profound, black and white, demanding sermon before! Their views of "righteousness" were totally smashed by Christ's description of "true righteousness"

Are you building on sand? Or rock?

The answer is determined by this question: Are you obeying the Bible?

May God give us:

An ear to hear God's will (Mt.13:9)
Matthew 13:19
When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

A heart to want God's will (Rom.6:17)
Romans 6:17
But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

A will to do God's will (Jn.7:17; James 1:22-25)
John 7:17
If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

James 1:22-25
But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. [23] For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: [24] For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. [25] But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

"GREAT FAITH"

Matthew 8:1-17
8/20/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 1

***Jesus can handle your problem -- Believe Him!**

Four examples of faith:

I. The <u>LEPER</u> believed that Jesus could overcome <u>DEFILEMENT</u> (v. 2-4)

II. The <u>CENTURION</u> believed that Jesus could overcome <u>DISTANCE</u> (v. 5-13)

III. The <u>DISCIPLES</u> believed that Jesus could overcome <u>DISEASE</u> (v. 14-15)

IV. The <u>TOWNSPEOPLE</u> believed that Jesus could overcome <u>DEMONS</u> (v. 16-17)

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"GREAT FAITH"

Matthew 8:1-17
8/20/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 1

"We have been introduced to the person of the King (Mt. 1-4) and the principles of the King (Mt. 5-7), and now we are ready for the power of the King. After all, if a king does not have the power to accomplish anything, what good are his credentials or principles?" (Wiersbe, p. 32)

"The mountain" **-**the Mount of Olives, from which He gave the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7).

"Great multitudes followed" **-**Because of His powerful, authoritative teaching, Christ commanded the respect of the people.

***Jesus can handle your problem -- Believe Him!**

Four examples of faith:

I. The LEPER believed that Jesus could overcome DEFILEMENT (v. 2-4)

V. 2
"A leper" **-** a horrible disease (described in Lev. 13)

SEE: the quote from the book Unclean! Unclean! by L. S. Huizenga (MacArthur, p. 7)

"Leprosy is an illustration of sin (Is. 1:5-6). The instructions given to the priests in Leviticus 13 help us understand the nature of sin: Sin is deeper than the skin (Lev. 13:3); it spreads (Lev. 13:8); it defiles and isolates (Lev. 13:45-46); and it is fit only for the fire (lev. 13:52, 57).

"There came a leper" **-**The fact that the leper ran up to Jesus and violated the law of quarantine, proved he believed that he would be cured and that Jesus would not be defiled.

The Jewish Talmud prohibited a Jew from coming closer than 6 feet to a leper, and if the wind was blowing, the limit was 150 feet (MacArthur, p. 6)

"Worshipped Him" **-** the word "worship" literally means to "kiss towards"; it means to do homage, to humbly show reverence to Divinity by bowing down in awe and demonstrating total affection and dependence.

NOTE: One of the clearest evidences of Christ's deity is His willingness to accept worship!

--Peter rejected worship (Acts 10:25-26), as did Paul (Acts 14:11-18)

--Angels rejected worship (Rev. 19:10), and rightly so, because only God was to be worshipped (Mt. 4:100.

But Jesus never rejected worship because He was not a mere man, nor was He an angel, but He was God Incarnate!

Note how often Jesus received worship: Ps. 2:8, 12; Mt. 8:2, 9:18, 14:33, 15:25, 28:9 & 17; Jn. 9:35, 38; 20:28-29; Lk. 24:51-52; by angels - Heb. 1:6; by all men - Phil. 2:10.

"Lord" **-**the leper recognized the deity, sovereignty, and majesty of Christ.

"If Thou wilt" **-**if you are willing. The leper did not question the ability of Christ but only His desire.

The question today is not whether God is able to heal, but whether it is always His will to do so (For Paul, it wasn't - II Cor. 12)

Our prayers should always be according to God's will (EX: Mt. 26:39, 42; I Jn. 5:14).

We don't demand anything of God! We simply request Him to do what His will decides.

"Thou canst make me clean" **-**lit. You are able! (cp. the faith of Daniel's 3 friends - Dan. 3:17-18)

"Thou canst make me clean" - the leper's faith was in the power of Jesus ***"Thou" -*** Jesus, unlike prophets like Elijah and Elisha, did not perform miracles through God, but as God! He had independent power and authority!

V. 3

"Touched him" **-**It was against safe precautionary medical procedure for one to touch a man with leprosy (since this disease was so contagious).

Lepers were isolated (quarantined) for the well-being of the community (Lev. 13:44-46).

But Jesus, knowing that his ailment would be immediately cured and to demonstrate compassion for the afflicted, touched him. Such empathy and love is often shown by Jesus (Mt. 8:3, 15; Mt. 9:29, 17:7, 20:34)

It was compassion that moved Jesus to touch a man that no one else would (Mk. 1:41 - *"And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean."*

Though the Law forbade one to touch anything unclean (Lev. 5:3), Jesus, knowing that the defilement would not occur because of the impending instantaneous cleansing, touched him.

Certainly "lepers yearned for the touch of another human being in their isolation and social stigma, they no doubt would have given anything for even brief intimate contact with someone besides other lepers" (MacArthur, p. 9)

"I will; be thou clean" **-**All Jesus had to do was say the words, and the man would be healed. The One who is called the Word has infinite power in His words as evidenced by His creative power. Since He made the universe by simply speaking the words (Heb. 11:3; cp. Gen. 1-2).

"Immediately" **-**the instantaneous nature of this healing proves this to be a true, undeniable miracle. When Jesus healed, it was never a long,s low process,b ut was

sudden and complete!

V. 4
"Tell no man" **-**Why not?

Luke 4:42-43 teaches that so many came to Jesus for healing that they were preventing him from departing and preaching in other cities

Jesus wanted to do many more miracles to substantiate the validity of His message and mission (of His being Messiah). He wanted also to minister to Gentiles (Mt. 12:16-21)

If this news would have spread, many would have followed Him for healings and not for the right reason - to hear His message of salvation. Desperate people will always flock to healing services. Jesus did not want merely a reputation for being a healer but Messiah!

This leper, however, went out and published the healing, so that so many people swarmed to Jesus that He could not minister publically (Mk. 1:45 - *But He went out and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places; and they came to him from every quarter.")*

It's ironic how Jesus told this man to tell no one, yet He told everybody; and yet Jesus tells us to tell everybody (Mk. 16:15) and yet we often tell nobody!

"One thing is certain: Jesus did not perform miracles to 'get a crowd'." (Wiersbe, p. 32)

Publicity is not always what we need most!

"Go. . . show. . . offer" **-**This man was to follow the O.T. Law, which required these things to be done (See: Lev. 14).
Christ always upheld the Law and never violated it!

"For a testimony" **-**the leper's obedience to the law of Moses would be a great testimony to both the power of Jesus and to his conformity to the law! Perhaps, this would have been the very first time the priests would have seen a leper cleansed. This would be the first time they would have to perform the duties of Lev. 14. They would have to "blow the dust" off of that part of the scroll because finally, they are

actually required to carry out a passage of Scripture they learned at Rabbinical School but had never put into practice on a former leper.

II. The CENTURION believed that Jesus could overcome DISTANCE (v. 5-13)

V. 5

"A centurion" **-**an officer in the Roman army who commanded 100 men (a "century" is 100 years).

This man would have been a Gentile. (Matthew now shows that Jesus not only healed the Jews but also the Gentiles)

V. 6

"My servant" **-**note the compassion of this centurion. Most centurions couldn't care less for their servants; when one becomes useless, they would simply replace him with another one.

Faith always produces love! (Gal. 5:6)

"Palsy, grievously tormented" - the servant was a paralytic who could not move a muscle, but was trapped on a bed suffering great agony and pain.

V. 8

"I am not worthy" **-**a statement of humility which recognized the great importance of Jesus Christ (cp. John the Baptist said the same thing - Jn. 1:27; Mk. 1:7)

By faith, this man recognized something about Jesus which demanded respect (no doubt he recognized Christ's impeccable holiness and incredible power).

For a high-ranking Roman to say this to a Jew is incredible!

"Speak the word only" **-**This man recognized the power and authority of Christ's word.

He also recognized that Jesus was not limited by distance. Jesus did not have to be physically present to work!

Though Jesus ascended to Heaven and is seated at the Father's right hand, His arm

is not short that He cannot work right here in Port Charlotte, FL! (Is. 59:1)

"My servant shall be healed" - Note; Faith does not doubt. Faith recognizes that all God has to do is "say the word" and the thing (whatever it is) will certainly be done.

V. 9

The centurion is saying: "Even I, who am a lesser officer, can give orders and they are carried out. If one who has limited authority can give orders and see them fulfilled, then certain Christ, who has total authority, can!

V. 10

"Twice in the Gospels it is recorded that Jesus marveled: here, at the great faith of the Gentile centurion, and in Mk. 6:6 at the great unbelief of the Jews" (Wiersbe, p. 33).

"I have not found so great faith" **-**This man's faith was unique among his contemporaries, even among those who should have had such faith -- the Jews (who had God's Law)!

V. 11

"The east and west" **-**Gentiles (like the centurion) from all over the world will share the Messianic Kingdom with the patriarchs because of their faith!

But "***the children of the Kingdom"*** (i.e. the Israelites who were showered with so many blessings and promises regarding that future kingdom) shall be prohibited from eating because of their unbelief.

V. 12

Physical descent from Abraham does not get one into God's Kingdom! (cp. Rom. 3:1-2)

"Cast out" **-** hell will be a place of total separation (from God and heaven)

"Outer darkness" **-** hell will be a place of total darkness (no light at all)

"Weeping" **-**Hell will be a place of total sorrow

"Gnashing of teeth" - hell will be a place of total conscious torment
V. 13

"As thou hast believed" -In the same way as the Centurion believed that Jesus would work, so Jesus did it that way!

NOTE: Many receive little from Jesus because their faith is little. The proportion of our faith will largely determine the proportion of our blessings.

Without faith we cannot please God (Heb. 11), and without faith we cannot receive answers to prayer (Mk. 11:24 - *"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire;, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."*; cp. James 1:6, 7).

III. The DISCIPLES believed that Jesus could overcome DISEASE (v. 14-15)

Mark 1:30 says that it was some of the disciples who spoke to Jesus about healing Peter's mother-in-law (cp. Lk. 4:38).

V. 14

"His wife's" **-**Peter had a wife (I Cor. 9:5) and contrary to RCC tradition, he was not the first pope! (Note: the popes are forbidden to marry).

"Sick of a fever" **-** no matter how small an ailment is, Jesus cares!

V. 15

"He touched her" **-**all it took was a touch of the Master's hand and the fever fled from her body.

Jesus also rebuked the fever (Lk. 4:39) and then lifted her up (Mk. 1:31)

"She arose and ministered" **-** When God cures us it is not so that we can selfishly enjoy the benefits of being healthy, but it is to serve our Lord. Many use past ailments as excuses to justify why they can't come to church, can't perform certain ministries,b ut this woman did not lazily lie around the house and complain about how terrible her headache was, she got right up and got busy for Christ!

"Her ministering" **-**no doubt included preparing dinner, etc.!

IV. The TOWNSPEOPLE believed that Jesus could overcome DEMONS (v. 16-17)

V. 16

"They brought unto him" **-**the townspeople (Lk. 4:40) who had spiritually afflicted friends and relatives brought them to Jesus. They had faith that Jesus could perform the miraculous!

"They brought unto him" **-**People will often never come to Jesus unless someone brings them.

"He cast out" **-**he expelled; he ordered them to leave!

"With his word" **-**The same power that cured the leper (v. 3) and the paralytic (v. 8) is the power that exorcised demons!

"Healed all" **-**Christ's power is not limited to some cases, but all.

With God, *"nothing shall be impossible!"* As the hymnwriter said, "God specializes in things thought impossible, He does the things others cannot do."

In Matthew 8:1-17, Jesus specifically heals a leper, a Gentile, and a woman. Three types of people who were viewed as outcasts by many Jewish people in Jesus' day. "Many Pharisees would pray each morning, 'I give thanks that I am a man and not a woman; a Jew and not a Gentile; a free-man and not a slave'." (Wiersbe, p. 33)

V. 17

Note: This paraphrase of Isaiah 53:4 is fulfilled not by Christ's death, but by His life Contrary to the teaching of some that "healing is in the atonement", the Bible does not say that Christ died for sickness, but for sin.

This prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled by Jesus curing His days of ministry as He compassionately cared for the physical needs of the suffering!

- Jesus healed simply (not by formulas or gimmicks)
- Jesus healed instantly (not gradually)
- Jesus healed totally (not partially)
- Jesus healed impartially (no favoritism)

"Physical health, race, social status, or gender make no difference to Him"

(MacArthur, p. 15) (i.e. there is no distinction between Jew & Greek - Rom. 10:11-12)

"THEY JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND"

(The Misunderstood Messiah)
Part I
Matthew 8:18-27
8/27/2017

INTRODUCTION:

***Don't misunderstand Jesus!**

Four examples of people who didn't understand who Jesus was, what He came to do, and what it takes to follow Him:

I. They didn't understand
THE COMMITMENT TO FOLLOWING HIS PATH (8:18-22)

II. They didn't understand
THE SAFETY OF HAVING HIS PRESENCE (8:23-27)

III. They didn't understand
THE BENEFITS OF KNOWING HIS POWER (8:28-34)

IV. They didn't understand
THE REALITY OF RECEIVING HIS PARDON (9:1-8)

"THEY JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND"

(The Misunderstood Messiah)
Part 2
Matthew 8:18-27
9/3/2017

INTRODUCTION:

***Don't misunderstand Jesus!**

Four examples of people who didn't understand who Jesus was, what He came to do, and what it takes to follow Him:

I. They didn't understand
THE _____ TO FOLLOWING HIS _____ (8:18-22)

II. They didn't understand
THE _____ OF HAVING HIS _____ (8:23-27)

III. They didn't understand
THE _____ OF KNOWING HIS _____ (8:28-34)

IV. They didn't understand
THE _____ OF RECEIVING HIS _____ (9:1-8)

"THEY JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND"

(The Misunderstood Messiah)
Part I
Matthew 8:18-27
8/27/2017

INTRODUCTION:

Of all who have ever walked the face of this earth, none has been so misunderstood as Jesus Christ.

EX: To Philip, Jesus said: *"Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?"*

Of His crucifiers, Jesus said: *"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do"* (cp. I Cor. 2:8)

After His resurrection to the 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus, Jesus said: *"O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken"* (Lk. 24:25)

***Don't misunderstand Jesus!**

Four examples of people who didn't understand who Jesus was, what He came to do, and what it takes to follow Him:

I. They didn't understand
THE COMMITMENT TO FOLLOWING HIS PATH (8:18-22)

V. 18

The ***"great multitudes"*** were gathered merely for physical miracles (healings, etc.). The masses, seeking such healings, would have greatly hindered Christ from reaching others (including Gentiles - Mt. 12:18), and would have robbed precious time from His goal of preaching the Gospel.

"Because great crowds followed Jesus, and opposition had not yet begun, many would-be disciples wanted to follow Him. However, they would not pay the price." (Wiersbe, p. 34)

V. 19

"Master" = Teacher

Perhaps this scribe (copier and teacher of the O.T. Law) was intellectually impressed by Christ's teachings and at this time was momentarily inspired to follow the Lord.

"I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest" - This man, with stars in his eyes and visions of earthly glory in his mind, prematurely utters a pious promise to follow Jesus no matter where Jesus would lead.

Many today make shallow commitments to following Christ, but without counting the cost.

"Jesus knew that a strong profession does not necessarily reflect strong commitment" (MacArthur, p. 22)

"Many people are attracted to Him by excitement, glamour, or the hope of personal benefit. . . such a person sees the soldiers on parade, the fine uniforms, and the glittering arms and is eager to join, forgetting the exhausting marches, the bloody battles, the graves" etc. (Lenski, cited by MacArthur, p. 23).

EX: those soldiers who enlisted in the U.S. military for education benefits who ended up in Arabia for "Desert Storm"

V. 20

Jesus, knowing the shallowness of the man's commitment to follow, reminds him of the price he will have to pay if he is to be such a follower.

To follow Jesus wherever he would lead will often require sacrifice, doing without, difficulty, pressure, trials, hardship.

This man evidently thoughts that following Christ is all glory, all comfort, "a bowl of cherries."

Jesus' point: The foxes and birds have houses - places of comfort, shelter, and rest - but He did not even carry a pillow!

Christ's itinerant ministry would require Him to travel light and miss out on the comforts He deserved.

"Son of man" - a title that shows Christ's humiliation in becoming incarnate. Jesus, although He was God (Phil. 2:6), humbled Himself in becoming human.

The "Son of God" became the "Son of man" so that we, the "sons of man," might become "sons of God."
In a world that isn't fair, God never promises the Christian an easy, carefree life; but He does promise a blessed life with true purpose, meaning, and eternal reward.

EXCUSE # 1 - The cost is too great
(The comforts of this life keep many from surrendering all)

V. 22

EXCUSE # 2 - I'll serve You later
(The customs and cares of this life keep many from surrendering now)

See Luke 9:57-62 for 3 excuses.

V. 21

"Another of His disciples" **-** Evidently not one of the 12 but perhaps one of the 70

Note: Luke's gospel is more chronological, and it describes the selection of the 12 disciples (Lk. 6:12-16), then later the excuse-making "disciple" (Lk. 9:59)

"Bury my father" **-** There is no indication that his father had actually died, but he is man is excusing himself from following Christ so that he could go and care for his father until he died, and then he could get his lucrative inheritance (perhaps he was afraid he would lost his inheritance)

V. 22

"Let the dead bury their dead" - Obviously, physically dead people could not bury anyone. Jesus is saying let those who are spiritually dead worry about burying those who die physically. In contrast, however, following Christ takes pre-eminence over everything!

Christians can get so involved in doing that which is lesser priority, that they fail to do that which is paramount; that which shall come first.

"Jesus was not asking the man to be disrespectful to his father (who was not yet dead) but to have the right priorities in life" (Wiersbe, p. 34)

Jesus is saying: "Let the world take care of the things of the world" (MacArthur, p. 25)

Following Christ requires self-denial and cross bearing. (Mt. 16:24)

Following Jesus involves following Him on His terms and not our own!

II. They didn't understand
THE SAFETY OF HAVING HIS PRESENCE (8:23-27)

V. 24

The little Sea of Galilee, because of its geographical location, can become a raging sea in a matter of minutes.

"The ship" - was no huge ocean vessel, but was by today's standards a little boat (cp. Mk. 4:36).

"He was asleep" - Had they known who Jesus was, they would not have been worried that He was asleep. He, though He took upon Himself physical limitations, was still in total control of things - even asleep!

V. 25

Being fishermen, the disciples had been in storms before; they perhaps exhausted all of their efforts and finally in desperation go to wake up Jesus.

Can you imagine what they must have thought:
"How could He sleep during a time like this?!"
"Doesn't He realize what is going on?!"
"Doesn't He care about us?"

Sometimes we are tempted to ask such questions in the midst of turmoil, confusion, and severe trial, but remember Jesus has everything under control! (In Heaven, *"He neither slumbers nor sleeps"*)

V. 26
Matthew is contrasting the *"little faith"* of the disciples with the *"great faith"* (8:10) of the Centurion.

"Fear" is always the result of ***"little faith."***

Whenever we worry it is always because we are not trusting God like we should.

"Rebuked the winds and the sea" - Perhaps all Jesus said to the wind was "Stop it" and to the sea, "Peace, be still" (Mk. 4:39). All it took was the power of His word.

"Great calm" - the sea went from violent, raging, beating waves to a peaceful, serene, smooth calm.

It wasn't just a calm, it was a great calm. Not a ripple remained! The sea became like a sheet of glass. It was not a gradual calming, but it was a sudden and complete calm.

One second the disciples are rocking back and forth in their little boat, and the next, they were completely stationary.

The wind went from a howling, vicious torrent to non-existence; not a breeze remained.

v. 27

The disciples were amazed! They knew Jesus had power over leprosy (v. 3), palsy (v. 13), sickness (v. 14), and demon possession (v. 16) -- but did He have the power to instantaneously control the natural elements?! No one can do this! No one except God!

So they responded, *"What manner of man is this?"* He was no ordinary man!

The problem with the disciple's question is that it reveals that they still didn't know who Jesus was. They still thought He was a mere man.

Despite His authoritative teaching and His tremendous miracles, they still didn't see that He was the God-Man!

Psalm 89:8-9 - *"O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto Thee? of to Thy faithfulness round about Thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea; when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them."*

"The winds and the sea obey Him" - when Jesus speaks the elements submit. When Jesus speaks, the humanly impossible is accomplished. When Jesus sends forth the command, "Mother Nature" proves she is not "Mother" but is an obedient servant to her Creator.

III. They didn't understand
THE BENEFITS OF KNOWING HIS POWER (8:28-34)

V. 24

"Possessed" - to possess means to inhabit or live inside and to control that which you live in

"Devils" - plural; their name was "Legion" because there were many demons who possessed these men (Mk. 5:9; Lk. 8:30). A "Legion" was the largest unit of the Roman army, 3000 - 6000 strong (Ryrie note)

"Two possessed" - "In their accounts of this incident, Mark (5:2) and Luke (8:27) mention only one demon-possessed man, but do not state that only one was present. For their particular purposes they chose to focus on the more dominant of the two men" (MacArthur, p. 41)

Marks of someone who is a Satanist or demon-possessed:

1. A pre-occupation with death (*"out of the tombs"*)

2. Violent behavior *("exceeding fierce")*

3. Super-human strength (*"exceeding fierce")*

   Cp. Luke 8:29 - *"He was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness"*

4. Anti-social isolation *("that no man might pass that way")*

5. An abhorrence for Jesus Christ *("what have we to do with thee"")*

6. Clairvoyant knowledge *("Jesus, thou Son of God")*

   There is no indication that these men knew Jesus; however, when someone is demon-possessed they can know things that they have never been taught; speak in languages they have never learned.

   "Thou Son of God" - a reference to Christ's deity! Note: The demons

have no choice but to fall down and worship Christ (Lk. 8:28)

7. Insanity, masochism, and immodesty

(Mk. 5:5 describes the demon-possessed person as *"crying"* and cutting/*"gashing himself with stones")*

Lk. 8:27 - This man *"ware no clothes"*

V. 29

"Art thou come to torment us before the time?" - The demons indicate that:

---Jesus has the power to torment *("thou")*

---Jesus has power over demons (*"us")*

---Jesus will one day at a particular time judge demons (they along with Satan will be hurled down into the bottomless pit (*"into the deep"* - Lk. 8:31; cp. Rev. 20:1ff)

Note: demons fear Christ and rightly so.

A shocking statement: "If people feared Christ like demons do, we would see revival." They *"believe and tremble"* - James 2:19

As Warren Wiersbe has observed, we could almost construct a "statement of faith" from the word of demons (demons do have faith - James 2:19).

--They believe in the existence of God

--They believe in the deity of Christ

--They believe in the reality of future judgment

--They believe also in prayer (v. 31)

V. 31

The unclean swine would be a fitting abode for the unclean spirits.

"Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" I Jn. 4:4

Demons (even a legion of them) are NO match for Jesus Christ.

NOTE: The demons' response to Jesus Christ shows:

**Demons fear Jesus Christ (v. 29)

a. They know His holiness
(*"What have we to do with Thee?"* - implied answer: Nothing!)

b. They know His deity
(*"Thou Son of God"*)

c. They know His power and judgeship
(*"Art Thou come to torment us before the time?"*)

d. They know His sovereignty (v. 31)
(*"Besought"* - They begged Jesus; *"If Thou"* - They know that whatever Jesus decides to do, He does it; *"Suffer us"* - they recognize that they can do nothing unless Jesus allows it)

V. 32

A pig is an easily agitated creature to begin with; this demonic possession caused the pigs to desire nothing but death to seek to rid themselves of the evil demons.

To anyone (EX: animal rights activists) who would question why Jesus would do this to swine, the reply is: Jesus didn't do anything to the swine; the demons did.

God always gets blamed for man's or Satan's sin.

But why did Jesus allow it?

--*"God owns everything"* (Ps. 50:10-11) and can do with it as He pleases
--Jesus values men more than pigs or sheep (Mt. 12:12) (Wiersbe, p.34)

V. 33

After the demons left the men, they drastically changed. Luke 8:35 describes them as:

1) Sitting (at the feet of Jesus)

2) Clothed

3) In his right mind

4) Testifying (Lk. 8:39)

V. 34

"Besought" - to make a soft appeal, to encourage (one to leave)

They would not dare command or order Him to leave after hearing and seeing all that He could do!

You would think that the town would have rejoiced, celebrated, elected Jesus as "mayor."

You would think they would have been glad that these two menaces to society were straightened out!

But such was not the case.

It's ironic how, even today, Jesus is not wanted by all. The irony is that people have nothing good to lose from Him -- only everything good to gain!

This rejection of Jesus is a small picture of the large scale rejection that Jesus faced.

It's a microcosm of the macrocosm.

IV. They didn't understand
THE REALITY OF RECEIVING HIS PARDON (9:1-8)

V. 1

"His own city" - Capernaum; although Jesus grew up in Nazareth, Capernaum became His headquarters, His stopping ground; the city where Jesus performed a great majority of miracles.

V. 2

"They" - Four men (Mk. 2:3) who loved their paralyzed friend and believed that Jesus could heal him.

"Brought to Him" - When they could not gain entrance into the building because of the multitudes of people that crammed into the place, they went up on the flat roof, broke up the ceiling tiles, and lowered their friend down Mk. 2:4; Lk. 5:19).

"Palsy" - A paralytic who couldn't move and was confined to a bed.

"Jesus, seeing their faith" The faith of the four men and the faith of the paralytic

"Be of good cheer" - cheer up; take heart; be encouraged (wipe the frown from your face and the sorrow from your heart; don't be discouraged any longer); because your sins are forgiven!

NOTE: Nothing cheers a heart like the forgiveness of sin by Jesus Christ!

"Thy sins" - His own personal sins (no one but we ourselves can be blamed for our sins)

"Thy sins" - Everytime he missed God's standard of righteousness

"Be forgiven" - pres. pass. *"are being forgiven"*

Pres. tense = His sins were being removed at the very instant Jesus said the words.

Passive voice = it was Jesus who forgave Him

The word "forgiven" means to drive away or do away with. *"As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us"* (Ps. 103:12); whenever God forgives sins, He casts them *"into the depths of the sea"* (Mic. 7:19)

ILLUS: The Alaskan translation for "forgiveness" (MacArthur, p. 52)

V. 3

"This man blasphemeth" - In their hearts, they accused Jesus of slander against God.

They rightly recognized that no one could forgive sins except God alone (Mk. 2:7; Lk. 5:21). Their failure was in no seeing that Jesus was God.

Since they did not recognize Jesus as God, they thought He was committing a sacrilegious, belittling to God's prerogative, blasphemous statement.

They were right in their believe that only God could forgive sins (not any man or angel), but they were wrong in that they didn't recognize Jesus for who He was.

V. 4

"Knowing their thoughts" - Jesus, being omniscient, knew what others could not know - He knew the thoughts and intents of the heart.

It is "evil" to accuse Jesus of blasphemy, and it is evil to not believe He is deity incarnate.

V. 5

It is obviously easier to say *"Thy sins be forgiven thee"* since the validity of the statement cannot be so easily tested as *"Arise"* (Ryrie note)

Any one can say the words *"Your sins be forgiven thee"* - Such a statement is meaningless unless the one who says it has the power to do it!

Just talk with no power to back it up is cheap; it's impotent.

V. 6

"But that ye may know" - This statement is the clearest reason given in the Bible as to why signs and miracles were performed. They were to validate (vindicate, authenticate) both the Messenger and His Message.

Jesus did what only God can do because Jesus is God!

Forgiving sins is a prerogative of God only; and Christ's independent ability to forgive sins is one of the strongest indications of His deity.

Note: Other Scripture showing Christ's ability to forgive sin:

"Hath power on earth" -

"Power" = authority

"Hath. . . on earth" - Jesus while incarnate on earth had the same authority to forgive sins as He had in Heaven

"To the sick of the palsy" - Had Jesus not qualified (limited) His command to *"Arise"* to this paralytic, every paralytic on earth would have arisen at that imperative.

V. 7

"And he arose" - This miracle was:

1) Immediate (Mk. 2:12) - not a process

2) Undeniable (Lk. 5:25) - *"He arose up before them"* - right before their eyes (Note: It is certain that the people knew this man; this was not a "staged miracle" (a fake set-up) like so many of the supposed healings that occur at "healing meetings" today around America)

3) Complete (or total) - The man had his total strength, in so much as

he was able to pick up a bed and walk home with it!

V. 8

"They marvelled" - they wee filled with fear and awe

"Which had given such power unto men" - this statement reveals a major misunderstanding on the part of the people. God never gave such power unto men (plural), as if Jesus was just one among "men" to whom God gave such power.

Jesus uniquely had this power. No one else has power to forgive and no one else did what Jesus did on this occasion.

And Jesus was not just a man either. He was God in human flesh. The God-Man!

CONCLUSION:

Jesus, A Friend of Sinners

Matthew 9:9-13
9/17/2017

Intro.

***We need to follow our Savior's pattern for evangelism.**

How did Christ bring sinners to Himself?

I. **Confrontational Evangelism** - "He saw a man" (v. 9)

II. **Friendship Evangelism** - "He sat at meat" (v. 10-13)

Four Requirements:

A. **A neutral setting** - "in the house" (v. 10)

B. **A distinct lifestyle** - "physician. . . sick" (v.11-12)

C. **A spiritual purpose** - "call. . . sinners to repentance" (v. 11-12; 13b)

D. **A merciful attitude** - "I will have mercy" (v. 13a)

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Jesus, A Friend of Sinners

Matthew 9:9-13
9/17/2017

Intro.

Matthew (in v. 9-13) is continuing his theme of showing how Jesus Christ was misunderstood by the people of His day.

In this context, it is the religious crowd who find it incomprehensible that Jesus would come in contact with publicans and sinners.

Jesus cares for sinners! (Note His love for sinners in v. 9-13)

Matthew (also called "Levi") was a Jew who worked for Rome by collecting taxes.

V. 9

Publicans were despised because:

1. Extortion

   Publicans would normally collect more taxes than were due to Rome, then they would pocket the extra cash.

2. Bribery

   They would accept bribes from the wealthy and make up for it by "socking it" to the middle and lower class people

3. Traitorous (misplaced loyalty)

   "Because of the nature of their position, their first loyalty was to Rome" (MacArthur, p. 60)

   Due to the fact that they were viewed as traitors, reprobates, money-hungry scoundrels, they were considered outcasts of the Jewish society.

   "The noted Jewish scholar Alfred Edersheim reports that a Jewish "publicani" was barred from the synagogue and was forbidden to have any religious or social contact with his fellow Jews. He was ranked with the unclean animals, which a devout Jew would not so much as touch. He was in the class of swine, and because he was held to be a traitor and a congenital liar, he was ranked with robbers and murderers and was forbidden to give testimony in any Jewish court." (MacArthur, p. 60-61)

Since Matthew was prohibited from the religious life of Israel and evidently was longing for God's grace and redemption, he was so overwhelmed at the privilege offered by great Jesus Christ to follow Him, that the things of the world immediately lost their value. . . for he had found the Pearl of Great Price.

"Follow Me" - a brief but powerful exhortation

"And he arose and followed Him" - Matthew gets up, leaves his business behind, and followed Jesus.

To follow Christ today does not necessarily mean that you will have to leave your place of business (unless it is sinful employment). But there must be a willingness to do whatever Jesus wants you to do (EX: how a man left his dental practice to go to Bible college at Pillsbury).

V. 10

"In the house" - in the house of Matthew (Lk. 5:29)

"Like many new converts, Matthew's first thought was to tell his friends about the Savior. He was so overwhelmed that he threw a banquet to present Jesus to his friends--all of whom, as tax-gatherers and sinners, were social and religious outcasts.

"Many publicans" - Matthew being a publican no doubt had many associates who were of the same profession. You can reach people in your sphere of influence and area of expertise that no one else can!

What type of "sinners" did Jesus save?
--fornicators (the woman at the well - Jn. 4)
--demon-possessed (Mary Magdalene)
--adulterers (Jn. 8:1-11)
--prostitutes
--thieves (EX: thief on the cross)
--religionists (Nicodemus & Saul of Tarsus)

It was most likely because of this very banquet that the Lord Jesus gained the reputation by His enemies as *"a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners"* (Mt. 11:19; cp. Lk. 15:2)

V. 11

The Pharisees were too cowardly to go directly to Jesus and ask Him, so they interrogate His disciples instead.

Sometimes our good will be evil spoken of.

V. 12

"The analogy is simple. Just as a physician is expected to go among people who are sick, a Forgiver should be expected to go among those who are sinful [and in need of forgiveness]. . . What sort of doctor would spend all of his time with healthy people and refuse to associate with those who are sick?" (MacArthur, p. 64)

Jesus is still the Great Physician who can cure spiritual heart disease, and regenerate sick souls, and resuscitate those who are spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1ff)

V. 13

"Go ye and learn" - a rabbinic rebuke because of ignorance. Go get your O.T. scroll and learn what Hosea meant when He said this in Hosea 6:6.

NOTE: In the context, Gomer, and Hosea's forgiveness of such a great sinner

God desires us to show mercy (pity, compassion) on people, not merely to bring sacrifices to God. To bring a sacrifice to God but to do so with a self-righteous, holier than thou, unmerciful attitude toward others is hypocrisy.

The hypocritical Pharisees paid their tithes, yet avoided the *"weightier matters"* of the Law - justice, mercy and faith! (Mt. 23:23).

"I am not come to call the righteous" - Reason: There are none! (Rom. 3:10)

Had the Pharisees know the O.T., they would have know this (Ps. 14:1-3; Ps. 53:1-4)

"Sinners to repentance" - Jesus saved the *"chief of sinners"* (Saul of Tarsus - I Tim. 1:15) to give an encouraging example that He is able to save anyone who comes to Him by faith (I Tim. 1:16).

Jesus saw every situation as an encounter with eternity at stake, and so must we.

***We need to follow our Savior's pattern for evangelism.**
How did Christ bring sinners to Himself?

Basically: Christ Made CONTACT with the Lost.
He touched their lives - Matthew 9:9-13)

Christ's life on earth is characterized by His willingness to "touch" the lives of sinners (literally - Mt. 8:3, 15; 9:20, 29; 14:36; 17:7; 20:34; Mk. 7:33; Lk. 22:51; Heb. 4:15)

He came into contact with those who needed Him. Jesus never isolated Himself from rubbing shoulders with hurting people.

How did Christ made contact with the lost?

I. **Confrontational Evangelism** - "He saw a man" (v. 9)

Commonly called "cold turkey" evangelism - taking the Gospel to someone you don't know.

EX: Woman at the well

Even in this type of evangelism a rapport must be built.

II. **Friendship Evangelism** - "He sat at meat" (v. 10-13)

Friendship evangelism is commonly called: "Lifestyle evangelism"; "Bridge evangelism."

Jesus is called a "Friend of sinners."

Should we be friends with the lost? Yes and No

Yes-We are friends in the sense that we genuinely love them and seek to build a bridge in their life so that they will listen to our gospel and see it "fleshed out" by our lives.

No-We are never to be like the world in order to win them. We are not to compromise conviction, participate in worldly practices; or go to certain of their places of entertainment to win them.

[We are to surrender personal differences, never doctrinal convictions - EX: Paul - I Cor. 9:19-23]

Two extremes are prevalent today in the name of "evangelism":

1) Spiritual Isolation - to have no contact with the lost (many fundamentalists)

2) Spiritual Immersion - to have no distinction with the lost (to blend into their worldliness) (many "New Evangelicals")

Four Requirements:

A. A neutral setting - "in the house" (v. 10)

It was not church, nor was it the night club where Jesus sat with sinners.

What is a neutral setting? It is a location and atmosphere not noted for either "religion" (on the one hand) or "sin" (on the other hand).

a. The Bible Examples of evangelizing in neutral settings:

1) Samaritan woman - by a well (Jn. 4)
2) Zacchaeus - in his home (Lk. 19:5-10)
3) Ethiopian Eunich - on the Gaza Road (Acts 8:26-40)
4) Cornelius & family - in his house (Acts 10:27-28)
5) Lydia - by a river (Acts 16:13)
6) Phillippian jailor - outside a jail cell (Acts 16:23, 29-30)
7) Jailor's family - in a home (Acts 16:32, 34)
8) The Athenians - at a market place (Acts 17:17b)
9) Justus - in his house (Acts 18:7)

Paul did frequently go into Jewish synagogues and preach, but not to the neglect of sharing his faith in "neutral" locations.

It is improper to have the mentality that evangelism should primarily take place in the local church. The primary function of the assembled congregation is the edification of the saints (Eph. 4:12; Heb. 10:24-25) not the evangelism of sinners.

Even though reaching the lost will and should take place during church gatherings (I Cor. 14:23-25), the primary purpose of believers "coming together" (v. 26) is not evangelism but edification.

Evangelism takes place, primarily, when the Church is dissembled, as believers go out to the homes, jobs, and

marketplaces, etc. (Acts 5:42, 8:4).

b. The benefits of evangelizing in neutral settings:

1) It shows the lost person that salvation does not come via a church, or a "religion."

2) The atmosphere does not inhibit the lost person (less apprehension or fear) - in a church building he may not feel comfortable (tendency is to throw up barriers against any form of "prosceletizing")

3) The atmosphere does nto distract the lost person

--In a nightclub, bar, etc., the surroundings are sensual, noisy, and worldly, thus distracting to both the one witnessing and the one listening.

4) Neutral settings provide periodic (consistent) contact with the lost person

EX: Through building relationships with those at work, school, recreational areas (parks, etc.), you establish rapport, trust, and come in contact with lost people on a consistent basis.

They get a chance to see a "real live" Christian in day-to-day life.

B. A distinct lifestyle - "physician. . . house" (v.11-12)

Jesus remained a physician when among the sick, He did not become sick with them!"

SEE Matthew 5:13-16

a. We must maintain our spiritual savor (v. 13)

1) We need to be distinct morally

The world needs something to retard corruption - what makes us distinct? Note previous context (v. 3-12).

2) We need a persevering contact

b. We must maintain our spiritual light (v. 14-16)

1) Don't hide your light (v. 15)

Our tendency is to make mad, quick dashes into our town and then retreat to our refuge. People see light flashing by, then wonder, "What was that???!!!"

2) Let people see your light (v.16)

a) We should be known for our "light" (our distinguishable brilliance against the backdrop of the world's darkness)

Today, many Christians are "gray," not "white" (seeking to blend rather than contrast).

b) We should be known for our "good works"

(1) Our "good works" must be visible to the world ("...that they may see your good works...")

Christianity is not merely a "closet" religion

The world will never see real love, joy, peace, contentment, humility, honesty, sacrifice, and spirituality unless they see it in us.

(2) Our "good works" must cause the world to glorify God, not ourselves.

Be humble about your "light"

C. **A <u>spiritual</u> purpose** - "call. . . sinners to repentance" (v. 11-12; 13b)

Our major goal in building relationships with the lost is to lead them to repentance (to bring them to our Savior).

Our purpose (goal) is <u>not</u> to:

a. Merely <u>gain friends</u>

A true friend will tell the most important news he has ever heard - the gospel.

b. Become a <u>social worker</u>

Beware not to get sidetracked from your main goal. Many churches today are nothing but social organizations (feeding the poor; clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, etc.), meeting temporal needs and never getting around to the <u>eternal needs</u> of their souls.

Some might think, "If I have people over to my house, etc., with the ulterior motive of sharing the Gospel, am I being a hypocrite? Answer: NO!

This is the most <u>loving motive</u> we could ever have.

D. **A <u>merciful</u> attitude** - "I will have mercy" (v. 13a)

"Mercy" - is to extend to others the same treatment God showed to you. Showing mercy requires <u>humility</u> and <u>love</u>.

<u>Humility</u> - "I am no better than you." You will never lead anyone to Christ if you preach <u>down</u> to them with a "holier than thou" attitude.

<u>Love</u> - "I will love you as Christ loved me when I didn't deserve it."

"People need to know how much you care before they will care about how much you know."

God is interested in internals (mercy), not merely externals (sacrifice).

SEE Mt. 12:7

CONCLUSION:

Jesus by example teaches us that we need to make contact with the unsaved in order to win them.

Salt is useless unless it come sin contact with food.
Light is useless unless it comes in contact with darkness.
A map is useless unless it comes in contact with someone who needs directions.
A compass is useless unless it comes in contact with someone who is lost.
A Christian is useless unless he comes in contact with the unsaved.

--Do you seek to make contact with the lost or avoid them?

--Do you know who your neighbors are?
- What are their names, first and last?
- What are their children's names?
- Where do they work?
- When was the last time they were in your home?
- When was the last time you were in theirs?

--Why do you think God gave you the job you have? Why did He set those people across your path? Are you reaching them?

Don't be a hibernating Christian! Don't be an isolationist! Don't live on your own island while the sea of humanity drifts to eternal ruin!

--Make a list, include your unsaved neighbors, fellow employees, class mates, relatives, etc.

--Pray for a chance to develop relationships with them

--Plan an occasion to get together - Be ready to sow the seed

Hymn: "Jesus: what a friend of sinners"

"THE MIS-MATCH"

(Man's Ways and Christ's Ways Don't Match!)
Matthew 9:14-17
9/24/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 14

***Don't mix your old ways with the new life in Jesus Christ.**
(Don't mingle old religion with your new relationship)

Why not?

I. It is <u>inconsistent</u> for Christ to be <u>present</u>
& His children to live lives of <u>misery</u>. (v. 14-15)

II. It is <u>incompatible</u> for Christ to be a <u>part</u>
of man-made, legalistic, religious <u>tradition</u> (v. 16-17)

A. Don't <u>patch</u> the old religion -- replace it! (v. 16)
(New unshrunk patches don't repair old garments)

B. Don't <u>pour</u> into old religion, replace it! (v. 17)
(New unfermented wine doesn't remain in old wineskins)

"THE MIS-MATCH"

(Man's Ways and Christ's Ways Don't Match!)
Matthew 9:14-17
9/24/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 14

Examples of mis-matches (things that are not suited for each other)

(This account also occurs in Mark 2:18-22 and Luke 5:33-39)

***Don't mix your old ways with the new life in Jesus Christ.**
(Don't mingle old religion with your new relationship)

Why not?

I. It is inconsistent for Christ to be present & His children to live lives of misery. (v. 14-15)

V. 14

"The disciples of John" - these were followers of John the Baptist, whose mission was to prepare people for Christ (Jn. 3:26-36). Many, however, never caught on to John's message (Acts 19:2-5).

The fasting of John's disciples was probably due to their burden for John, who was now in prison (Mt. 4:12)

"The Pharisees fast oft" - Though the Law did not require such, the Pharisees prided themselves in the fact that they fasted "twice" a week (Lk. 18:12).

[NOTE: The Law only required 1 day of national fasting a year: The Day of Atonement, Lev. 16:29-30. This time of fasting was to be an expression of mourning over sin. The phrase *"Afflict your souls. . ."* would imply fasting (Lev. 16:29, 31)]

Many times God's people will be criticized for not complying with the man-made rules and traditions of organized denominational religions.
Implied by their question is this: "If you are greater and more spiritual than John the Baptist and the Pharisees, why is it not evidenced by your disciples? If they are truly spiritual, shouldn't they be fasting and mourning?

One misconception that people have is that Christians cannot have joy; they should always be somber; they should always walk around with their heads bowed; and gloom written all over their faces in continual sorrow because of sin.

While it is true that we should mourn over sin (Mt. 5:4), it is not true that we can never have joy, peace, feelings of liberty, or an abundant and full life.

Jesus came to give *"abundant life"* (Jn. 10:10).

Christians, even in troubles, should *"rejoice and be exceeding glad"* (Mt. 5:12)

"Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, rejoice" (Phil. 4:4)

Ps. 16:11 - *"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore"*

Jn. 15:11 - *"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."*

I Pet. 1:8 - *"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."*

V. 15

"The children of the bridechamber" - lit. the sons of the bridegroom. These attendants prepared the "room or dining hall in which the marriage ceremonies were held" (Vine, p. 150). They were responsible for the festivities. "The wedding celebration (then and today) was not a time for them to mourn but to rejoice" (MacArthur, p. 69)

"The Christian life is a feast not a funeral" (Wiersbe, p. 35).

Fasting was always linked to prayer and was for the purpose of getting God's attention. A person would be so overwhelmed by some problem or need that they would actually have no desire to eat, but only to seek God.

If the intention of fasting was to get the attention of God, why would anyone fast when God was standing right in front of them? There was no need to fast in Christ's presence, since He was right there to answer their questions, lift their burdens, and come to their aid.

If the disciples of John and the Pharisees had understood who Jesus was, they would not have asked such a question.

"Children" - depicts the Sons of God (those belonging to Christ)

[Every son of God (Jn. 1:12) is part of the Bride of Christ (Rev. 19:7-9)]

"The Bridegroom" - depicts Jesus Christ

[Note: The *"Friend of the Bridegroom"* = John the Baptist, who as the Best Man, prepared the way for the Groom and His marriage - SEE: John 3:28-30]

"Shall be taken away" - a reference to the death of Christ, after which time a season of *"fasting"* was forthcoming (SEE: John 16:20-22)

II. It is <u>incompatible</u> for Christ to be a <u>part</u> of man-made, legalistic, religious <u>tradition</u> (v. 16-17)

A. Don't <u>patch</u> the old religion -- replace it! (v. 16)
(New unshrunk patches don't repair old garments)

V. 16

"New cloth" - Unshrunk.

What would happen if you took a fresh, new, unshrunk piece of wool cloth and put it on an old garment that had already shrunk?

Answer: When the patched garment was washed, the unshrunk portion would shrink, thus reducing itself in size, and would pull itself away from the old garment, making the tear larger and harder to repair than when you started.

"The illustration of the *<u>cloth</u>* reminds us that He came to bring spiritual wholeness; He did not come to "patch us up" and then let us fall apart." (Wiersbe, p. 35)

Christ came to bring something new! Not to repair the old!

B. Don't <u>pour</u> into old religion, replace it! (v. 17)
(New unfermented wine doesn't remain in old wineskins)

"Wine was often stored in animal skins that were specially prepared for that purpose. The hide would be uncut except at the legs and neck, and sometimes would be turned inside out. The leg openings would be stitched closed and sealed, and the neck was used as a spout, which was tied with a leather thong or string." (MacArthur, p. 70).

"Old bottles" **-** would be bottles that have expanded due to previous fermentation of wine (they would also be dry and cracked).

"The image of the *<u>wineskins</u>* teaches that He gives spiritual fullness. Jewish religion was a worn-out wineskin that would burst if filled with the new wine of the Gospel. Jesus did not come to renovate Moses or even mix Law and grace. He came with new life!" (Wiersbe, p. 35).

II Cor. 5:17 - *"All things are become <u>new</u>!"*

Many who are stuck on the "old," who are sold on it, don't question it. . . they are not open for change, do not desire the "New"!

Luke 5:39 teaches that people are reluctant to change, even when the old life is <u>not</u> really better, though they may think so.

Those who are inebriated by the old will not immediately be turned on to the new. It may take time,b ut be patient!

"New wine" - unfermented grape juice

Joshua 9:13 - *"And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey."*

Isaiah 65:8 - *"Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all."*

Matt. 26:29 - *"But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."*

The generic word *"wine"* (oinos) without a qualifying adjective could refer to <u>new</u> or <u>old</u> wine, depending on the context. It is most consistent that Jesus created <u>new</u> wine out of water (Jn. 2).

[NOTE: The translation "new wine" in Acts 2:13 is a mistranslation - "gleukous" should be translated "sweet wine."]

Should Christians drink wine? No, not if it is alcoholic. Why not?

1) It violates <u>Scriptural teaching</u> (Prov. 20:1 - *"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."*

2) It is <u>addictive</u> and <u>destructive</u> (Prov. 23:29-35)

3) It is symbolic of <u>worldliness</u> (in our indulgent, pleasure-orientated society) (EX: Daniel's convictions - Dan. 1:8).

4) It inhibits good judgment and sound thinking (Lev. 10:8-11 - "*And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean.*"

5) It leads to riotous behavior (Eph. 5:18 - *"Excess"* - riotous, wild, and unruly behavior)

*6) It is a potential stumbling block (Rom. 14:21 - *"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."*)

Jesus did not teach a reformed Judaism.

John Calvin and Martin Luther would have been wider had they begun entirely over, rather than attempting to reform (hence, "Reformation") the Roman Catholic Church.

The Pharisees' legalistic, external, self-righteous system of traditional Judaism was diametrically opposed to Christianity. This is why clashes occurred. Persecution by the "old" was inevitable!

This opposition proves the incompatibility of the two. We should learn the same lesson from the Roman Catholic Church, which tortured God's people in the Dark Ages.

CONCLUSION:

The point:
A new patch must be put on a new garment. New wine must be put into new wineskins.

The meaning:

It is foolish to take Christ's message and mission and attach it to Judaism with the goal of trying to "Christianize" Judaism.

Christ + Law does not equal salvation.

Christ + works do not amount to eternal life.

It is Christ only!

NOTE: The book of Galatians and the problem of the Judaizers.

Christ is not an "additive" that you add to the crank case of your life to improve the performance of your efforts.

He is not a "supplement" that you add to bolster your spiritual vitamins.

Jesus is incompatible to those whose lives are filled up with religion and self-righteousness.

It is not Christ plus the works of the law for salvation. It is Christ who fulfilled the Law for us (Mt. 5:17) and Christ in us (II Cor. 5:21). Only Christ for salvation!

Rom. 3:20, 28 - *"Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall not flesh be justified in His sight: for by the Law is the knowledge of sin. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law"*

Acts 13:39 - *"And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."*

Gal. 2:16 - *"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."*

Eph. 2:9 - "*Not of works, lest any man should boast."*

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (Jn. 1:17)

All forms of legalism are attempts by man to add to Christ's finished work for salvation.

Example:

1) 7th Day Adventism
(Christ plus Sabbath keeping)

2) United Church of Christ (U.C.C.)
(Christ plus baptism)

3) Roman Catholic Church
(Christ plus Mary & Sacraments)

Anything in our lives that is unsuitable, mis-matched, clashing, inconsistent, contradictory, or in disharmony with what Christ wants for us must go!

Many of Christianity's methodologies are adaptations of dead, formal Christianity.

We need:

--A willingness to change anything that is hindering Christ to work in and through us. If the structure is incongruent with Christ, change it!

--A willingness to let go of "old baggage" that keeps us from accepting Christ or that slows us down in living for Christ

"THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND"

Matthew 9:18-35
10-1-2017

INTRODUCTION:

***Jesus is willing to touch lives that are suffering, lost, and powerless!**

I. Jesus touched the lives of the <u>LIFELESS</u> (v. 18-19;23-26)

II. Jesus touched the lives of the <u>HELPLESS</u> (v. 20-22)

III. Jesus touched the lives of the <u>SIGHTLESS</u> (v. 27-31)

IV. Jesus touched the lives of the <u>SPEECHLESS</u> (v. 32-34)

V. Jesus touched the lives of the <u>HOPELESS</u> (v. 35, cp. v. 36)

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III. Jesus touched the lives of the _____ (v. 27-31)

IV. Jesus touched the lives of the _____ (v. 32-34)

V. Jesus touched the lives of the _____ (v. 35, cp. v. 36)

"THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND"

Matthew 9:18-35
10-1-2017

INTRODUCTION:

People crave the compassionate touch of others who care.

EX:--The soothing touch of a mother who strokes the head of her feverish child
--The comforting shoulder you lean on when tragedy strikes
--The encouraging pat on the back for a job well d one

In a "high-tech" society, we need a "high touch" Christianity!

It has been proven that babies that were held and touched developed emotionally whereas those that were not, ended up being emotionally unstable. (EX: The story of "Rosie" - Minneapolis, MN)

The Bible speaks about men whose hearts God had touched (I Sam. 10:26).

To Jeremiah the Bible says: *"The LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORd said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth."* (Jer. 1:9)

God assures us: *"Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."* (Isaiah 59:1-2)

Jesus has always been a Savior who reaches out toward those in need. He reached out and touched lepers (Mt. 8:3); the sick (Mt. 8:15); those in need of comfort (mt. 17:7); the blind (Mt. 20:34); the deaf and dumb (Mk. 7:33); the dead (Lk. 7:14); the maimed (EX: cut off ear - Lk. 22:51); the little children (Mk. 10:13; Lk. 18:15)

The key thought in this context is how Jesus touched people's lives and allowed them to touch Him.

SEE: *"Lay thy hand upon her"* (v. 18); *"touched"* (v. 20); *"touch"* (v. 21); *"took her by the hand"* (v. 25); *"then touched he their eyes"* (v. 29)

Jesus touched the lives of the hurting, suffering, helpless, hopeless, etc.

***Jesus is willing to touch lives that are suffering, lost, and powerless!**

I. Jesus touched the lives of the LIFELESS (v. 18-19;23-26)

V. 18

"A certain ruler" - a synagogue official; a spiritual leader of the Jews, like Nicodemus (Jn. 3:1ff). His name was Jairus and he was the elder of the synagogue at Capernaum (cp. Mk. 5:22).

"Worshipped him" - to bow down and worship

The Law forbade bowing down before anything other than God (Exod. 20:5; 23:24). For Christ to receive worship, He must be God!

[NOTE: Peter (Acts 10:25-26), Paul (Acts 14:11-18), and angels (Rev. 19:10) rejected worship (people bowing down to them); but Jesus did not! This is one of the clearest evidences of His deity]

"My daughter" - to lose a loved one is very hard. Especially a 12-year old young daughter (Mk. 5:42). This was his one and only child (Lk. 8:42).

"Even now dead" - she had just died. Even though she was dead, this man had great faith that Jesus could dow hat was humanly impossible.

Jairus was a desperate man. Tragedy often drives a person to Christ. Desperate people don't care what others think. His daughter was on the brink of eternity! It didn't matter what his friends thought; it didn't matter what his religious colleagues would say; it didn't matter what the neighbors would think.

It should not matter to us what people think about Jesus either! His hand is the only one that can save!

Jairus had faith in Jesus:

1) Even though he was a Jew (an orthodox one! - a ruler of the Jews)
2) Even though his daughter was in the jaws of death
3) As evidenced by his worship
4) As evidenced by his words (*"she shall live!"* - What confidence!)

V. 23
"Minstrels" - flute players

"The people making a noise" - the noise involved a tumult of weeping and wailing (both of family and of professional mourners who were hired by the family).

V. 24
"Sleepeth" - a euphemism for death which conveys a bright optimistic hope (believers "sleep" in Jesus - I Th. 4:14; Acts 7:60).

Jesus referred to dead Lazarus (Jn. 11:13-14) as having fallen "asleep" (v. 11). Why? Because of the temporary nature of his death.

By this time, the girl was literally dead; but for Jesus death is nothing more to overcome than waking someone up out of sleep.

Note: The spirit which had left her body (cp. Ja. 2:26) returned into her body again! (Lk. 8:55).

"They laughed him to scorn" - a repeated laughter in a scornful, ridiculing, sarcastic manner.

V. 25
"The people were put forth" - the unbelieving scorners were dismissed from the room.

"He went in" - Jesus, along with Peter, James, John, and the girl's mother and father, went into the room (LK. 8:51).

Jesus reaches down and takes hold of a cold and lifeless hand. As soon as He lifts her by her hand, the blood begins to flow, her heart begins to beat, her lungs take in air -- she stands up alive and well!

Why? Because she was touched by the Master's hand!

Jairus' story teaches us that Jesus can touch the life of a person because of the faith of another.

Intercede! You may be your loved ones' only link to the power of Christ.

II. Jesus touched the lives of the HELPLESS (v. 20-22)

V. 20

"An issue of blood" - hemorrhage (continual bleeding that would not stop; evidently a 12-year period, or menstrual flow, that would not cease)

Her continual bleeding was perhaps due to a tumor or other disease in her uterus.

The continual bleeding no doubt left this woman anemic, pale, and very weak.

This woman spent a fortune on physicians, but man's help was in vain; she even got worse from the doctors' treatments. (Mk. 5:26)

"Like Jairus, this woman knew that only Jesus could help . And just as Jairus daughter had known twelve years of life and laughter with her family, this woman had known twelve years of misery and ostracism from her family." (MacArthur, p. 79)

Although the Law forbade one with a running issue to touch anyone (SEE: Lev. 15:25-27), she had faith that by touching Jesus she would be instantly healed and that Jesus would in no way be defiled. She believed that Christ's divine power would neutralize any uncleanness and would immediately heal her disease.

V. 21

"She said within herself" - imperfect tense - "she repeatedly kept saying to herself"

This woman had inner faith that if she were to just slightly graze the fringe of His mantle she would be instantly cured.

[Important Note: her faith was in Christ, not in any magic in His garment. The power flowed from one wearing the garment, not from the garment itself. The Bible says that virtue (power) went out of Him (Mk. 5:30)]

V. 22

"But Jesus turned him about" - Jesus wanted her to publically declare her faith, so He, knowing that power had gone out from Him to her, said, "*Who touched Me?*" (Mk. 5:30; Lk. 8:45).

We should never be ashamed of anything Jesus does for us, but be willing to publically testify of His grace (EX: baptism; EX: testifying)

"Be of good comfort" - Jesus encourages her because of her great fear (Lk. 8:47). She was afraid of being condemned for defiling Christ.

"Thy faith hath made thee whole" - Just as faith in Christ made her physically whole, faith in Christ makes us spiritually whole. Faith is the l ink between God's power and man's need.

Faith honors God and God honors faith (Heb. 11)

Multitudes of people crowded around Jesus. Many slipped through the throng and touched Him, yet this woman's touch was combined with faith, and her faith cured her (Reason: Because her faith was anchored in the right object - Jesus Christ)

Luke details that she was healed before Jesus spoke. As soon as she touched His garment, *"immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction"* (Lk. 8:46, & Mk. 5:29)

III. Jesus touched the lives of the SIGHTLESS (v. 27-31)

V. 27

"Son of David" - They recognized that Jesus was the promised Messiah in fulfillment of Is. 11:1-5.

V. 28

Notice the persistence of those who sought help from the Master. Jairus sought Him even after his daughter was dead. The woman with the hemorrhage was determined to touch His garment despite the obstacles and crowds. And these two men follow Jesus right into the house.

You will find His powerful hand of mercy also, when you search for Him with all of your heart (Jer. 29:13 - *"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."*)

"Believe ye that I am able to do this?" - We never should doubt the ability of Jesus. We don't question His ability, only His will.

"Their 'Yes, Lord' was the confession that released the power for their hearing (Wiersbe, p. 36).

By the same token, it is by your "Yes, Lord," that you receive salvation from hell, liberation from the distresses of this life.

V. 29

"Then touched He their eyes" - Again, all it takes is a touch from the Master's hand.

Whenever Jesus touches an area of need, it is needy no more!

Their measure of faith was equalled by the measure of healing. They believed he could totally heal their blindness, so he totally gave them their sight!
(no doubt, 20-20 vision!)

When Jesus touched the helpless and hopeless, He infused His power and life into them.

Just as Jesus touched the eyes of the physically blind so they could see, so He must touch the eyes of the spiritually blind (Is. 6:10; Mt. 15:14; Rom. 11:25) so they can be illuminated (Heb. 6:4; 10:32).

It is ironic how Jesus tells them not to broadcast the miracle, and yet they do. Then He tells us to broadcast the Gospel and so often we don't.

IV. Jesus touched the lives of the <u>SPEECHLESS</u> (v. 32-34)

V. 32

"Dumb" - He could not talk; the demon which possessed him tied his tongue so that he could not speak.

V. 33

"It was never so seen in Israel" - Not prior and not since. Nothing so spectacular and powerful was ever done, because no one ever had power like Jesus!

V. 34

The Pharisees falsely accused Jesus of casting out demons by Satan's (called "Beelzebub") power, not heavenly power.

Because they could not deny the reality or validity of Christ's miracles, they then attributed them to Satan.

This was actually blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, who was the power behind the miracles (cp. Mt. 12:27, 28, 31)

V. Jesus touched the lives of the <u>HOPELESS</u> (v. 35, cp. v. 36)

V. 35

According to the ancient Jewish historian Josephus, the Galilean region at that time had some two hundred cities and villages in an area of about 40 miles wide and 70 miles long (cited by MacArthur, p. 103)

Jesus traveled everywhere, teaching, preaching, and healing.

Note the emphasis of verse 35 - ***"All . . . every . . . every . . ."*** No one is outside of the power of Jesus Christ!

V. 36

Note the hopeless condition of people without Jesus, the Great Shepherd.

CONCLUSION:

Jesus, though in Heaven, is still touching lives today! And those He touches, He transforms!

POEM: (the violin story) *"The Touch of the Master's Hand"*

"The Harvest is Plenteous"

("A HEART FOR THE MULTITUDES")
Matthew 9:35-38
10/8/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 35

***Christ had compassion on the lost.**
(He felt their sorrow, He cared, and He encourages you to care)

I. The Occasion for Christ's Compassion (v. 36a)
(*"When He saw the multitudes")*

A. He saw the real needs of people

B. He saw the real need for laborers (v. 37-38)

II. The Reasons for Christ's Compassion (v. 36b)

A. He saw hopeless people with no strength
("fainted")

B. He saw helpless people with no protection
("scattered abroad")

III. The Response of Christ's Compassion (v. 37-38)
(*"Then saith He. . . the harvest truly is plenteous. . . pray ye")*

A. He shared His burden (v. 37)

B. He urged for prayer (v. 38)

"The Harvest is Plenteous"

("A HEART FOR THE MULTITUDES")
Matthew 9:35-38
10/8/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 35

***Christ had compassion on the lost.**
(He felt their sorrow, He cared, and He encourages you to care)

I. The <u>Occasion</u> for Christ's Compassion (v. 36a)
(*"When He saw the multitudes")*

A. He saw the real <u>needs</u> of _____

B. He saw the real <u>need</u> for _____ (v. 37-38)

II. The <u>Reasons</u> for Christ's Compassion (v. 36b)

A. He saw _____ people with no <u>strength</u>
("fainted")

B. He saw _____ people with no <u>protection</u>
("scattered abroad")

III. The <u>Response</u> of Christ's Compassion (v. 37-38)
(*"Then saith He. . . the harvest truly is plenteous. . . pray ye")*

A. He <u>shared</u> His _____ (v. 37)

B. He <u>urged</u> for _____ (v. 38)

"The Harvest is Plenteous"

("A HEART FOR THE MULTITUDES")
Matthew 9:35-38
10/8/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 35

With all of the Hurricanes sweeping our part of the world lately, it has brought out the worst (looting) and best of people (helping others in need)

Do you have a heart? A heart for people? A heart that breaks for those in spiritual bondage and headed for eternal ruin and misery?

Christ's public ministry was three-fold:

1) Teaching - to instruct or indoctrinate in the matter of righteousness

2) Preaching - to proclaim or herald the truth
to cry out the good news about the Kingdom and the need to be born again to enter
it (Jn. 3:1ff)

3) Healing - to perform miraculous cures so as to be a sign of Christ's power and authority

Two key words in Verse 35 are the words *"all"* and *"every"*.

"All" = points to the fact that no one is outside of Christ's concern. Christ is impartial; unprejudiced; He shows no favoritism. He loves all and desires to reach all. Although Jesus desired the message to go first to the Jews, He intended it to reach the world - Acts 1:8; Mk. 16:15; Mt. 28:20.

"Every"= points to the fact that nothing is outside of Christ's control. Christ is sovereign - has total power. There was no sickness that was too great for Him. The Great Physician was not stumped by any disease. No problem was (or is) too impossible for Him. His power knows no limits! He is omnipotent!

***Christ had Compassion on the Lost**
(He felt their sorrow, He cared, and He encourages you to care)

V. 36

"He was moved with compassion" - (aorist passive - from "splanchna"). The word refers to being moved emotionally on the insides; to feel sympathetic in one's person for someone to the point that it upsets your insides - your stomach.

[The noun form is often translated "bowels" referring to literal intestines - Acts 1:8; and to inward affection - II Cor. 7:15; Phil. 1:8, 2:1; Col. 3:12; Philemon 7]

Jesus was constantly moved with compassion toward others:

--Toward the multitudes who were spiritually (Mk. 6:34), and physically (Mt. 14:14) sick

--Toward the multitudes who were physically hungry (Mt. 15:32)

--Toward the blind (Mt. 20:34)

--Toward the unclean leper (Mk. 1:41)

--Toward the widow whose son died (Lk. 7:13-14)

Our Lord not only felt their sorrow, He did something about it!

Mark 6:34 - *"And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things."*

Christ, being *"meek and lowly in heart"* (Mt. 11:29) is *"touched with the feeling of our infirmities"* (Heb. 4:15).

We are to be like our Savior (I Pet. 2:21) in that we feel the plight of others.

It is often easiest to have such feelings of compassion toward your own immediate family and closest friends. However, to have the same heart as Jesus, we need both the same compassion the Good Samaritan had on a stranger (Lk. 10:33) and that which the Father had for His prodigal son (Lk. 15:20).

I. The Occasion for Christ's Compassion (v. 36a) (*"when He saw the multitudes"*)

"When He saw. . . He was moved" = what Christ saw with His eyes affected His heart!

*What Christ saw affected His heart.

Jeremiah (the "weeping Prophet" - EX: Jer. 9:1), when he saw the plight of Israel said, *"Mine eye affecteth mine heart"* (Lam. 3:51).

When we see things from God's perspective, we see true needs, and have genuine burdens for people.

The disciples were with Jesus and saw the same crowd, but evidently did not see the same need.

A. He saw the real needs of people

Jesus was moved with compassion because:

1) He saw the true needs of people (their spiritual needs)

2) He saw the eternal destiny

We too often view the masses we rub shoulders with as obstructions in our way, worthless, fleshly carnage.

Our hearts are often cold and unmoved because of:

--Pre-occupation (too busy worrying about our own matters in this life)

--Callousness due to sin (Mt. 24:12)

--Lack of spiritual insight

Our eyes often lack spiritual 20/20 vision.

SEE Acts 20:20

Paul's compassion on the lost (Acts 20:19).

Many Christians are quicker to cry over the death of a dog or over a tear-jerker TV program, than over lost souls perishing.

B. He saw the real <u>need</u> for <u>laborers</u> (v. 37-38)

No one will see their need to work (laborers) until they see the need of the work (People).

Most who do not witness, are oblivious to the need!

What causes Christians to not see the need? Basically, spiritual insensitivity, caused by not reading the Bible; worldly distractions; lesser priority preoccupations;

II. The Reasons for Christ's Compassion (v. 36b)
(*"because they fainted, and were scattered abroad"*)

A. He saw hopeless people with no strength
(*"fainted"*)

"Fainted" = to be spiritually weary.

*People are weary of religion.

Israel as a people were harassed and bewildered by those who should have taught them (SEE Ezek. 34:1ff)

*People are weary of sin and its effects. (cp. Heb. 12:3)

B. He saw helpless people with no protection
(*"scattered abroad")*

"Scattered abroad" = the word describes sheep that are downcast, wounded and lying helpless without the presence and help of a shepherd.

Christ wept over unprotected Jerusalem because of her rebelliousness and refusal to come to Him (Mt. 23:37).

*"**Sheep having no shepherd"*** - Christ is the shepherd the world needs (Jn. 10:11).

III. The Response of Christ's Compassion (v. 37-38)
(*"Then saith He. . .The harvest truly is plenteous. . . pray ye"*)

A. He shared His burden (v. 37)

The emphasis in verses 36-38 is on the word *"multitudes"* (cp. *"plenteous"* 37)

The multitudes of humanity are likened unto a **"harvest"** because people, like a field of wheat, are:

1. Valuable (they have great worth)
2. Temporal (the time to harvest is now; delay is fatal! Cp. John 4:31-38)
3. Plentiful

The population explosion (the world's population growth) -

*250 million people populated the earth at the time of Christ (this equaled the population of the USA alone in 1994, which presently has 325 million in 2017, but expected to go over 400 million by 2,050).

World Population:
In 1650 - 500 million (world population)
1800 - 1 billion
1930 - 2 billion
1960 - 3 billion
1975 - 4 billion
1981 - 4 1/2 billion
2000 – 6 billion
2015 – 7.4 billion
2017 – 7.6 billion
Projection: 10 billion by 2050

The world's population growth is slowing, according to a new 2017 United Nations report, but the number of people living on Earth will still approach 10 billion by the year 2050.

The document tallies the current population at 7.6 billion people, up from 7.4 billion just two years ago.

This year's count means the world added roughly 1 billion people over the last dozen years. It will take 13 years to add the next billion, according to the

report. The planet is expected to have 8.6 billion people in 2030, and 9.8 billion by 2050.

How much does the world population increase each day?
In terms of net gain (births minus deaths), we are adding over 200,000 people to this planet every day, or 140 people every minute (8,400 people every hour). That equals over 70 million more people every year, about the same as the combined populations of California, Texas, and Washington.

The 2017 United Nations report says China remains the most populous country, with 1.4 billion inhabitants – or 19 percent of the world's population. But India trails close behind at 1.3 billion people, and in just seven years, is expected to surpass China in population.

"Sixty per cent of the world's people live in Asia (4.5 billion), 17 per cent in Africa (1.3 billion), 10 per cent in Europe (742 million), 9 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean (646 million), and the remaining 6 per cent in Northern America (361 million) and Oceania (41 million)

Today we have 30 times as many people to reach as when Christ said that the harvest was plenteous! (cp. Lk. 10:2)

Florida (20.61 million) is the 3rd most populous state in the USA (behind California (39 Million) and Texas (28 million). Ahead of New York (19.75 million) (For information contact the Census Bureau)

Florida "The Sunshine State", is adding more than 1,000 people a day

The global population is getting older: The number of people 65 and older is projected to triple by mid-century, from 531 million in 2010 to 1.5 billion in 2050. In the U.S., the population of seniors is expected to slightly more than double, from 41 to 86 million. (http://www.pewresearch.org)

Florida has been called "God's Waiting Room" As people live out their last days in the Sunshine State. Over 1 million people die every year in our state. 2,740 every day. 114 per hour. Almost 2 per minute.

Among the world population over 155,000 people die every day. 1.8 people go into eternity every second.

Every second of every day, 4.2 people are born and 1.8 people die.

Over 6,000 people will go into eternity during today's service and message.

Christ called His disciples' attention to the harvest being "white" (ripe) in John

4:35.

B. He urged for prayer

"Therefore" - the urgent appeal to pray is because of the enormity of the task and the scarcity of laborers (v. 37)

Don't pray this prayer unless you are willing to be an answer to that prayer. How could anyone sincerely pray for laborers if they themselves are not willing to be one? It's inconsistent (even hypocritical) to pray for God to move others to do what you will not allow Him to move you to do

[NOTE: The disciples not only prayed, they went! See chapter 10 in which Jesus sent them out]

"That He will send" - God must move the hearts of His servants; He must send them.

"How shall they preach except they be sent (by God)?" (Rom. 10:15)

True compassion will drive you to your knees!

Ps. 34:17 - *"The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth"* God knows a burdened heart!

CONCLUSION:

Enroll in our Personal Evangelism Course!

Luke 19:41-42 - And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,
Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

Is there no cause to weep?

No weeping = no reaping
Psalm 126:6 - He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed,
shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Compassion is the key to pulling men out of the fire
Jude 22-23 - And of some have compassion, making a difference:
And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

--"Compassion making a difference" - lit. have compassion (pity) on those who are wavering or doubting.

In Luke 15, the Lord Jesus gives an illustration of one person who repents and turns to the true and living God. (the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, the Lost Son).

Jesus said: “Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” (Luke 15:10)

Never underestimate the value of 1 soul.

Each one Reach one!

"THE DISCIPLES' COMMISSION"

Matthew 10:1-17
10/15/2017

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 4

***Observe the marching orders of your Commander-in-Chief!**

As you serve Christ, what principles should you keep in mind for effective ministry?

I. Don't Neglect the Jewish People (v. 5-6)

II. Freely Give What God Gave You (v. 7-8)

III. Trust God to Provide Your Needs (v. 9-10)

IV. Don't Allow Rejection to Discourage You (v. 11-15)

V. Use Discretion When Ministering to People (v. 16)

VI. Expect Opposition (v. 17)

"THE DISCIPLES' COMMISSION"

Matthew 10:1-17
10/15/2017

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 4

V. 1
"Disciples" - a disciplined one. One who is trained in the disciplines of Godliness; one who is a student of the Master, Jesus Christ.

"<u>He</u> gave them power" - Jesus, being God, had the ability and authority to give the disciples authority to exorcise demons and conquer sickness and disease.

No one else who ever lived had such authority as Jesus does.

What a unique group of men Jesus worked with and used for His service! --

1) **Impulsive Peter** (overly confident in his own ability - Lk. 22:31-34; Jn. 18:10-11)
2) **Obedient Andrew**
3) **Ordinary James**
4) **Tender-hearted, loyal John**
5) **Inquisitive Philip** (a "show me" attitude - Jn. 14:6-8) (Ex. Missouri – the "Show Me" state)
6) **Unknown Bartholomew** (not much is revealed about him in Scripture)
7) **Doubting Thomas** (Jn. 20:25)
8) **Despised Matthew** (tax Collectors were despised people)
9) **Little James** (called "James the Less" [Mk. 15:40] either referring to his small stature or his young age
10) **Privileged Lebbaeus,** who had the nickname Thaddaeus and Judas (Acts 1:13; Jn. 14:22); who was the brother of James and evidently the half-brother of Jesus, the son of Mary & Joseph (Mt. 13:55)
11) **Zealous Simon** (He is called Simon Zelotes [Lk. 6:15; Acts 1:13] since he belonged to the radical and violent sect known as the Zealots. The Zealots had a critical spirit towards anyone who differed even a little bit from their line of thinking, and Simon [called Nathanael] also demonstrated a cynical attitude when he said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" [Jn. 1:46])
12) **Hypocritical Judas Iscariot** (who pretended faith in Christ but ended up revealing his true colors when he betrayed the Lord

This motley crew of fisherman, tax collector, many times arrogant, self-centered disciples were commissioned by Jesus. If Jesus could use them, He can use you to be a fisher of men, too (Mt. 4:19).

Today we are in a battle! ILLUS: Song *"Onward Christian Soldiers"*

This chapter involves the reception of orders from the Commander-in-Chief Jesus Christ.

What were His marching orders to His disciples?

***Observe the marching orders of your Commander-in-Chief!**

As you serve Christ, what principles should you keep in mind for effective ministry?

I. Don't Neglect the Jewish People (v. 5-6)

"These twelve" - Jesus commissions only the twelve here (cp. Lk. 9:1) and sends them out 2 by 2 (Mk. 6:7). But later commissioned 70 other men and sent them out 2 by 2 (Lk. 10:1ff)

The restrictive command not to go on the road leading to the Gentile nations nor to enter into any Samaritan city seems uncharacteristic with Christ's love for the world but it is not.

This temporary injunction to go to the *"Jew first"* with the Gospel is justifiable for several reasons:

1) The *"Kingdom"* (v. 7) was originally promised to them in the O.T. (this Kingdom has not come yet - Acts 1:6-7)

2) They were a specially chosen nation through which came the Word of God (Rom. 3:2), and through whom as concerning the flesh, the Messiah Jesus Christ came (Rom. 1:3; 9:5)

SEE: Rom. 9:1-5

Note Paul's burden for the Jewish people -
a sincere burden (v. 1)
a great burden (v. 2a)
a continual burden (v. 2b)
a compassionate burden (v. 3-5)

Peter acknowledged that the Gospel was to go to the Jew first (see: Acts 3:24-26).

Paul had a conviction to deliver the Gospel to the Jew first (Rom. 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 believeth: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."*

3) Since the Israelites had the Gospel sent to them first,

--they would have no excuse for not believing it (their condemnation was heightened by the miracles they saw and by the fact that they clearly heard. Rom. 2:9 - *"Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and laos of the Gentile"*)

--God's reception of the Gentiles would not be shown to be favoritism

4) The Father sent Christ to the lost sheep of Israel to fulfill Scripture (Ezek. 34:10-16)

5) It's only wise (since they knew the culture and language) and right to go to your own relatives first with the Gospel (the 12 disciples were Jewish)

Jewish evangelism is greatly lacking in America because we have believed the lies of Satan that they will not listen, or that they are okay with their own religion, etc. (SEE: *"The Memorandum from the Prince of Darkness"*)

II. Freely Give What God Gave You (v. 7-8)

"Preach" - to proclaim; to cry out; to publically herald out God's Word (preaching is not supposed to be an activity of the past but obsolete in the present - II Tim. 4:2ff)

"The kingdom of Heaven is at hand" - the kingdom would have come if God's offer was accepted by Israel, but since it was rejected it has been put on hold.

These miracles by the disciples were to <u>authenticate</u> the message from the disciples. These wondrous signs would give credibility to the offer that the kingdom of God was at hand.

"Freely ye have received, freely give" -

--God's offer of the kingdom was free of charge (has no "admission fee")

--The miraculous power was God's power, not the disciples' power, so they were not to put price tags on healings, resurrections, and exorcisms

(The indulgences sold by the RCC are totally blasphemous!)

Don't let money be your motive!

Although he should be provided for (I Cor. 9:11; Gal. 6:6), no preacher should minister for filthy lucre (I Tim. 3:3; I Pet. 5:2).

We don't peddle the Gospel. No one should pray for pay or minister for money.

What talents (gifts) or resources (material blessings) has God given you? Are you somehow giving them to help the cause of Jesus Christ?

III. Trust God to Provide Your Needs (v. 9-10)

"Provide" - do not get and bring along money for the journey. Don't worry about cramming your money belt full of coins, so as to be financially independent.

"Scrip" - lit. "bag" - perhaps a food bag for carrying sack lunches.

Jesus is saying don't carry more than one tunic, nor an extra pair of sandals, nor an additional staff in case yours breaks.

The point is this: God will take care of everyone who lives for Him and puts Him first (SEE: Matt. 6:31-34).

Why not stock up and pack up? Because when you work for God, He will provide for his workers one day at a time (*"The workman is worthy of his meat"*; SEE: I Cor. 9:7-14; I Tim. 5:17-18)

IV. Don't Allow Rejection to Discourage You (v. 11-15)

V. 11

Not everyone is worthy (deserves the privilege) to show proper hospitality to God's servants.

"There abide" - those willing and able to open their home were to do so until the disciples' mission was finished. Then they would move on.

The importance of hospitality:

> *"Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality"* (Rom. 12:13)
>
> *"For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in"* (Mt. 25:35)
>
> *"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach."* (I Tim. 3:2)
>
> *"The stranger did not lodge in the street: but I opened my doors to the traveller."* (Job. 31:32)

V. 12

"Salute it" - give it your greeting.

Politeness in someone else's home is always proper.

Somehow the presence of Christ's disciples would bring a peace to the home.

There is a sanctifying effect produced by a Godly believer's presence in a home (I Cor. 7:14; cp. Joseph - Gen. 39:5)

V. 14

The ***"shaking off of the dust"*** is a way of saying, "If you want nothing of my Gospel, I want nothing of your city! I take no responsibility for your rejection of the truth I gave you."

Don't let those who reject your Christianity discourage you; just shake the dust off and move on! (Acts 13:50-51 - *"But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium."*)

Don't let their unjust criticism "stick to your ribs"! Don't carry the baggage of discouragement and hurt feelings.

V. 15

Sodom and Gomorrha did not have the signs and wonders performed by Christ or his disciples. *"To whom much is given, much is required"*

V. Use Discretion When Ministering to People (v. 16)

Sheep and wolves do not get along too well! And its not the sheep's fault!

As you serve Christ, realize that there are wolves who will seek to destroy you and your work.

Because the wolves of the world (the cynical, irreligious, anti-God, pro amoral, humanistic, perverted fools of this world's system), you must be careful <u>what</u> you say (wise) and <u>how</u> you say it (harmless) (Also, I might add - <u>when</u> you say it - Prov. 225:11).

To preach the Gospel without compromise "does not require and should never include, being abrasive, course, inconsiderate, belligerent, blatant, or blunt" (MacArthur, p. 201)

Only a close walk with God can give you wisdom in your selection or words and harmlessness in the tone, inflection, etc. of your voice.

People were always looking to trip Jesus up in His word, but never could!

Be careful how you deal with people.

Follow Paul's prescription for problem people: *"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men."* (I Thes. 5:14)

VI. Expect Opposition (v. 17)

"Beware" - be on your guard against

"Councils" - local courts

"Scourge" - to flog with a bastinado (a stick or club), a painful punishment (Ryrie) (cp. the beatings God's people took - Acts 5:40; 22:19; 26:11)

"In their synagogues" - most often the sharpest opposition will come not from those without religion, but from those blinded by it.

They actually think they are doing God service!

Persecution by men should not come as a shock! The Lord said it would come! (I Pet. 4:12-19). God never promised that we would be exempt from the wrath of man (Antichrist) but His own wrath.

CONCLUSION:

"How do I handle persecution for Christ?"

(DEALING WITH UNJUST OPPOSITION)

Matthew 10:16-25

10/22/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 16-17

***Be prepared for end-time persecution!**

How do I handle persecution for Christ?

1. **Utilize it for a testimony for Christ** (v. 18)

2. **Don't worry, rely upon divine unction in emergency situations** (v. 19-20)

3. **Expect it even from family members** (v. 21-22a)

4. **Endure it and be delivered** (v. 22b)

5. **Rebound off it, and move on** (v. 23)

6. **Accept it - if they persecuted Jesus, they will persecute you!** (v. 24-26)

Alternative Outline

"PERSECUTION IN THE LAST DAYS"

(How to Handle Unjust Opposition)
Matthew 10:16-25
10/22/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 16-17

***Be prepared for end-time persecution!**

Why will God allow persecution to fall upon His saints in the Last Days?

I. So that His <u>TESTIMONY</u> would shine bright in times of darkness (v. 18)

II. So that His <u>POWER</u> would enable them in times of weakness (v. 19-20)

III. So that His <u>FELLOWSHIP</u> (closeness) would sustain them in times of betrayal (v. 21-22a)

IV. So that His <u>DELIVERANCE</u> would reward them at the time of the end (v. 22b)

V. So that His <u>GUIDANCE</u> would re-direct them in times of witnessing (v. 23)

VI. So that His <u>EXAMPLE</u> would encourage them in times of unjust treatment (v. 24-25)

"How do I handle persecution for Christ?"

(DEALING WITH UNJUST OPPOSITION)
Matthew 10:16-25
10/22/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 16-17

Although verses 17-25 are recorded in a context describing Christ's commissioning of His disciples (v. 1-16), these verses will ultimately be fulfilled in the future Tribulation days prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ (NOTE: V. 23).

Note: Verses 17-25 actually were stated by Jesus to His disciples in an escatalogical context (See: Mark 13:1ff; Luke 21:12-19).

However, since Matthew recorded his Gospel thematically rather than chronologically, these verses occur at Christ's commissioning of His disciples.

Certain aspects of this prediction by Jesus were fulfilled in 70 A.D. when Rome destroyed Jerusalem and scattered its people.

These disciples whom Jesus addressed did face severe opposition (Note the book of Acts).

Peter warned us: *"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you."* (I Pet. 4:12)

It should not come as a surprising shock that opposition will come in the Last Days. God told us how things and people would be.

Contrary to evolutionist thinking, people are not getting better and better, but worse! (though man's sin nature remains as depraved as it ever was, it will be manifested more in the last days!)

The Marks of the End Time Humanity

(II Timothy 3:1-4)

1. **A <u>Troubled</u> Society** (v. 1)
"Perilous times" = grievous times

2. **<u>Selfishness</u>** (v. 2)
a. *"Lovers of their own selves"* = self-lovers; humanism
b. *"Covetous"* = money lovers

3. **<u>Arrogance</u>** (v. 2)
a. *"Boasters"* - to brag about self-superiority
b. *"Proud"* - haughty; to look down on others

4. **<u>Blasphemy</u>** (v. 2)
Abusive speech toward Jesus Christ (Ex: rebels, liberal theologians, and cults)

5. **<u>Disregard for Authority</u>** (v. 2)
a. *"Disobedient to parents"* - unpersuaded of their need to submit to and obey parental authority
b. *"Unthankful"* - no appreciation for what their parents gave to them and ultimately what God gave them (evolution gives rise to unthankfulness - Rom. 1:21)
c. *"Unholy"* - no reverence for that which is sacred

6. **<u>Without Natural Affection</u>** (astorgoi)
Modern examples:
--No family loyalty
--Divorce
--Abortion

7. **<u>Liars</u>**
a. *"Trucebreakers* - refuse to be bound by agreements
b. *"False accusers"* - devilish slander

8. **<u>Wild, Rowdy, and Lawless</u>**

a. *"Incontinent"* = uncontrolled; unrestrained; no power over their emotions, words, actions, etc.
b. *"Fierce"* = savage, untamed, brutal
c. *"Despisers of those who are good"* - lit. to have no love for good (cp. Is. 5:20; Rom. 1:32)

9. <u>Inconsiderate</u>

a. *"Traitors"* = to betray someone to ruin them
b. *"Heady"* - headstrong; reckless and rash; to rush forward in pursuit of getting their own way without concern for those they crush along the way

10. <u>Egocentric</u>

a. *"High-minded"* - conceited; to "be so inflated with a sense of their own knowledge and importance, that they envelop themselves in a cloud of smoke (root comes from "tuphos" - smoke, mist, cloud) and are unable to recognize the truth" (H. Kent).
b. *"Lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God"* - pleasure lovers rather than God lovers

Contemporary preoccupations: entertainment, recreation, sports, leisure, food, comfort, and convenience

11. **External Godliness**

"having a form (external semblance or appearance) of Godliness" They appear religious, but have no power or ability to really live Godly.

Such wicked behavior will escalate when the Antichrist becomes Satan's global leader who pressures the world into taking his mark and worshipping him (Rev. 12-13).

Jesus said: *"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world"* (Jn. 16:33).

***Be prepared for end-time persecution!**

How do I handle persecution for Christ?

1. <u>Utilize</u> it for a <u>testimony</u> for Christ (v. 18)

"Ye shall be brought" - speaks of God's people being apprehended, arrested, and delivered over to governmental leaders

NOTE: the frequent reference to God's people being *"delivered up"* [cp. v. 19, 21]. Why would governors [local leaders] and kings [national emperors] want to speak to God's persecuted people? Perhaps because they are desperate to find answers to the famines, plagues, and other natural disasters that will occur in the Tribulation.

Also, the unusual conviction to not go along with the rest of the world will gain the attention of these leaders. They will want to know "Why?" "Why such conviction?" "Why not take the mark?" "Why not live the way the rest of the world is?"

"For My sake" - Because of me; on account of me

Simply because you belong to Jesus, that is enough reason for Satan to hate you and for his people to oppose you (SEE: Mt. 5:10-12).

NOTE: Also, Jesus often allows opposition to come upon us so that we can by our steadfastness and loyalty glorify Him!

No one else is worth living for and dying for!

"For a testimony (witness) against (to) them" - God works in mysterious ways and uses unusual circumstances to utilize us as His witness!

All things do work together for good (Rom. 8:28)!

Remember the unjust persecution, then testimony of <u>Joseph</u> (Gen. 39ff) witnessed before the Pharaoh of Egypt. Shadrach, Meshech, Abednego (Dan. 3) witnessed before Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Daniel (Dan. 6) witnessed before Darius, King of Medo-Persia. Paul (who witnessed before the Emperor of Rome Caesar - Acts 27:24).
"No matter how difficult our circumstances may be, we can turn opposition into

opportunities for witness" (Wiersbe, p. 38)

How you handle problems and pressures, trials and tribulations will be either a testimony for Christ (in His favor) or against Christ (in His dishonor)

"And the Gentiles" - the pagan nations of the world will also hear from God's people and the elect remnant of saved Jews.

2. Don't worry, rely upon divine unction in emergency situations (v. 19-20)

"Take no thought" - Don't be anxious, worried, or upset as to how (your delivery) or what (your content) you will say. Both the ability to speak and the choice of words to speak will be given).

(NOTE: This text does not apply to preachers who justify their lack of preparation with the abused promise: *"Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it"* - Ps. 81:10. This text specifically refers to those who will be brought before the world's leaders in the last days.

"In that same hour" - God will not be early or late in giving His servants the message they will need.

"It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit" - The Holy Spirit who resides in believers will give unction to His spokesmen, as He pours out new revelation in the future Tribulation (See: Acts 2:17-20; cp. Joel 2:28-32; Ezek. 39:29).

Though this specific promise is eschatalogical, the Holy Spirit's fullness today brings with it divine unction and power in your witnessing.

(Cp. Acts 4:8 - *"Peter filled with the Holy Ghost, said. . ."*; cp. 13:9)

How often, I recall, I was called upon to preach or had occasion to witness and the Lord would flood my mind with Bible verses. I know His Spirit reminded me of Scripture I had heard or read before. His power is always available for those desperate moments of life.

3. Expect it even from family members (v. 21-22a)

Can you imagine your own brother "turning you in" to be put to death? Can you fathom a father betraying his own son or daughter to the enemy? Can you comprehend how a child could disrespectfully rise up against the mother and father who brought them into the world, fed them, clothed them, no doubt with tears gave them the gospel, but to no avail.

Such unnatural traitorous acts against one's own loved ones shows the lack of love (Mt. 24:12), lack of natural affection (II Tim. 3:3), overwhelming Satanic influence (II Tim. 2:3ff; I Tim. 4:1ff), and desperation of people who will at all cost satisfy their selfish needs at the expense of eve their own flesh and blood.

"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another and will hate one another." (Mt. 24:9-10).

SEE Micah 7:2-6 for a description of this unnatural behavior (devoid of family loyalty).

"Hated of all men" - to have everyone against you--everywhere you turn--will indeed be a sad time in human history. This has never occurred yet.

"For My name's sake" - Jesus will be the name the whole world will hate! They will at that time turn against all who claim it!

The world hates Christians because it hates Christ. SEE: John 15:18-23.

"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." (Prov. 18:24).

"When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up" (Ps. 27:10).

4. <u>Endure</u> it and be <u>delivered</u> (v. 22b)

"He that endureth" - he who "remains faithful under" the pressures put on by the oppressive world, flesh, and devil

Note: One's "endurance" is a manifestation of the genuineness of their faith!

True disciples will continue and persevere (John 8:31 - *"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed"*; cp. Col. 1:23).

Those who defect from the ranks of Biblical Christianity show by their abandonment that they have given heed to doctrines of devils (I Tim. 4:1) and that they were not really "*of us*" (fellow-believers) (*"They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they have been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that some of them were not of us"* - I Jn. 2:19)

The *"endurance"* involves: not giving up the faith which has been once and for all given to the saints, and not giving in to the Antichrist and his diabolical deception.

"To the end" - to the end of this age (to the end of the times of the Gentiles; to the inauguration of the Day of the Lord).

"Shall be saved" - Saved spiritually or physically? Answer: Physically via Rapture!

The word "saved" means to be delivered. The word "salvation" refers to the "Rapture" very often (I Th. 5:8-10; Rom. 13:11; I Pet. 1:5).

"Shall be saved" - SEE: Mt. 24:13, 21-22.

For those living in the last days of the Tribulation, I Peter 4:13 gives God's encouragement to those who will endure fiery trials. He implores us to *"rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."* (I Pet. 4:13). Christ's glory will be revealed at the Rapture.

5. <u>Rebound off it</u>, and move on (v. 23)

God often uses persecution to scatter His people and spread His Word (the Church reluctant to fulfill the Great Commission into all the world needed a push. Persecution was the push they needed to scatter. SEE: Acts 8:1-**<u>4</u>**).

"The cities of Israel" - God will employ His 144,000 redeemed Jews to preach throughout all the cities of Israel in the second half of the Tribulation, prior to Christ's coming. At the time of His coming, He will reward His faithful (Mt. 16:27 - *"For the Son of man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works."*

6. <u>Accept</u> it - if they persecuted Jesus, they will persecute you! (v. 24-26)

None of us is above Jesus our Master and Lord. If Ye was persecuted and unjustly treated, why do we think we will escape it?

We may be *"as our Master"* in the sense that we too will be unjustly ridiculed, condemned, and beaten.

If Jesus (the good Master of the house) was misunderstood and identified as Beelzebub (Satan), it should come as no surprise that we (sinners saved by grace and members of His family [*"household"])* are called names and wrongly abused - 23:27-31.
John 15:20 - *"Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also."*

When Jesus was being led away to be crucified, He compared what they did to Him with what they would do in the future Tribulation (SEE Luke 23:27-31)

CONCLUSION:

The purpose of this message is not to give anyone a "martyr's complex." But to help you the next time you are opposed for Christ. Those living in the future Tribulation will need to be armed with such assurances.

How do I handle persecution for Christ?

1. Utilize it for a testimony for Christ (v. 18)

2. Don't sweat it, rely upon divine unction in emergency situations (v. 19-20)

3. Expect it even from family members (v. 21-22a)

4. Endure it and be delivered (v. 22b)

5. Rebound off it, and move on (v. 23)

6. Accept it - if they persecuted Jesus, they will persecute you! (v. 24-26)

"DON'T FEAR MAN, BUT GOD!"

Matthew 10:26-33
10/29/2017

INTRODUCTION:

***Don't fear man, but God!**

I. Don't Let the Fear of Man <u>DISCOURAGE</u> You
Because God will vindicate you in the end (v. 26)

II. Don't Let the Fear of Man <u>SILENCE</u> You
But boldly proclaim God's truth for all to hear (v. 27)

III. Don't Let the Fear of Man <u>INTIMIDATE</u> You
Because man does not control your eternal destiny - God does! (v. 28)

IV. Don't Let the Fear of Man <u>DISHEARTEN</u> You
Because God is in sovereign control of your life and cares for you
(v. 29-31)

A. He <u>remembers</u> you (v. 29)

B. He <u>knows</u> you (v. 30)

C. He <u>values</u> you (v. 31)

V. Don't Let the Fear of Man <u>EMBARRASS</u> You
--If you deny Christ because of fear, He will deny you! (v. 32-33)

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A. He _____ you (v. 29)

B. He _____ you (v. 30)

C. He _____ you (v. 31)

V. Don't Let the Fear of Man _____ You
--If you deny Christ because of fear, He will deny you! (v. 32-33)

"DON'T FEAR MAN, BUT GOD!"

Matthew 10:26-33
10/29/2017

INTRODUCTION:

All of us at one point or another have feared:

--persecution
--unpopularity
--hardship
--ridicule
--conflict
--confrontation
--rejection
--threats

NOTE: The repeated references to NOT being AFRAID:*"Fear them not" (v. 26)*
"Fear not them" (v. 28)
"Fear ye not" (v. 31)

Note the following list of verses which say *"Fear not"* -

***Don't fear man, but God!**

I. Don't Let the Fear of Man <u>DISCOURAGE</u> You
Because God will vindicate you in the end (v. 26)

"Therefore" - In light of the <u>persecution</u> mentioned in VV 17-25, believers are exhorted to not fear.

This verse actually was stated in a context where Jesus said, *"Beware of the <u>leaven</u> the Pharisees, which is <u>hypocrisy</u>"* (NOTE: Luke 12:1-2)

Jesus is saying, Don't be intimidated by the self-righteous, fake & phoney hypocrites who persecute you and false accuse you in the name of "religion" (EX: the RCC Inquisitions), because God's day of Judgment will one day expose their wicked lives.

To be treated with injustice can be discouraging until you realize that this day of reckoning has not arrived yet.

God will vindicate the righteous! All the talk and abuse inflicted upon believers will be handled by Christ. The shunning, sneering, isolation, coldness, ugliness, abuse, and mistreatment by neighbors, fellow employees, family or carnal believers will be dealt with by God. Let God defend you and take vengeance.

The cloak that the persecutors put upon their evil will be stripped off one day.

"Those in the world's eyes who now look like winners will turn out to be losers, and those who seem to be losers will be winners" (MacArthur, p. 220)

People may cover, conceal, camouflage or hide their sin under a cloak of "spirituality" but one day God will reveal the secrets of men (Ro. 2:16)

Nothing is hidden from God's eyes (Heb. 4:13 - *"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."*)

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13)

It is within man's depraved and evil nature to keep skeletons in their closet, and when anyone comes close to perhaps opening that door, they react - and react violently!

II. Don't Let the Fear of Man <u>SILENCE</u> You
But boldly proclaim God's truth for all to hear (v. 27)

"Fraternal orders and lodges . . . have secret rites and ceremonies" (MacArthur, p. 220), but Biblical Christianity is not a secret religion!

In other words, what you learn in private, proclaim in public!

That which God teach us in our quiet times (devotional times), He intends that we not hide it under a bushel, that we not keep it to ourselves, that we do not selfishly hoard it; but that we give it away!

The fear of man has resulted in many closed mouths. We worry more about what others will think about us, than we do about what God thinks of us.

"Speak ye in light (for all to see) . . . ***preach ye upon the housetops*** (for all to hear)"

God approves of street preaching; yea, even commands it!

We are often so intimidated that we become "closet Christians."

Some excuse themselves from witnessing by saying:

1. *My faith is "personal"*
2. *I will let my "life" speak for my faith*
3. *I might say the wrong thing*

We have an urgent message; a universal message (it's for all).

Our message is too great to keep to ourselves; Our message is too important to keep closed up; our message is too needed to not say anything about!

Paul said: *"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel!"* (I Cor. 9:16)

ILLUS: Hugh Latimer & King Henry VIII (MacArthur, p. 222)

III. Don't Let the Fear of Man <u>INTIMIDATE</u> You
Because man does not control your eternal destiny - God does! (v. 28)

"Them" - unbelievers (perhaps instigated by Satan)

"People can kill the body" - (not outside of God's sovereign control, however - Deut. 32:39; Mt. 10:29-31) ***"but after that*** **[they]** ***have no more that they can do"*** (Lk. 12:4)

Any harm man does is only temporary.

Satan can't touch the soul.

He himself will be helplessly cast into hell, he sends no one there.

"Rather fear him" - Fear God (not Satan). It is God (specifically, Jesus Christ who holds the *"keys of hell and of death"* (Rev. 1:18)

The word ***"fear"*** means not only to have a <u>reverence</u> (respect) for God (because of who He is) but also to <u>tremble</u> before Him; to be <u>terrified</u> by him (because of what He can do) (II Cor. 5:11)

God is to be feared.

Deut. 6:13 - *"Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve Him, and shalt swear by his name."*

I Sam. 12:24 - *"Only fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all your heart, for consider how great things He hath done for you."*

Ps. 33:8 - *"Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him."*

Eccles. 12:13 - *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."*

I Pet. 2:17 - *"Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."*

Rev. 14:7 - *"Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."*

Rev. 15:4 - *"Who shall not fear thee, O lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest."*

When I was pastoring in NY, there was a shooting at the Brooklyn Family Court which produced panic, causing many people to run for their lives (and rightly so!). If people feared God as much as they fear man, they would flee to God for salvation!

Fearing God takes faith today! (one day it will not! - Rev. 6:16-17)

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. 111:10; Prov. 9:10)

The most spiritual people in history had this testimony, that they feared God.

--Joseph feared God (Gen. 42:18)
--The 70 elders of Israel were chosen because they feared God (Ex. 18:21)
--Job feared God (Job 1:9)
--The virtuous woman feared God (Prov. 31:30)

The person who fears God will:

> --delight in God's Word (Ps. 112:1- *"Praise ye the Lord. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments."*)
>
> --walk in God's ways (Ps. 128:1 - *"Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways"*; cp. Prov. 14:2 - *"He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him."*)
>
> --be blessed (Ps. 128:4 - *"Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD"*; Ecc. 8:12 - *"Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him;"*)
>
> --be taught God's will (Ps. 25:12 - *"What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose."*)

This statement teaches us these truths:

1) Man is not merely a "body"

2) What matters most is what happens after death. Losing one's soul is to lose all (Mk. 8:36-37)

3) God is to be feared, not man

4) God decides where you will spend eternity

"Destroy" - not annihilation; but removal from the presence of God. To perish; to give our to eternal torment and misery (the same word is used of demons who fear this destruction - Lk. 4:34)

Paul uses this word to speak of *"eternal destruction"* (II Th. 1:9)

"the soul" - the word is often used synonymously with "spirit" (as here)

The soul is that immaterial part of man that gives him life, and that lives forever!

"Soul and body" - the "body" will one day be reunited to the soul at the resurrection of the unjust (Jn. 5:29; Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:5)

"In hell" - not "hades" but "Gehenna" = meaning the "Lake of Fire" (cp. Rev. 20:15; 21:8)

"Gehenna" refers to a place of burning.

Martin Luther (the reformer) said:

"Let good and kindred go
This mortal life also;
The body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still;
His kingdom is forever"

IV. Don't Let the Fear of Man DISHEARTEN You Because God is in sovereign control of your life and cares for you (v. 29-31)

A. He remembers you (v. 29)

"Two sparrows **[little birds]** ***sold for a farthing"*** (1/16 of a day's wages - perhaps like $5.00). They gave a greater discount for five sparrows, namely - two farthings (Lk. 12:6)

"Without your father" - without your heavenly Father's knowledge and will.

He does not forget about the existence of one sparrow (Lk. 12:6) and yet we often view Him as unconcerned or disinterested about our lives.

It is a comfort to know that nothing will happen to us, nor will anyone take the life of a child of God without our Father allowing it! He's in control!

"In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust, I will not fear what flesh can do unto me" (Ps. 56:4)

"The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" (Ps. 118:6)

". . . the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:6)

B. He <u>knows</u> you (v. 30)

The average hair count on the human head is said to be about 100,000.

Posted on February 12th, 2014 by the Bauman Medical Group
You are born with about 100,000 scalp hair follicles to start with, but it varies with natural hair color. Blondes have an average of 150,000 hairs, the average redhead has 90,000. Those with black or brown hair average 100,000 to 110,000 hairs.

There are about 5 million hair follicles on the adult human body and men have a few hundred thousand more than women. These follicles are distributed fairly evenly throughout the body, with the exception of our hairless palms and soles.

The average human head (an average scalp measures approximately 120 square inches or 770 cm^2) has about 100,000 hair follicles (Gray 2003). Each follicle can grow about 20 individual hairs in a person's lifetime (About 2007). Average hair loss is around 100 strands a day.

This verse teaches that God is omniscient (cp. Ps. 139).

If God cares enough about us to number our hairs; if He is aware of the number of insignificant hairs, are we right to think that we are not important enough to think about? Are we right to doubt His wondrous love when we are unjustly treated?

When God protects His own, He protects them down to the individual hairs. (Wiersbe, p. 39)

C. He <u>values</u> you (v. 31)

"Fear ye not, therefore" - Because of God's interest in us, His continual watchcare over us; His sovereign supervision, His genuine concern. . . He says you don't need to live in fear.

God's people excel the worth of multitudes of birds! We are valuable

(precious) to God.

V. Don't Let the Fear of Man <u>EMBARRASS</u> You
--If you deny Christ because of fear, He will deny you! (v. 32-33)

Paul confessed, *"For I am <u>not ashamed</u> of the Gospel of Christ"* (Rom. 1:16)

"Confess me" - to <u>say the same thing</u> about Jesus that the Bible says about Him.

Confession before men is a manifestation of true salvation.

"Before my Father" - Jesus will say of those who testify of him: "Father, they belong to me, they believe in me."

"Before My Father" - Jesus also said that He would confess us before the holy angels of God (Lk. 12:8). Why? So that they will know who to gather up at the Rapture (Mt. 24:31; cp. Mk. 8:38; Lk. 9:26)

We can deny Christ by <u>word</u>, <u>act</u> (*"works"* - Titus 1:16); or by <u>silence</u>.

To be <u>denied</u> by Jesus will be the greatest loss!

For Him to say, *"I do not know them"* or *"They do not belong to me"* will be the height of tragedy.

NOTE: Peter denied Christ (Mt. 26:34, 75) but later repented and then boldly and fearlessly acknowledged Him (Acts 2-5).

The Anabaptist Balthazar Hubmair did the same.

No one is a possessor of Christ who is not a confessor of Christ.

"The fear of man bringeth a snare (a lure into a trap - an eternal trap!) *but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe"* (Prov. 29:25).

CONCLUSION:

THE COST OF COMMITMENT

(What It Costs to be a Committed Christian)
Matthew 10:34-42
10/5/2017

INTRODUCTION:

***Consider the cost of being a committed disciple.**

I. Some will <u>RESIST</u> you
Because of your commitment to Christ (v. 34-36)

II. Some will <u>TEST</u> you
Because of your commitment to Christ (v. 37-39)

Three tests you must be willing to face:

A. The test of <u>love</u> (v. 37)

B. The test of <u>loyalty</u> (v. 38)

C. The test of <u>life</u> (v. 39)

III. Some will <u>RECEIVE</u> you
Because of your commitment to Christ (v. 40-42)

THE COST OF COMMITMENT

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B. The test of _____ (v. 38)

C. The test of _____ (v. 39)

III. Some will _____ you
Because of your commitment to Christ (v. 40-42)

THE COST OF COMMITMENT

(What It Costs to be a Committed Christian)
Matthew 10:34-42
10/5/2017

INTRODUCTION:

How much does it cost to be a Christian? Nothing. . . and everything.

Becoming a Christian costs you nothing! Salvation is free! (Rev. 22:17) Eternal life is a gift! (Rom. 6:23) The inheritance of Heaven is all of grace (Eph. 2:8-9; I Pet. 1). Jesus paid it all! He did the work! He endured the cross (Heb. 12:2)!

Becoming saved costs you nothing, but it cost our Heavenly Father His Only Begotten Son!

Being a Christian costs you everything! Whereas entrance into God's family does not cost you a thing, once in God's family there is a price to pay as long as we live on this sin-cursed earth.

You see, Heaven charges no admission fee, but the world charges a high departure fee when you leave its philosophies, ambitions, morals, etc., after being born again.

There is no charge for God's offer of Paradise (no price could match its worth); however, all those who have accepted God's are not appreciated by those who have rejected His offer . . . and that's where the trouble comes from.

A preacher once titled his sermon: *"Heaven & Hell on Earth"* His points were:

I. For the unsaved, this is the closest to Heaven they will ever experience.

II. For the saved, this is the closest to Hell that we will ever experience.

ILLUS: The Parables of the Builder and the King (Luke 14:28-32)

***Consider the cost of being a committed disciple.**

I. Some will <u>RESIST</u> you
Because of your commitment to Christ (v. 34-36)

V. 34

"To send" - Does not describe purpose but <u>result</u>. In other words, Christ did not come with the motive or intention of bringing conflict, but He knew that conflict would be the inevitable result of His coming.

Jesus does bring peace to the hearts of His people (Jn. 14:27); but unfortunately, His peace cannot extend to those who are at war with Him.

Christ's mission in His first coming to the earth was <u>not</u> merely to make peace between man and man or nation and nation.

There cannot be true, lasting peace in human relationships until there is peace with God. As long as people are at odds with God, they will be at odds with others.

Although at Christ's first coming peace was not achieved, at His second coming peace will be realized. SEE: Isaiah 2:1-4. Why will peace finally come?

1. The Prince of Peace will rule the earth (Is. 9:6; Rev. 20:4-6)
2. Satan will be bound (Rev. 20:1-3)
3. The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord (Is. 11:9)

"A sword" - speaks of conflict and war; not started by Christ or His children, but by the enemies of Christ.

The unsaved, humanistic, Antichrist, anti-Bible world has throughout history opposed God's people. We should not be shocked by such antagonism, because Jesus said it would be this way (Jn. 16:33; cp. I Pet. 4:12).

Satan is the chief <u>instigator</u> of trouble! He stirs things up! He stirs up the heathen to

oppose righteousness (Acts 19:23-34). He uses man's wicked and deceitful heart (Jer. 17:9) to rebel against anything connected with Jesus Christ. He is busy energizing those who are spiritually blind (II Cor. 4:4) as he works out his diabolical plans in the *"children of disobedience."* (Eph. 2:2)

People are offended when you leave "their religion." They are grieved when your allegiance shifts from them to Jesus. They are agitated when your righteousness becomes a rebuke to their unrighteousness. They are annoyed when your light exposes their darkness! They are upset when blessings flow upon you and not on them. They are perplexed when they observe your confidence and hope, while they grope in lostness and confusion.

Face it, folks, the world has never been a friend to Christ!

The world's philosophies. . .ideologies. . .motives and methods (ambitions and ethics). . .moral standards. . . are totally different than God's!

Such different world views produce conflict. Such opposing world views produce friction, and friction causes heat, and heat causes fire!

V. 35

"Variance" **-**to split up; to sever; to cut into two parts; hostility on the part of the unsaved will set him against the saved; the result being division, disunity, and separation.

God teaches that believers should strive to be at peace with all men. But you cannot force them to be at peace with you (Rom. 12:18; Heb. 12:14). Not peace at all costs!

"There is a difference between the 'offense of the cross' (Gal. 5:11) and offensive Christians." (Wiersbe, p. 39)

Usually, those who will have the greatest reaction against you will be those who are

the closest to you!

Son - Father
Daughter - Mother
Daughter-in-law - Mother-in-law

In the Last Days, iniquity will abound so much that the love of many will wax cold (Mt. 24:12); people will be without natural affection (I Tim. 3:3). Family members will actually betray family members (Mt. 10:21).

ILLUS: Pastor Jordan's rejection by his family

ILLUS: MacArthur, p. 231

This tragic disloyalty and abandonment of natural affection is not something new. Even in the Prophet Micah's day, he said: *"For the son dishonoreth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house."* (Micah 7:6)

V. 36

"Foes" = enemies

To have your own family turn on you has to be the most terrible feeling of betrayal. Yet at the same time, such family antagonism will be the greatest test of your faith and test of your devotion to Christ. When such domestic turmoil occurs, you will have a choice: family or Christ. Where will your loyalty be placed?

II. Some will <u>TEST</u> you

Because of your commitment to Christ (v. 37-39)

Three tests you must be willing to face:

A. The test of love (v. 37)

Don't interpret v. 37 out of its preceding context. The point is this: when the "chips are down" and you have a choice to make--family or Christ--the one you love the most will determine whom you side with. Sometimes in life people have to make this hard choice.

"Not worthy of Me" - Christ, being your Savior, Lord, and God is worthy of your total allegiance, loyalty and devotion.

--He is to be our "*first love*"

Rev. 2:4 - *"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."*

--Loving Him foremost is the greatest commandment.

Mark 12:30 - *"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength,; this is the first commandment."*

Our love for Jesus should be so paramount, so great, so supreme, that our love for even family (by comparison) would seem like "hatred."

SEE: Luke 14:25-27

Devotion to loved ones must take second place to your devotion to Christ.

The only way a believer can escape conflict is to deny Christ (either by word, action, or silence) and compromise his beliefs and testimony (Wiersbe, p. 39).

B. The test of loyalty (v. 38)

"To *'carry the cross'* does not mean to wear a pin on our lapel or put a sticker on our automobile. It means to confess Christ and obey Him in spite of shame and suffering." (Wiersbe, p. 39).

The "cross" was a well-known symbol of shame and death in Roman days.

The cross was a symbol of shame - because all who died on them were considered a *"curse"* (Gal. 3:13).

For many, cross bearing means to bear shame and rejection for Christ's sake (Heb. 12:2).

The cross was a symbol of death. - A cross was a cruel, painful instrument of death.

We all have to make a choice in life: Do we live for self and thereby miss out on following Jesus 100%? Or do we die to self and follow Him 100%?

To *"die to self"* means that I am willing to:

--forsake my selfish ambition, to follow His
--abandon my desires, to seek His
--leave my ideas, to embrace His
--depart from my pleasures to please Him

This cross bearing is a daily decision Luke 9:23 - *"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."*

Paul said, *"I die daily"* (I Cor. 15:31).

C. The test of life (v. 39)

The Christian life is full of paradoxes.

--The way up is down (Luke 14:11 - *"For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted"*)

--The way to save your life is to lose it (Lk. 9:24 - *"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it."*)

--Greatness is servitude (Mk. 10:44 - *"And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all."*)

--The way to find life is to lose it

One who "finds" something implies that he has been "looking" for it. One who is spending his life looking for happiness, pleasure, worldly fulfillment, will perhaps temporarily "find it" only to soon lose it!

However, one who abandons his selfish pursuit of the happy, pleasurable, and fulfilling life for the sake of Jesus Christ, will find it!

Real "life" is not found by those who seek it, but is the reward to those who life for Christ. Happiness is stumbled along by those whose pursuit is the goal of pleasing Christ! (ILLUS: Ron Hamilton's new song - "Happiness came looking for me, when I started giving happiness to others. . .")

Those who vainly pursue happiness for happiness' sake find that it eludes them at every turn, and when they finally do grasp it, it is like a big pretty bubble that bursts in their hands.

Prov. 13:7 - *"There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches."*

"He is no fool who gives that which he cannot keep, to gain that which he cannot lose" (Missionary Jim Elliot)

III. Some will RECEIVE you

Because of your commitment to Christ (v. 40-42)

V. 40

Although most will reject your testimony, message, what you stand for, etc. - many will accept!

It's good to know that our labors are never in vain! (I Cor. 15:58) God always has His remnant who will welcome us and what we believe in.

When someone receives a man or woman of God, this shows that they also welcome Jesus Christ!

One of the greatest evidences of true salvation is the comradery or common bond you will have with other believers after being saved.

Because of our oneness with Christ, anyone who embraces us embraces Him. And because of Christ's oneness with the Father, anyone who embraces Jesus embraces God the Father.

You represent Christ to the world. You are an ambassador for Christ (II Cor. 5:20).

If the ambassador of the U.S. went to a foreign country and was rejected, they did not merely reject him, but the country he was representing.

For someone to reject you is to reject the One you represent. If they accept you, they accept the One you represent.

NOTE: David's ambassadors were shamefully treated by the Ammonites (II Sam. 10:4). Such rejection showed their rejection of David (10:6ff)

Anything you do for a believer, you do for Christ (Mt. 25:40), and anything you do against a believer, you do against Christ (Acts 9:4).

V. 41

"A prophet in the <u>name</u> of a prophet" - is a prophet who has the <u>title</u> "a prophet of Jesus Christ."

In other words, whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet of Christ will receive the same type of reward that God will give to prophets.

Whoever receives (welcomes) a righteous man of God will receive the same type of reward the righteous man will receive.

What Jesus is saying is this: If you support, assist, help My man, you support Me; and if you support Me, I will reward you.

All of us will one day be awarded (I Cor. 3; II Cor. 5) for what we did while on earth. Whatever you do for someone who belongs to Jesus, you do for Him,a nd He will compensate you accordingly.

Rewards are not just for those in full-time Christian service (EX: pastor, missionary, evangelist, etc.). Rewards are for anyone who assists those in full-time Christian service! And not rewards of inferior quality either! The <u>same</u> reward!

V. 42

"Little" - not young child, but a man of small "rank"

Whereas in verse 41, Jesus described the "great" men of God (prophet and righteous men), now in verse 42 He describes a "little" man of God.

In other words, whatever you do for event he most seemingly insignificant member of the Body of Christ, you do for Him and He will be sure to reward you!

Mt. 25:40 - *"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I saw unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me."*

"In the name of a disciple" - refers to the "little" one who claims to be a disciple of Christ.

All (no matter how great or small) who name the name of Christ are His disciples.

"In no wise" - a double negative, giving the phrase the powerful meaning of "no possible way he will lose his reward."

The rewards far outweigh the temporary affliction we have to endure and overcome! (Rom. 8).

CONCLUSION:

You need to be willing to pay the price of resistance, rejection, family disruption, opposition.

"WRONG EXPECTATIONS"

Matthew 11:1-19
11/26/2017

INTRODUCTION:

***Beware of wrong expectations in the Christian life.**

Three examples of mis-expectations:

I. John the Baptist's Wrong Expectation of <u>JESUS</u> (v. 2-6)
(John questioned: *"Is this the real <u>Messiah</u>?"*)

II. The People's Wrong Expectation of <u>JOHN THE BAPTIST</u> (v. 7-15)
(The crowd questioned: *"Is this real <u>greatness</u>?"*)

III. The Unbeliever's Wrong Expectation of <u>JOHN AND JESUS</u> (v. 16-19)
(The religious leaders questioned: *"Is this real <u>spirituality</u>?"*)

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"WRONG EXPECTATIONS"

Matthew 11:1-19
11/26/2017

INTRODUCTION:

Things are not always what we think they should be.

Things don't always happen according to expectation.

We often expect one thing and get another. Our minds dream up illusions of grandeur only to have such misconceptions straightened out.

ILLUS: My expectation that the Sea of Galilee would be some huge body of water only to find it to be a small lake.

All of us have had expectations of something that didn't quite turn out to be as we thought (Ex: marriage, a certain food, a certain person, place or thing that didn't match our expectations).

"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick" (Prov. 13:12)

God clearly states: *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith 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."* (Isaiah 55:8-9)

After recording Christ's warning to His disciples of the opposition and persecution they would face (chap. 10), Matthew now writes about the conflicts Jesus faced. Chapters 11 and 12 describe how the religious leaders of Jesus' day rebelled against His prophet John and He Himself.

V. 1

"Teach and preach" - Christ had a balanced public ministry of privately teaching (instructing) and publically preaching (proclaiming, heralding) the Word.

No doubt His teaching was mingled in with His preaching as it should be for pastors today (II Tim. 4:2).

***Beware of wrong expectations in the Christian life.**

Three examples of mis-expectations:

I. John the Baptist's Wrong Expectation of <u>JESUS</u> (v. 2-6)
(John questioned: *"Is this the real <u>Messiah</u>?"*)

V. 2

"In the prison" - John the Baptist was thrown into prison for preaching the truth.

John rebuked King Herod Antipas for incestuously living with his brother's wife. Herod's guilt-ridden woman Herodias, so as to block out the conviction and to stop any more embarrassing statements from John, had him thrown into prison (Mk. 6:17-20). She wanted to have him killed but could not (Mk. 6:19).

It was during this imprisonment that John begins to have doubts concerning the person of Jesus. John thought, *"Was He the Christ? Was I doing right by publically announcing Him and by preparing people to receive Him?"*

It is not hard to understand why John was so perplexed and troubled. In his mind, he wondered:

1) "If Jesus was the Messiah, why hasn't the promised Messianic <u>kingdom</u> come?"

2) If Jesus was the Messiah, why would He allow me to be thrown into prison?

   If Jesus was the Messiah and if I was doing God's will, why would God <u>allow</u> me to be so unjustly treated?

3) If Jesus is the Messiah, why doesn't He come and <u>rescue</u> me?

   NOTE: God's will may be that we <u>glorify</u> Him by a mean's other than by physical deliverance.

   Even if we are required to give our lives for Him, it does not mean that His love or presence has left us (Rom. 8:36ff).

"The works of Christ" **-**John, hearing about the great works of Christ perhaps wondered, "Why isn't He showing me any of these great works? His works are consistent with the Messiah, but why would He allow me to suffer so unjustly?

Don't let opposition discourage you. Let "John's" life be a reminder that:

--The "will of God" is not determined by the ease of ministry (one may be completely <u>out</u> of the will of God and circumstances may be great)

--Trouble or problems do not necessarily mean that you are out of the "will of God" (one may be completely <u>in</u> the will of God and troubles may strike on every side -- EX: Job)

--Even the greatest of God's servants (11:11) are not exempt from persecution, yea, even execution (martyrdom)

--Your faith, like John's, will be tested

--Righteousness is not always rewarded in this life in the way it deserves (we live in an unfair world because we live in a sin-cursed world)

V. 3

"Art thou he that should come" - lit. Are you the "coming one"? Are you the one the Old Testament said would come? Are you the real promised Messiah or should we be expecting someone else?

One of the Messiah's titles besides the "son of David" or "King of kings" would be the "Coming One." The Old Testament prophesied of Christ: *"Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me.*" (Psalm 40:7); *"Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD."* (Psalm 118:26).

John no doubt wanted to cry out like the martyred saints under the altar who said: *"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"* (Rev. 6:10)

V. 4

Jesus could have given John a simple "Yes" answer, but rather gave enough evidence to speak for itself.

"Shew John again those things which ye do hear and see" - Confirm to John about My 1) Message ("hear")
2) Miracles ("see")

(Note: Christ's miracles were to vindicate His message)

V. 5

Jesus is saying: "Go tell John that I have power over:
blindness
deformity or paralysis
leprosy
deafness
death"

Such miracles were totally consistent with what the Old Testament prophets said concerning the Messiah.

Isaiah 35:5-6 - *"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing..."*

Why ***"the poor"***? Because they were the only ones who were willing to listen (cp. Mt. 19:16-24).

They had ears that were not clogged by the sound of money. They had hearts that were not hardened through the deceitfulness of riches. (Mark 4:19; I Tim. 6:17).

"The gospel preached" - this good news was again a prophetic promise of that which the Messiah would deliver (Is. 61:1 - *"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach the good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."*)

V. 6

"Offended in Me" - the ones blessed by God are those who refuse to let anything or anyone trip up their faith in Christ. They will not stumble because of opposition that may come for Jesus' sake.

For John, it meant that he would not doubt Christ's Messiahship even though he was in prison for the Messiah he prepared the way for.

Often when Christianity does not match up to someone's illusions of grandeur, they, in disillusionment, abandon it altogether!

Don't let a wrong expectation about Christianity shake your faith!

II. The People's Wrong Expectation of <u>JOHN THE BAPTIST</u> (v. 7-15)
(The crowd questioned: *"Is this real <u>greatness</u>?"*)

V. 7

"The world has many standards by which it measures greatness. These standards include intellectual achievement, political and military leadership, scientific and medical discoveries, wealth and power, and athletic, dramatic, literary and musical skill." (MacARthur, p. 249)

Although John had none of those qualities, yet there was none ever born greater.

"The wilderness" = the wilderness of Judea (Mt. 3:1), where John baptized and prepared people's hearts to receive Christ.

Rumors travelled: "Hey, did you hear about this mighty orator named John? "He is a great preacher." "People are amazed at his messages." "News has it that multitudes are following him and submitting to his baptism." "Let's go see what all of this is about."

As they went, no doubt each had formed a concept in their minds regarding what John would be like. Some no doubt thought that he would be a soft, pliable, flexible man, who would compromise with the religious leaders of his day. Or perhaps an unsteady man who didn't quite have his doctrine straight, who would be moved like *"a reed shaken with the wind."* They found him, however, to be a firm and rigid ancient fundamentalism who preached hard. (Mt. 3:7)

John did not vacillate with every change of society, but held firm to his convictions. We need such courage today!

V. 8

Others probably perceived John as this mighty "kingly" figure who wore an expensive white flowing silk robe and ate grapes at the hands of a harem, only to find that he wore a rough garment made of camel's hair with a raw-hide belt around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey all by himself in a barren desert (Mt. 3:4).

John wasn't a man of luxury (***"soft raiment"***), but a man of self-discipline and self-denial.

Don't judge a man's ministry by his:

1. Popularity (EX: how big his church is)
2. Personality (EX: how smooth he talks and acts)
3. Luxury (EX: his clothes, car, etc.)

V. 9

Others no doubt thought that John would be a prophet in the likes of Isaiah and Jeremiah and Daniel. But Jesus said that John was *"<u>more</u> than a prophet."* Reason: John was a **<u>fulfillment</u>** of prophecy! He would be the long-awaited forerunner of the Messiah.

V. 10

God the Father speaking to God the Son said in Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1 that he would send His *"messenger"* (*angelos*) to prepare the way for Jesus.

V. 11

John the Baptist was considered the ***"greatest"*** because he had the greatest privilege, the highest responsibility, the noblest task, the most honorable job--that being to announce to the world that the Messiah has come!

"He that is least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he" (John) -- What does this mean?

1) Does it mean that John, because of his doubts (11:3), was not yet a believer? (probably NOT)

2) Does it mean that because John was still alive and not in Heaven, then anyone who believes and passes on into Heaven has a greater position than John? (<u>YES</u>, this seems to be the best view).

   The most privileged are not those who are living on earth, but those who are living in the presence of God in Heaven.

   What a privilege to be saved! No wonder Paul desired to be absent from the body (II Cor. 5:8).

   Anyone enjoying the "spiritual dimension" of Heaven is greater than anyone existing in the "human dimension" of the earth.

V. 12

What is mean by the words ***"violence"*** and ***"violent"***?

Since the Gospels interpret themselves, by comparing this statement to the parallel passage in Luke 16:16, we gain insight into what Jesus is saying: (*"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it"*).

The word translated *"violent"* simply means *"<u>forceful</u>"*.

In spite of the kingdom of God suffering forceful opposition by those who were the enemies of Christ, those who really wanted to be saved would <u>forcefully</u> make every <u>effort</u> to enter in and lay hold of the promised Kingdom (ILLUS: the great effort to get on a crowded subway train at rush hour in NYC).

It was John's hellfire and damnation preaching that stirred people to storm and rush into the Kingdom.

God used John to quicken the conscience of people as to the enormity of their sin and need of salvation.

V. 13

"Until John" - the appearance of John the Baptist marked the transition from Old Testament law to the New Testament Church age. A new dispensation was being prepared for by John as he announced the Lamb of God - the One who would shed His blood to begin a new Testament (new covenant).

V. 14

"Elias" - Elijah

John, who was a Nazarite like Elijah, who ate like Elijah, who preached like Elijah (in a sense) was Elijah.

Was he literally Elijah? No.

Does this mean that Elijah really is not coming after all? No. Elijah is coming! (Mt. 17:11 - *"Elias truly shall* [in the future] *first come, and restore* [future tense] *all things"*).

But in a typical form, John was similar to Elijah and was a type or picture of the future Elijah who will come (Mt. 17:12-13).

John was similar to Elijah in this sense: John, like Elijah will be, was a forerunner of Christ (Lk. 1:17; Jn. 1:21).

John prepared the way for Christ's first coming. Elijah himself will prepare the way for Christ's second coming (SEE: Malachi 4:1, 5)

Mal. 4:5 - "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD."

The Jews were expecting Elijah to literally come back (Mk. 8:28), and since he never died (II Ki. 2:1), He will! Perhaps as one of God's two witnesses (Rev. 11:3-12).

V. 15

Everyone has ears, but not everyone has *"**ears to hear**"*. That is, not all people are open and receptive to God's truth.

For those of you who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, listen intently to what the Spirit is saying in His Word (cp. Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, etc.)

The message that needed to be *"heard"* was this: John is indeed the forerunner, and I am indeed the Messiah whose way he prepared (in the power and spirit of Elijah) (Lk. 1:16-17).

III. The Unbeliever's Wrong Expectation of <u>JOHN AND JESUS</u> (v. 16-19)
(The religious leaders questioned: *"Is this real <u>spirituality</u>?"*)

V. 16

"Whereunto shall I liken" *- "What analogy or example can I give to describe this generation*?" How can I illustrate it?

NOTE: the generation we live among today are very much like that of the first century (lukewarm, calloused, and unresponsive).

V. 17

While their parents shopped or sold in the market place, the children would play two games ["Wedding" (mimic a flute playing) and "Funeral" [mimic the paid mourners)]. (MacArthur, p. 260-61

There were always "hold-outs" who would refuse to go along with the other children and play these games.

So, children are playing in the marketplace. A few begin to play wedding music on their pipes and cry out to others, "Let's march, be happy, and play 'wedding'!" The others shout back, "No, we don't want to dance around today." So the first group, still wanting to play, begin to play funeral music and shout back, "Well then, let's play 'Funeral'." "No, we don't want to play funeral either. We don't feel like acting sad."

Jesus is accusing them of being unmoved and unresponsive to His miracles and message (SEE v. 20).

Because of their hard hearts, they did not act upon what they heard. Their wills were not affected. They just coldly sat there and did not realize who was speaking or what was being said.

*Always ask God for a tender heart, a soft pliable spirit that he can touch and move.

V. 18

John ate locusts and wild honey (a simple diet of a nomad) and being a Nazarite did not drink any fruit of the vine. And despite his sacrifices, rather than being applauded for his sacrifices, he is accused of being demon-possessed. He was Holy Spirit-possessed (cp. Lk. 1:15), but was not demon possessed.

I had a member of some cult make the same accusation against me.

When people falsely accuse you, realize you are not the first!

Mt. 5:11 - *"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake."*

V. 19

"Eating and drinking" - Jesus ate what others ate; He also drank of the fruit of the vine (unfermented wine).

But He was wrongly accused of gluttony, alcoholism, and partying with "low-lifers."

When people do not want to hear the truth, they will often discredit and criticize the speaker so as to justify or excuse themselves from listening.

NOTE: The reason Jesus associated with publicans and sinners was not to condone their sin, but to save them from their sin.

Jesus was friendly to such people but it was wrong to insinuate that He was close companions with them (as if He did what they did, went where they went, etc.).

They judged Jesus by "guilt by association." Because Jesus did not hang out with the hypocritical, religious clergy of His day, He was slandered (SEE: Mt. 9:10-13).

"Wisdom is justified of her children" - this proverbial statement describes wisdom as bearing offspring or fruit.

What Jesus is saying is that "Wisdom is proven to be true wisdom by the fruit it produces." He is saying: I am proven righteous by my deeds. My miracles attest to my Messiah-ship. My good works manifest that I am not what you accuse me of being.

People may say what they want about you, but let your works speak for your faith. Let your Godly life validate your Christianity. Show your faith by your works (James 2:18).

True spirituality shows itself not by "word, fame, or popular opinion" but by truth, righteousness, and holy living!

CONCLUSION:

You don't have to live up to people's expectations. Live up to God's expectations!

"Missed Opportunities"

(WASTED PRIVILEGES)
Matthew 11:20-27
12/3/2017

INTRODUCTION:

***Don't waste the spiritual privilege and opportunity you have today!**

Two reasons why people do not repent even when great opportunity exists for God to do a great work in lives:

I. UNRESPONSIVE APATHY (v. 20-24)
(Some think: *"Things are okay the way they are"*)

II. INTELLECTUAL ARROGANCE (v. 25-27)
(Some think: *"I am too 'smart' for God"*)

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"Missed Opportunities"

(WASTED PRIVILEGES)
Matthew 11:20-27
12/3/2017

INTRODUCTION:

ILLUS: The man ate cheese and crackers, not realizing his boat ticket included all meals on board.

Examples of blown opportunities (i.e. people who had resources, privileges, available opportunities, etc., but did not "cash in" on them, ignored them, to great ruin and loss; they did not realize what they had until it was too late). The greatest of all opportunities wasted will no doubt be made by those who came in contact with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and turned their back on it.

The people of three ancient cities in northern Galilee had the greatest opportunity as they saw and heard Jesus Christ. They witnessed most of Christ's miracles (He raised Jairus's daughter; healed the nobleman's son; exorcised the demoniac; healed Peter's mother-in-law, the woman with the bleeding hemorrhage, two blind men, the centurion's servant, the mute demoniac, and the paralytic).
And they heard most of His public messages. Yet they were totally <u>unresponsive</u> to it (11:16-17). It's not that they took any action against Jesus (they didn't oppose Him). They, like many today, simply <u>ignored</u> Him. "While the Son of God preached, taught, and performed unprecedented miracles in their midst, they carried on their lives and business as usual, seemingly unaffected" (MacArthur, p. 263).

Note prior Context: Matthew 11:16-19:
But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. (They were totally unresponsive).
For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

V. 20

***"Upbraid"* -** to reproach, revile, defame. Jesus authoritatively expressed His displeasure and disapproval of cities which disgracefully rejected the Lord's miracles and message.
"Wherein most of His mighty works were done" - Jesus performed powerful signs and wonders throughout Palestine, but the <u>majority</u> of His miracles were done in Northern Palestine. He did many, many miracles there.

He upbraided them ***"Because they repented not"*** - The Lord's strong condemnation of these cities is because they had no excuse for their unbelief. They saw His awesome miracles and heard His stirring messages, yet remained unmoved, unconvicted, unrepentant.

"Repented" - the word "repent" literally means to have a "change of mind"; to have a point of turning from unbelief to turning to faith in Christ. Christ's miracles were more than enough evidence to prove His Messiahship; His plentiful and powerful signs were more than enough to validate Him as being Lord of lords, King of kings, God of gods. They were without excuse to deny Jesus a rightful place in their lives! They had no just reasons to reject Him as their Master, Teacher, and Savior.

Man's problem is not that He lacks evidence for God's existence (Psalm 19:1-6 – "The heavens declare the glory of God…). His problem is that he refuses to accept the evidence that is available. He suppresses that knowledge (Ro. 1:18) so as to remain "unaccountable" to God and to continue his lifestyle of wickedness without a guilty conscience.

To sin against light is indeed the worse thing people can do!

> John 3:19 - And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

In Matthew 11, Jesus demonstrates that such willful ignorance is inexcusable and unjustified. Even today the world willfully remains ignorant of Christ and His relationship to God the Father despite all the evidence He gave.

"They hated Me without a cause" (John 15:25) – a prophetic fulfillment of Psalm 35:19 and 69:4. There is absolutely no reason whatsoever that anyone should hate and reject Jesus Christ!

Romans 1:20 shows how no one has an excuse to reject God or be a fool and say that there is no God. Romans 1:20 - For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Just as creation gives ample evidence for the existence of God, Christ's life, words and works give ample evidence for His messiahship. No one has any excuse who rejects the evidence of the New Testament regarding Him.

***Don't waste the spiritual privilege and opportunity you have today!**

Two reasons why people do not <u>repent</u> even when great opportunity exists for God to do a great work in lives:

I. UNRESPONSIVE APATHY (v. 20-24)

(Some think: *"Things are okay the way they are"*)

V. 21

"Woe" - a word that describes pity or sorrow because of the Judgment to come (cp. Rev. 18:10). A pronouncement of doom.

Chorzin and Bethsaida were just north of the Sea of Galilee. The Galilean region was where Christ ministered most. They saw Him and heard him.

Whereas ***"Tyre and Sidon" -*** two cities on the Mediterranean coastline of Phoenicia (located in modern Lebanon).

"Both cities were typical seaports, noted for their immorality and godlessness (even by pagan standards) and were deeply involved in the licentious Baal worship. A certain king of Tyre was so proud and evil that Ezekiel used him as a picture of Satan (Ezek. 28:11-15). The city's violence, profanity, pride, injustice, greed, and immorality were so excessive that the Lord destroyed it (vv. 16-19; cp. Jer. 25:22, 47:4)" (MacArthur, p. 264).
(For a description and the prophesied destruction of Tyre and Sidon, see: Eze. 26-28; Joel 3:4-8).)
"Sackcloth and ashes" - signs of mourning and sorrow! The sorrow is over sin.

If God's Word does not ever move us to tears, it's time for us to pray: *"God, forgive me for my calloused heart; please create in me a new, soft, pliable, moldable, responsive, submissive, believing heart."*

Jesus is saying that the people of Chrorazin and Bethsaida were more calloused and hard-hearted than Tyre and Sidon.

NOTE: When truth is seen and heard but not accepted and obeyed, it produces a hardening affect on the hearts of those who stubbornly and obstinately refuse to believe it (EX: the gospel-hardened southern USA; rebellious children in Christian schools; apathetic church members in Bible-preaching churches).

The sin of Chorazin and Bethsaida is committed today!

When God shows His infinite power and grace by saving a person and by transforming that person (giving undeniable evidence of His mighty power) and for people to coldly say: "Oh, it's just a fanatic religion," or "Oh, give them some time, they will get over this passing religious fad," -- they are committing the sin Jesus is describing.

Our prayer needs to be: "Lord, give me a tender heart to receive Your truth and a submissive will to obey Your truth."

V. 22

"Tolerable" - bearable, endurable.

Tyre and Sidon will be better able to handle (endure) their judgment than you will!

Jesus is not teaching that Tyre and Sidon will "get off the hook" and that they would somehow escape judgment or avoid paying the wages of their sin; but He is saying that their payment will not be as severe as yours will be. Their suffering will not be as intense as yours. Their pain and agony in the Lake of Fire will not be as unbearable as yours will be.

V. 23

"Capernaum" the city on the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee.

"Exalted unto heaven" - the critical text views this as a question: *"Will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be. . ."* I think it is best taken as a statement (as the KJV).

"Exalted" - lifted up. In pride and self-sufficiency, with wealth, prosperity, and independence, this city viewed itself as "lifted up" (in arrogance).

"Sodom" - a city that existed south of the Dead Sea in the days of Abraham. God noted that this city was one filled with *"Pride, fullness of bread. . . abundance of idleness. . . and [greed]"* (Ezek. 16:49).

Not even <u>ten</u> righteous people lived in Sodom (Gen. 18:32).

The city of "Sodom" from which we derive the word "sodomy" is mostly remembered for its sexual immorality, particularly homosexuality (Gen. 19). God destroyed this city along with its sister Gomorrah with brimstone and fire from Heaven. The twin cities lie bury under mountains of salt to this day.

"It would have remained until this day" - Sodom was destroyed in 2,066 B.C. Jesus is saying that this city (if it had seen and heard what Capernaum did) would have remained for over 2,097 years!

Jesus is implicitly teaching us that: Righteousness <u>preserves</u> nations!

Prov. 14:34 - *"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people"*

Nations decay, rot, fall, and crumble because of <u>sin</u>! Because they forsake God and His Word (EX: Rome).

V. 24

"The day of Judgment" - this is none other than the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15 -- This will be a holy (v. 11); impartial (v. 12a, 13); honest (v. 12b), fair (v. 12c, 13b) and final (v. 14-15) judgment.)

The purpose of this judgment is <u>not</u> to determine who is lost or saved, but to:

1. <u>Demonstrate</u> the <u>justice</u> of the condemnation of all who appear ("*every mouth will be stopped*" - Rom. 3:19)

2. <u>Determine</u> the <u>degree</u> of torment to be suffered for eternity

The Bible teaches a heightened condemnation for those who had the opportunity to know the truth but did not accept the truth.

SEE: II Peter 2:21 - For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

Luke 12:47-48 - And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Luke 20:47 - And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

The people of Sodom, though they were Sodomites, will suffer less intensely than the occupants of Capernaum, who for the most part were not Sodomites! Why? Because Capernaum heard but didn't heed; they saw but didn't submit; they came into contact with truth personified but didn't repent!

The self-righteous, Pharisaical, indifferent church goer who heard God's Word but ignores it and doesn't obey it is even more repulsive in God's sight than the idolatrous and immoral pagan (MacArthur, p. 266).

"The greater the privilege, the greater the responsibility; and the greater the light, the greater the punishment for not receiving it" (MacArthur, p. 264).
John 3:19 - And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

II. INTELLECTUAL <u>ARROGANCE</u> (v. 25-27)
(Some think: *"I am too 'smart' for God"*)

V. 25

"At that time" - at the same time that Jesus denounced the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum (this context v. 25-27 continues the thought of v. 20-24)

"Hid these things" - hid the <u>meaning</u> of Christ's mighty works and mighty message.

Why would God hide truth? He hides it from those who are too proud of their own wisdom and intelligence to receive His truth.

"Wise" - <u>Not</u> true wisdom (Psalm 111:10; Prov. 9:10) but worldly wisdom, worldly philosophical reasoning, like that adored by the ancient Greek philosophers (Col. 2:8 - *"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ"*)

(Acts 17; SEE: I Cor. 1:18-29)

"Prudent" - intelligent. Not true intelligence or knowledge, which comes only from God via His Word (Prov. 1:7, 2:6, 8:10), but again worldly intelligence that reasons out God and dismisses Biblical truth.

Some people are so "smart" they lack common sense! Some, rather than falling down and worshipping God, rather worship at the shrine of their own intellect.

The Lord does not exclude smart people from His Kingdom, but rather those who trust in their smartness and stiff-arm God's truth (EX: Paul was a brilliant, highly educated scholar...). "It is not intelligence but intellectual pride that shuts people at of the Kingdom" (MacArthur, p. 270).

Beware of the colleges or universities you send your kids to (secular humanistic, anti-God, anti-Bible thinking prevails). There is a deliberate agenda to strip away all belief in a Creator God through the "unscientific" propaganda of the theory of evolution.

"Revealed" - to uncover, to unveil, to make manifest

"<u>Thou</u> hast revealed" - only God via His Holy Spirit (I Cor. 2:10) can illuminate men's minds to comprehend Scriptural truth (Heb. 6:4, 10:32; Eph. 1:18).

"Babes" - infants, little children, <u>not</u> literal infants, but people of all ages who are humble and dependent (trusting) like little children (Mt. 18:3 - *"And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven."*).

It pleases God to uncover real truth to those who are humble enough to receive it. Unless one receives the Word with "meekness" (humility), he does not receive it (ja. 1:21). . . with desire like a *"babe"* (I Pet. 2:2).

V. 27

***"All things"* -** in context refers to "people." All people who come to Jesus come to Him because the Father gives them to Him (Jn. 6:37, 39).

Only divinity can fully comprehend divinity (cp. I Cor. 2:9-16), and only God the Son can reveal God the Father to you.

No one (man or angels) fully knows (*epiginosko*) the Son except the Father, and no one fully knows the Father except the Son, and whoever the Son desires to reveal (uncover -. cp. v. 25) the Father to.

Unless Jesus opens your eyes, you will never know the Father (Jn. 14:9 - *"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"*).

Sovereignty does not exclude human responsibility to *"come"* (v. 28).

CONCLUSION:

America is a privileged nation.

Freedom, abundance of Christian literature, Bibles, churches, Christian videos, music, colleges, seminaries, Bible institutes, etc. (contrast with other countries like China, India and Muslim countries who do not have such abundance)

The problem = people in the USA are wasting their privilege and ignoring their opportunities. Our country is becoming as dark as Europe which also has wasted great spiritual privilege.

Apathy and lukewarmness abounds. God's truth is not viewed seriously. Even by multitudes who call themselves "Christian". We are busy in our land "playing the fiddle on a ship that is sinking fast!"

We at VBC are tremendously privileged! We must not forfeit such opportunity.

We must redeem the time! Buy up the opportunities!

For the Child of God, it's time to get serious about God's Word.
Ask God to help you be serious about His Truth. Hear it eagerly; Study it intently; Believe it willingly; and Obey it conscientiously.

For those without Christ, if God's Spirit is prodding your heart, it's time to finally yield to what the Spirit is showing you about Christ. This could be your final opportunity to trust Jesus Christ alone to rescue your soul from perishing. He is only a call away. You can cry out to Him right now and ask His to save you.
2 Cor. 6:2 - (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured (helped) thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)
Proverbs 27:1 - Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

"REFRESHING REST"

Matthew 11:28-30
12/10/2017

INTRODUCTION:

In a harsh world of suffering, hardship, and difficulty . . .
***Christ PROMISES a life of <u>REFRESHING REST</u>!**

How can you experience such rest?

I. You must <u>COME</u> to Jesus (Salvation)
("Come unto Me" - v. 28)

II. You must <u>YOKE UP</u> with Jesus (Dedication)
("Take My yoke" - v. 29a, 30)

III. You must <u>LEARN</u> from Jesus (Discipleship)
("Learn of Me" - v. 29b)

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"REFRESHING REST"

Matthew 11:28-30
12/10/2017

INTRODUCTION: Sing the Hymn: *"How can it be"*

Have you ever felt so weary & pressured that you thought you were about to explode?

Has life weighed heavily upon you?

Have the storms of life blown relentlessly your way seeking as it were to decimate your life?

Have the burdens of this world led you to the point of despair or near collapse?

If so, God has a message for you who are:
Burdened by sin & it's consequences
Unsatisfied by materialism & the vanities of this world
Disillusioned by the rituals & regulations of man-made religion
Struggling with emptiness & loneliness

Illustration: "Princess Rest" (TAN #1876)

Throughout the centuries, these verses have been among the favorite of Christians. They are among the most loved words in the N.T.

These words in verses 28-30 have been:

Soothing to weary eyes as they are read,
Comforting to weary ears as they are heard,
Calming to weary hearts as they are believed.

In a harsh world of suffering, hardship, and difficulty . . .
***Christ PROMISES a life of REFRESHING REST!**

How can you experience such rest?

Note: the 3 verbs: *"Come...Take...Learn"*

I. You must <u>COME</u> to Jesus (Salvation)
("Come unto Me" - v. 28)

"Come" - God's invitation has always been - "Come unto Me"

"Come now , and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins by as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Is. 1:18)

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters, and he that hath no money; come, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price"
"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near"
(Is. 55:1,6)

The final invitation of the Bible is "<u>come</u>" (Rev. 22:17).

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely"

Jesus does <u>not</u> say:

"Come to religion"
"Come to the waters of baptism"
"Come to the tables of communion"
"Come to Mass" (Ex. Catholics)
"Come to a canonized patron saint"
"Come to Mecca" (Muslims)
"Come to a healing crusade"
"Come to a psychiatrists's office"
"Come to Friends"
"Come to the power of positive thinking"

But He says: "Come unto <u>Me</u>"

We "come" by <u>faith</u> (trust, dependance, reliance)

Jesus says Come!
False religion says do!
Jesus says come!
Satan says not now (wait)!
Jesus says Come!
The world says what for? (Why)

No one who comes to Jesus will be turned away or rejected (John 6:37 - "All that the Father given me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.")

"All ye" = Christ's invitation is for everyone. His rest is intended for all peoples and nations, regardless of skin color, language, or social status.

"This invitation is open to those who are exhausted and burdened down. That is exactly how the people felt under the yoke of pharisaical legalism (Mt. 23:4; Acts 15:10)." (Wiersbe, p. 41).

Labour - speaks of extreme weariness & *"heavy laden"* - speaks of extreme pressure.

"Labour" - Those who have toiled to the point of exhaustion. Those who are weary and tired.

ILLUS: of the blind dedication of those trapped in a cult (Ex. Jim Jones - Guiana; David Koresh - Waco Texas) or false religion. They work, toil, and sweat with the hopes of gaining favor with god. Yet all the while, they are strangers of the saving power of Christ.

Many in a desperate search for real inner peace, run from "philosophy to philosophy, from religion to religion, from guru to guru" & from cult to cult. Your search s tops when you come to Jesus!

"Heavy laden" - passive participle describes those who have had someone dump heavy burden on their back.

Perfect tense indicates that the burden which was placed upon them in the past has remained and has had adverse effects on the bearers.

Weariness and heavy burdens are very often the result of **sin**.
"The way of the transgressor is hard" (Prov. 13:15).

EX: Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-24).

Many do not come to Christ until their burden becomes unbearable! (EX: Pilgrim "Pilgrim's Progress")

"And I" = Emphatic in the Greek.--Jesus Himself gives rest.
--He is the exclusive source for rest.

The Lord alone is the One who gives rest -

Ex. 33:14 - "And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

> *I Ki. 8:56 - "Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant."*
>
> *Ps. 37:7 - "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."*

"Will" = rest is a promise
(it is guaranteed)
"Give" = rest is a gift
(it is free; no cost to you; just come!)

"Rest" = to be refreshed; lit. the word means to "pause" or to "cease" from something. It means to find relief from the strain of an unbearable load.

> *"rest"* does not refer to endless slumber or the right to laziness, but to refreshment to your body, soul (mind) & spirit.

How does Jesus give rest?

*He satisfies thirsty souls (Jn. 7:37-39)
*He delivers those who are lost (Lk. 19:10)
*He relieves those who are weighed down by sin
(Jn. 8:11, 36; "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." [v.

36]).
*He undergirds His sheep in His hand (Jn. 10:28-29)

The hymnwriter put it this way: *"O soul, are you weary and troubled? No light in the darkness you see? There's light for a look at the Savior, and life more abundant and free! Turn you eyes upon Jesus . . ."*

"Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling, calling for you and for me; See, on the portals He's waiting and watching, watching for you and for me. Come home, Come home, ye who are weary, come home. Earnestly, tenderly Jesus is calling; calling, O sinner, come home."

No unbeliever will experience God's rest (Heb. 3:11, 18); but those who believe will enter His rest (Heb. 4:1-11; Rev. 14:13).

The eternal plight of the unbeliever will be "No rest day nor night" - forever! (Rev. 14:11).

II. You must <u>YOKE UP</u> with Jesus (Dedication)
("Take My yoke" - v. 29a, 30)

"Take" = lift up, take up

"Yoke" = a yoke was a wooden harness that was used to join (unite) two oxen together so that they would plow a field together in harmony and unity.

ILLUS: A teacher read to her class the text, "My yoke is easy." "Who can tell me what a yoke is?" she asked.

A boy said, "A yoke is something they put on the necks of animals." Then the teacher asked, "What is the yoke God puts on us?" A little girl said, "It is God putting His arms around our necks." (TAN # 6833)

"My yoke" - In contrast to the yokes of bondage and hardship.

EX: Egypt - Lev. 26:13;
Harsh rulers - I Ki. 12:4, 9-14
Legalism - Acts 15:10 (cp. Gal. 5:1)

"Take my yoke" - This is a deeper experience. When we come to Christ by faith, He <u>gives</u> us rest. When we take His yoke and learn, we <u>find</u> rest, that deeper rest of surrender and obedience. The first is "peace <u>with</u> God" (Rom. 5:1); the second is "the peace <u>of</u> God" (Phil. 4:6-8).

You <u>never</u> serve, learn, go through trials, toil, raise children, work a job, etc. <u>alone</u> when you are in the yoke with Christ!

V. 30

"My yoke is <u>easy</u>"-

My yoke is a good yoke, a mild yoke, a pleasant, comfortable yoke, not hard, harsh, sharp, or bitter.

Before the Lord Jesus began His public ministry, He worked as a carpenter and no doubt made wooden yokes, perfect well-fitting yokes that would never gouge an animal.

Many wrongly think that if they yoke up completely with Jesus that life will be unbearable, too many demands, too great a task. Yet such thinking is another lie of the devil to keep people from true commitment.

The yoke of Christ is in contrast to the heavy yokes placed upon the people by the Pharisees and false religious teachers of the day.

Note the following context (ch. 12): "At that time..." (v. 1). The Pharisees use the Sabbath (which was supposed to be a day of rest, joy, and doing good for others) against the Lord who established the Sabbath (v. 2, 10).

On the Sabbath, Jesus provided physical rest to people by allowing his disciples to pick grain to satisfy their hunger (v. 1-8) and by healing a man who was tormented by a withered hand (v. 9-13).

"My burden is light" - Christ does place burdens on us but they are easy to bear! The reason is simple - He is yoked up with us and He bears them for us.

Our present afflictions allowed by Christ for our benefit are light and temporary (II Cor. 4:17-18 - "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are not seen are temporary; but the things which are not seen are eternal.").

The Pharisees burdens were not light (Mt. 23:4) - but Jesus' are!

All of our duties as Christians are blessed and eternally profitable. Any weight put upon us by those responsibilities is balanced with strength that is supplied by the yoke of Christ (cp. Jn. 15:1-5 - "Vine and branches").

ILLUS: "Yoke's Heavier End" (TAN # 5213)

Serving Christ in the flesh is hard work. Perhaps the reason why pastors "burn out" in the ministry is because they have not been in the yoke with Christ.

Doing the will of God, in the yoke of Christ, is not grievous (I Jn. 5:3).

III. You must LEARN from Jesus (Discipleship)
("Learn of Me" - v. 29b)

"Take My yoke and learn" - Jesus is actually quoting a well-known Jewish metaphor for discipline and discipleship - "Put your neck under the yoke, and let your soul receive instruction" (Sir 51:26).

To learn ("mathete") from Jesus is to be His disciple ("mathetes").

Christ alone is the Teacher, who by His person and work can instruct men regarding the Father (cp. v. 25-27) (Wycliffe Bible Comm, p. 949).

"Learn of me" = learn from (apo) me.

True learning takes place in the life of one who is walking each day with Christ.

Note: How people took notice how the unlearned & ignorant fishermen from Galilee had "been with Jesus"

To be like Mary of Bethany and sit at the feet of Jesus is the key to acquiring profound spiritual knowledge (Luke 10:39-42).

True humility is learned only from the Master (Jn. 13:15).

True love is learned only from the Master (Jn. 15:13).

True forgiveness is learned only from the Master (Jn. 8:11; Lk. 23:34, 43).

True peace is learned only from the Master (Jn. 17:33; Jn. 14:1ff).

Lest anyone should be fearful or apprehensive to yoke up with Christ, our Lord gives these words of reassurance -

"For I am meek and lowly in heart."

"Meek" = gentle (Jesus is gentle, not harsh) "He upbraideth not" (Jms. 1:5)

"Lowly" = humble (Jesus is humble enough to yoke up with us, humble enough to personally tutor us. Though He is God [exalted above all], He is humble enough to

associate with the lowest of the low).
"Meek and lowly in heart" - The Hymn - "There's not a Friend Like the Lowly Jesus"

"Ye shall find rest" - the implication is that people are looking for rest but have not found it.

The "securities" of this life (EX: stocks, bonds, savings, insurances, etc.) do not provide real rest.

"My faith has found a resting place, not in device nor creed; I trust the ever living one, His wounds for me shall plead."

"Rest **to your souls"** - Souls (psuchais) = your lives.

The "soul" is the immaterial part of man as it relates to this life**.**

God says in Jer. 31:25, "For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul."

Jesus gives rest!

EX: Hymn, "Moment by Moment" -

> *"Never a trial that He is not there (Mt. 28:20); never a burden that He doth bear (I Cor. 10:13); Never a sorrow that He doth not share (Heb. 4:15), Moment by moment, I'm under His care.*
>
> *"Never a heartache and never a groan, Never a teardrop and never a moan; never a danger but there on the throne; Moment by moment, He thinks of His own." (Rom. 8:34).*

CONCLUSION:

"I have come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10)

Concluding Hymn, Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling.

"CORN ON THE COB AND THE WITHERED HAND"

(A Lesson on What Really Matters in Life)

Matthew 12:1-13

12-17-2017

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus' teaching about the Sabbath shows the true important issues of life.

***Realize what really matters in life!**

I. <u>HUMAN NEED</u> takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 1-4)

II. <u>GOD'S WORSHIP</u> takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 5)

III. <u>SHOWING MERCY</u> takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 7)

IV. <u>JESUS CHRIST</u> takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 6, 8)

V. <u>DOING GOOD</u> takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 9-13)

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IV. _____ **takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 6, 8)**

V. _____ **takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 9-13)**

"CORN ON THE COB AND THE WITHERED HAND"

(A Lesson on What Really Matters in Life)

Matthew 12:1-13

12-17-2017

INTRODUCTION:

"The events recorded in Matthew 12 mark a major turning point in Jesus' ministry, focusing on the rejection of the Messiah by His own people" (MacArthur, p. 280).

On the front page of this account of Christ being rejected by His own people, controversy is stirred up over the matter of the "Sabbath" (v. 1, 10).

V. 1

"The Sabbath day" -

This was Saturday, the seventh day of the week, a day of rest - to cease from work.

Facts about the Sabbath:

1. The Sabbath was based on God's continual rest from His creative work on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2-3; Exod. 31:17)

2. The Sabbath was not a required day of rest until the Law was given by Moses (some 2,500 years after creation) (Exod. 16:23, 20:8-11, 31:12-17).

3. The Sabbath was given specifically to the nation of Israel (Exod. 31:13-17)

4. The Sabbath had 2 primary purposes:

    a. To be a sign of God's unique relationship to Israel (Exod. 31:13, 17). It was also to be a sign of her allegiance to God's covenant (Exod. 31:16; Jer. 17:19-27; Ezek. 20:12-24).

    b. To provide rest (refreshment) for everyone (even animals) in Israel (Exod. 23:12 - *"Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest; that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger may be refreshed."*)

5. The Sabbath law forbade even the building of fires (Exod. 35:1-3) and was punishable by death for those who presumptuously [with willful "high-handedness"] violated it (Num. 15:32-36)

6. The Sabbath law was fulfilled by Christ (Mt. 5:17, 18) and apparently completed, abolished and set aside by Christ at His death.

Proof:

a. The Sabbath was "a shadow (type) of the things that were to come (i.e. the eternal rest - Heb. 4:9-10); the reality, however, is found in Christ" (Col. 2:17).

b. Christ nailed such ordinances to the cross (Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:15).

c. The civil and ceremonial aspects of the Law were done away with at the cross (Heb. 9-10).

d. Paul calls the observation of days and months and times and years (references to the Sabbath and O.T. Jewish holidays) a return to *"weak and beggarly elements"* that resulted only in bondage (Gal. 4:9, 10).

e. The New Testament teaches that it is not God's requirement *"to esteem one day above another"* (Rom. 14:5); it is a matter of Christian liberty.

f. The Sabbath is no where required in the N.T. (especially not in places where such a command would be expected - EX: The Jerusalem Council - Acts 15).

7. Sunday is not the Sabbath, but was a day set apart by the early Church in commemoration of the Lord's resurrection (Lk. 24:1; Jn. 20:19), to gather for corporate worship (I Cor. 16:2) and the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:20).

Sunday received the technical title: The Lord's Day - Rev. 1:10

We pattern our Sunday church gathering after the early Church's example.

8. Though the Church is under no Law of God to do so, it is wise to rest one day in seven.

SEE MacArthur page 282 for a long list of added rules and regulations restricting Sabbath

activity.

The Sabbath instead of being a day of rest "had become a day of incredible burden. Because of the thousands of man-made restrictions regarding it, the Sabbath was more tiresome than the six days devoted to one's occupation. It was harder to 'rest' than to earn a living." (MacArthur, p. 281).

Beware of cultural or traditional additions to God's Word. All additions end up nullifying it (Mt. 15:3, 6).

"Legalist" = one who imposes additions to God's Word on other people; one how makes requirements for salvation or spirituality that God has not made.

Jesus' teaching about the Sabbath shows the true important issues of life.

***Realize what really matters in life!**

I. HUMAN NEED takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 1-4)

V. 1

As the disciples pulled corn off the stalks, it was not a business endeavor. It was not plucking the ears of corn to sell but *"to eat"*

***"Pluck the ears of corn"* -** the Law allowed an Israelite to go into someone else's vineyard and eat grapes till he was full, but not to carry any home in a basket. Also, he could go into a neighbor's corn field and pluck ears of corn to satisfy his hunger but could not use a sickle to cut down corn so as to unjustly steal and make a business from his neighbor's corn (Deut. 23:24-25). The Law allowed people to satisfy a day's hunger by taking what was needed, but did not allow the person to plunder his neighbor's field.

V. 2

***"Thy disciples"* -** Apparently Jesus, so as to avoid wrong accusations made against Him, did not eat the corn His disciples did.

***"Thy disciples"* -** One way to discredit someone is to employ the tactic of guilt by

association.

The Pharisees wanted to knock Jesus by knocking those who were closely associated with Him. Sometimes, people will attack you; but their real motive is to attack Christ.

The Pharisees wrongly accused the disciples of working on the Sabbath, when in fact they were not working, but eating to satisfy their hunger.

V. 3

"Have ye not read" - Jesus puts them on the spot by appealing to their ignorance.

NOTE: Christ's authority is the Word of God. He authenticates I Samuel by citing I Sam. 21:1-6.

V. 4

"The house of God" - the Tabernacle

The ***"shewbread"*** or ***"bread of the Presence"*** was twelve loaves of bread (representing the 12 tribes of Israel) that were brought to the house of God as an offering before God's presence, to show appreciation for His provision. Every Sabbath the loaves would be changed, and the old loaves became food for the priests.

"Not lawful. . . but only for the priests" - the Law said that these special loaves of bread were for the priests to eat (Lev. 24:5-9). The priests would only eat the "week old" bread; after it sat for a week on a special table in the presence of God as a memorial.

Certain civil or ceremonial laws at certain occasions can be temporarily set aside in order to fulfill the higher laws of human need (EX: civil law. Speed limits are broken by ambulance drivers to rush a critical patient to the hospital; policemen can go through red lights and stop signs to respond to emergencies).

Jesus is teaching that human need supersedes mere ritual and ceremony.

Too often, organized Christianity fails to reach out to people and their needs by putting ritual, order, form, and rules ahead of the needs of people.

Too often, we act as though. . .

--man exists for rules and rituals, instead of rules and rituals existing for man

--man exists for religion, instead of religion existing for man

--man exists for church services instead of church services existing for man

--man lives for maintaining the organizations, instead of the organization existing for the spiritual well-being of man.

EX: To miss a church service because you were right in the middle of sharing the Gospel with a receptive, lost, needy sinner is totally justified.

II. <u>GOD'S WORSHIP</u> takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 5)

How do the priests *"profane the Sabbath"*? They continue their <u>work</u> of offering sacrifices to God!

"The ministering priests had to light the altar fires, kill the sacrificial animals, and then lift up the carcasses and place them on the altar. Sacrifices on the Sabbath were, in fact, <u>double</u> sacrifices, requiring twice the work of the normal daily sacrifice (Num. 28:9-10; cf. Lev. 24:8-9) (MacArthur, p. 286).

The weekly day of rest was forfeited by the priests so that they could serve God! Some things are more important than rest! Service to God is one of them.

III. <u>SHOWING MERCY</u> takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 7)

The added restrictive Sabbath rules were part of the *"sacrifice"* Jesus referred to.

Ahead of any of our sacrifices to God must come mercy to other people (Hos. 6:6).

Sacrifice without mercy is hypocrisy. If one shows that he loves God (whom he has not seen) by offering Him a sacrifice, yet does not love people (whom he has seen) by neglecting to show mercy, what kind of love is that? (I Jn. 4:20).

God does not want the sacrifices of the disobedient. *"To obey is better than sacrifice"* (I Sam. 15:22).

Hebrews 13:16 - *"But to do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."*

Micah 6:8 - *"He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doeth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"*

"Ye would not have condemned [judged] the guiltless" - the "guiltless" were the disciples, who did not wrong to pluck and eat corn on the Sabbath.

Jesus is saying that David did wrong, but you do not condemn him for it; my disciples did not do wrong and yet you condemn them.

IV. JESUS CHRIST takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 6, 8)

V. 6

To a Jew in Jesus' day, the only thing greater than the Temple was God. They were no doubt infuriated by Christ's claim to such greatness.

Jesus is greater than the Temple!

Why? He is the God who instituted the Temple and its worship. He is the Glory who filled the Temple. And He as God is the Deity who was worshipped via the Temple!

Jesus is greater than all! (Hebrews)

He is greater than the prophet Jonah (Mt. 12:41).

He is greater than King Solomon (Mt. 12:42).

V. 8

In declaring Himself ***"Lord of the Sabbath"*** Jesus was actually affirming equality with God; for God has established the Sabbath (Gen. 2:1-3).

Jesus being "Lord of the Sabbath" has the right to:

1) Teach us its true purpose

2) Elevate more important matters above it

3) Do away with it (like He did on the cross)

The main point is that Jesus is more important than the Sabbath.

Sometimes people can get so involved in the machinery of the work of the Lord that they forget the Lord of the work!

If things are not done "just so" (precisely as we had planned), we get all bent out of shape and view ourselves as failures, when really what mattered was: "Was Christ glorified?"

V. DOING GOOD takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 9-13)

V. 10

They are asking Him if it was not a violation of the Law to practice medicine on the Sabbath.

"Rabbinic tradition, not the O.T. Law, forbade practicing medicine on the Sabbath unless the person were on the verge of death" (Ryrie)

If Jesus were making money for healing, it would be wrong to practice such a business on the Sabbath. However, His works were works of charity with no enterprising motives.

V. 11

John 7:23 - *"If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken, are ye angry with me, because i have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day?"*

Jesus again shows the Pharisees the inconsistencies of their religious viewpoints.

The Jewish Rabbinical Law evidently for economic reasons allowed this rescue of a sheep on the Sabbath.

Rescuing one of their sheep from a pit would not be considered work, yet they had the audacity to accuse Christ of wrong doing for rescuing a man from deformity.

V. 10

Secular ancient history tells us that this man was a carpenter who formerly made a living with his hands but not had to beg for food in shame (The Gospel according to the Hebrews, cited by William Barclay).

V. 12

Sometimes people treat human beings with less respect than they do their animals.

(EX: Hinduism, which regards the cow as sacred, giving all it the food it wants while multitudes starve)
People are of more value than animals because they were created in the "image

and likeness of God," and possess a spirit that can commune with God and will live on forever.

Mark 3:4 - *"And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? To save life, or to kill? But they held their peace."*

V. 13

***"Stretch forth"* -** This was an action the man could not do, but by faith he did it, and by faith he was cured.

The arm was cured so well that you could not tell the difference between it and the other one.

CONCLUSION:

Lessons:

1. The time is always right to do right.

2. Human needs are more important than religious ritual (true religion is practical first and foremost - James 1:27)

3. Man was not created for the Sabbath, rather the Sabbath was created for man's benefit (Mk. 2:27).

4. Legalism and Christianity are incompatible (whenever someone adds to God's Word, the addition is sure to conflict with God's will)). Beware of making laws and standards that God has not made.

"BEHOLD, MY SERVANT"

Matthew 12:14-21
1/7/2018

INTRODUCTION:

***Seriously look at Christ's example of servanthood and copy that pattern.**

I. He was <u>PLEASING</u> to the Father (V. 18a)

II. He was <u>EMPOWERED</u> by the Spirit (v. 18b)

III. He was <u>PROMOTED</u> by Humility (v. 19)

IV. He was <u>CHARACTERIZED</u> by Gentleness (v. 20)

V. He was <u>CONCERNED</u> for all Nations (v. 18c, 21)

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"BEHOLD, MY SERVANT"

Matthew 12:14-21
1/7/2018

INTRODUCTION: Read: **Matthew 12:14-21**

Hundreds of years before the Messiah would come into the world, God, via the prophet Isaiah, made this prediction:

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."
Isaiah 42:1-7

"The dominant figure of Isaiah 40 - 53 is the 'Servant of the Lord.' Up to chapter 53, the term 'servant' occurs twnety times in the singular" (Walter Kaiser Jr., The Messiah in the Old Testament, p. 173).

Isaiah 42 is one of five "servant" passages or "servant songs" in Isaiah, the others being:

--49:1-13
--50:4-9
--52:13-53:12
--61:1-3

Most ancient rabbis saw Isaiah 42 as being Messianic, such as Rabbi David Kimchi, who said, "This is King Messiah."

Jesus is the fulfillment of Isaiah 42!

See: Matthew 12:14-21

V. 14

Note: Previous Context: The miracle of healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath Day (stirred up opposition to Jesus by the religious sect known as the Pharisees)

"The Pharisees" - No one opposes the truth more fiercely than someone who, in self-righteousness, actually thinks they are defending God and His truth to do so (EX: Saul of Tarsus).

The Church's most severe opposition in the past came not from the atheists or agnostics but from the hands of the religious (EX: Jihadist Islam, Radical Hindus, and the Roman Catholic Church back in the days of the Inquisitions).

"Council" - to plot together; to scheme; to make a conspiracy against. This conspiracy occurred 2 years before Christ's crucifixion.

"How they might destroy Him" - The Pharisees already had determined that they would kill Jesus; now their problem was how they would do it.

V. 15

"Jesus knew it" - He is omniscient.

"He withdrew Himself" - Jesus was not interested in fighting or in wasting his time and energy defending Himself, but in reaching the lost world with the truth.

"He healed them all" - One validation of Christ's miracle power and deity is that no case was too hard for Him. His divine power was proven to be authentic (real) by His ability to *"cure all manner of sickness"* (Mt. 4:23).

Note the Compassion of Christ: Jesus could have done a number of things to prove His deity & power. He could have flown around Jerusalem; He could have removed & relocated buildings etc. but rather He chose to prove His power by performing compassionate miracles.

V. 16

"Charged" -to seriously warn. Why would Jesus so sternly warn people not to publicize who He was and what He did? Why didn't Jesus hire a staff of public relations personnel? Why didn't He promote Himself? Why wasn't He like modern presidents, who spend millions on campaigning and promotional rallies?

The reasons are these:

1. He was to fulfill all Old Testament prophecies concerning Himself, including a prophecy which described Christ's low profile, humble character. He was to accomplish a prophetic statement made through Isaiah which described certain features of Christ's attitude and actions (Is. 42:1-4).

2. He needed to reach the Gentile multitudes (and not be taken and made King of the Jews only).

Matthew in referring to Isaiah 42 does not quote it verbatim, but rather gives a paraphrase of that prophecy in order to highlight certain features of it.

V. 18

"Behold my Servant" - These words were spoken by God the Father of His Son.

Jesus is frequently called *"servant"* in the Bible:

Is. 52:13 - *"Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high."*

Zech. 3:8 - *"Hear now, o Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH."*

Fulfilment: Matthew 20:27-28 – "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Note the humble servanthood of Jesus Christ described in: Philippians 2:5-8
"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

What is servitude?
What is a servant?

Look at Messiah and see!

"Behold" - look at, view, see

Today, we need to take a look at Jesus, the <u>Servant</u> of the Father, and compare ourselves with Him to see what kind of servants we are.

We as Christians (Christ-like ones) need to follow in "His steps." (I Pet. 2:21)

***Seriously look at Christ's example of servanthood and copy that pattern.**

I. He was PLEASING to the Father (V. 18a)

"I have chosen" - It was the Father who, as Head of the Triune Godhead, chose to send His Son into the world (cp. Jn. 3:16; I Jn. 4:14 - *"And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world"*).

Christ is called "the beloved" (Eph. 1:6) to show the intimate relationship between Him and the Father. Jesus is the unique, special object of His love.

NOTE: *"Servant"* = "pais" - not a usual word for servant (like "diakonos" or "doulos"). This word describes "an intimate servant who was trusted and loved like a Son" (MacArthur, p. 297).

Though Jesus is hated and rejected by the world, He is beloved by the Father.

Though the world with it's "Pharisees" is not pleased with Jesus, the Father is well pleased.

Lesson: It matters not if people are pleased with you, but whether God is pleased.

"In whom my soul is well pleased" - These words were fulfilled at Christ's baptism and anointing of the Spirit (mt. 3:16-17).

Not only at His baptism, but also on the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter remembered how "*He (jesus Christ) received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*" (II Pet. 1:17).

"Those who are (without Christ) in the flesh cannot please God" **(Ro. 8:8)** but God is well pleased with His Son, so that if you are in the Son, God is well-pleased with you. No one can please God independently of Christ.

A true servant does not do his own independent will (what he wants) but he wants to do the will of the One he serves. This is the way Jesus was (Mt. 26:29; Jn. 6:38 - *"For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will,b ut the will of him that sent me."*; Jn. 4:34 - *"Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."*)

"Then said I, Lo, I come, (in the volume of the Book it is written of me) to do Thy will, God" (Heb. 10:7).

II. He was <u>EMPOWERED</u> by the Spirit (v. 18b)

The Messiah's anointing with the Holy Sprit is a reaffirmation of Isaiah 11:2, which states:

> And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;
> *Isaiah 11:2*

If Jesus is God, why does He need the Spirit? This question reveals the depth of Christ's humility & condescension.

"I will put my Spirit upon Him" - When Jesus became incarnate, He even forfeited the Spirit's power until His baptism (30 years old). When He was anointed by the Holy Spirit, He did His miracles via the Spirit. The Spirit came upon Him to divinely enable Him to perform His great mission and awesome miracles.

Luke 4:18-19 - *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (a quote of Isaiah 61:1)*

"God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power" (Acts 10:38).

Unlike every other servant of God (who had a restricted measure of the Spirit's power), it is said that *"God giveth <u>not</u> the Spirit by <u>measure</u> unto Him (Jesus)"* (Jn. 3:34).

> This is why the blasphemy against the Spirit is such an offense to Yahweh. Because Yahweh predicted that He would put His Spirit upon the Messiah, and then the Pharisees were interpreting this Spirit as the satanic power of Beelzebub (Mt. 12:24)

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is a willful and continual denial concerning the Spirit's testimony of the person and work of Jesus the Messiah.

One reason God puts His Spirit into God's servants is to equip them to do just what He calls them to do (cp. Rom. 12:5-8; I Cor. 12:7-11, 27:31; Eph. 4:11-16).

If Jesus (while incarnate) relied upon the Holy Spirit for power, how much more do you and I need His Spirit?

"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord"

Are we controlled by the Holy Spirit?

III. He was <u>PROMOTED</u> by Humility (v. 19)

"Strive" - to quarrel or wrangle.

Isaiah 42:2 - ***"Lift up" –*** context – to Lift up one's self; to exalt one's self. Jesus made it a point not to promote Himself but to let His life and actions speak for themselves. He did not have to go around saying, "I am Yahweh."

His persecutors would ask: “Are you the Christ (Messiah)” to which Jesus would respond: “It is as you have said”

"Voice" - To call aloud with self-proclamation.

"Cry" - to cry out in a loud voice; to scream excitedly.

"The term was sometimes used of a dog's barking, a raven's squawking, and even a drunk's bawling" (MacArthur, p. 299).

"Streets" - wide streets

It is interesting that Jesus did not go looking for the multitudes in the streets, but the multitudes came looking for Him! They sought Him out! His fame spread throughout the land without any public relations manager, promo ads, or marketing team.

Jesus did not rant and rave, hoot and holler, or foam at the mouth as He preached. He did not seek to arouse the emotions and use persuasive gimmicks or intimidating rhetoric so as to agitate His hearers and pressure them into a response that was devoid of rational understanding and the free exercise of their will.

Jesus did not waste His time arguing, quarrelling or debating, nor did He loudly challenge and react against His opposition. (Jesus would never appear on the late night shows of today)

He did not brawl; He never created an uproar in the streets. He did not lead civil rights marches, nor did He come in the pomp and ceremony which the people expected of the Messiah. Even when He did make His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on that Palm Sunday, He would humbly ride in on a donkey! Fulfilling Zechariah 9:9.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.
Zechariah 9:9; note the fulfillment in Matthew 21:2-7

If you want to be an influential communicator, if you want to get your message of righteousness across, remember that "the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." *James 3:18*

"And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Is. 32:17).

"The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools" (Eccl. 9:17; cp. I Cor. 2:1-4).

"A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. 15:1).

The humility of the divine Servant:

For whether *is* greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? *is* not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.
Luke 22:27

God's Servant Messiah would be noted for humility!

IV. He was CHARACTERIZED by Gentleness (v. 20)

"Bruised reed" - a battered reed which was ready to crack and fall down.

"One of the most obvious legacies of the Fall is man's natural tendency to destroy. Small children will often step on a bug just for the sake of killing it, or snap off a beautiful bud just before it flowers. A tree branch is broken for the sake of breaking it, and a stone is thrown at a bird just to see it fly away or fall to the ground" (MacArthur, p. 300).

Jesus would not injure those who were already injured.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Mt. 11:29).

"***Smoking flax"*** - a dimly lit wick (made of flax of the plant and used in a lamp).

Jesus saw lives that were just barely hanging on; people whose life was just dimly lit and ready to go out. He would not extinguish such people. Rather, He would gently deal with the woman at the well; He would in a gentle manner minister to the woman caught in adultery; He would graciously speak to the thief hanging next to Him on the cross.

The Lord Jesus came the first time as a meek and lowly lamb.

Such a gentle spirit will not characterize His second coming, when He appears as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah to judge His adversaries in the Day of the Lord.

The bruised reed (ready to snap) and the smoking flax (ready to go out) illustrate the lost, depraved, sinful people of Christ's day, who deserved the wrath of God, but did not receive it at Christ's first coming.

Christ came not to condemn the world but to save it (Jn. 3:17).

Note, however, that Christ's gentle, uncondemning manner will last "till (until) He send forth judgment unto victory (conquest)" He will send forth righteousness leading to His ultimate conquest at His second coming.

V. He was <u>CONCERNED</u> for all Nations (v. 18c, 21)

"Shew" - to announce or proclaim

"Judgment" - righteousness

Jesus showed the world what true righteousness was in the Sermon on the Mount (mt. 5-7).

The fact that Jesus distinguished what was right from what was wrong, shows that there are <u>moral absolutes</u>. (Truth is not relative).

The fact that He preached righteousness to the Gentiles shows that His principles apply to all people (not limited to a particular group or race; Christianity is not just the white man’s religion, nor merely the religion of the USA).

> **Isaiah 42:1** - ***“to the Gentiles (the Nations)” - the Goyim***
> The fact that He preached righteousness to the Gentiles shows that His principles apply to all people (not limited to a particular group or race).
>
> "Contrary to the thinking and expectations of most Jews, the Messiah was to be the Redeemer of the whole world, <u>not</u> just of Israel" (MacArthur, p. 298).
>
> The promise to Abraham was that through his (Messiah’s) seed *"all the nations of the earth would be blessed"* (Gen. 12:3).
>
> ***Isaiah 42:4 – “the isles shall wait for his law” –*** From the Islands in the remotest parts of the earth the Gentile world has embraced Him as Messiah. Today, many remote places of the earth are standing ready to hear the Gospel message. What a great missionary statement: "The isles shall wait for His law" (the Messiah's word).
>
> Note: The word “isles” is translated as “gentiles” by Matthew in 12:21.

"In His <u>name</u>" - there is no salvation in any other name than that of *"Jesus"* (Acts 4:12).

It was always God's plan that the Gospel reach from the "uttermost to the guttermost."

Ps. 22:27 - *"All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee."*

Ps. 86:9 - *"All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name."*

Is. 9:2 - *"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."*

Isaiah 42:6 - "for a light of the Gentiles" – The Messiah would be the source of illumination to the Goyim (the Nations of the earth).

Messiah being a light to the Gentiles is a repeated theme in Isaiah.
See: **Isaiah 9:1-2, 6,7**

Mt 4:16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

****Needed: A Right Theology and Anthropology**

In God's eyes, all lines of distinction, all supposed marks of superiority are non-existent.

"For there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. 2:11).

Jesus did not show partiality. Even His enemies admitted: "Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men." (Matt. 22:16b)

a. God shows no partiality in judging men
(Rom. 2:9-11 - "Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God.")

b. God shows no partiality in describing men (Rom. 3:9-23)
(Rom.3:9-10-"What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.")

****Needed: A Right Soteriology**

God shows no partiality in saving men (Rom. 3:24-31).

Gal. 3:26-28 - "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

All races are accepted by God and saved on an equal level (Gal. 3:26-28).

Do you view yourself as a debtor to all people (indebted to reach all with the Gospel)?

Rom. 1:14 - "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise."

All races are equal in the Body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13).

SHATTER THE BARRIER OF <u>RACIAL</u> SUPREMACY
(God's people must extol <u>righteousness</u> over <u>race</u>)
(Key Text: Acts 10:9-48)

Jew and Gentile are equal in the body of Christ. (Rom. 2:11 - *"For there is no respect of persons with God."*) God does not show racial favoritism (nor should we!) (v. 34)

No servant of God can tolerate the sin of racial discrimination in his life.

Jesus is an "equal opportunity" Savior!

CONCLUSION:

Christ's servanthood:

1. **He was <u>PLEASING</u> to the Father (V. 18a)**
2. **He was <u>EMPOWERED</u> by the Spirit (v. 18b)**
3. **He was <u>PROMOTED</u> by Humility (v. 19)**
4. **He was <u>CHARACTERIZED</u> by Gentleness (v. 20)**
5. **He was <u>CONCERNED</u> for all Nations (v. 18c, 21)**

True servanthood requires the humility to do even the lowest of service for others (EX: Jesus washing the disciples' feet - SEE: Jn. 13:14-17).

Are we a servant like Christ? He is our model.

"THE UNPARDONABLE SIN"

(Blasphemy Against the Spirit)

Matthew 12:22-33

1/14/2018

INTRODUCTION:

***Beware of the unpardonable sin; understand what blasphemy against the Spirit is.**

I. The Miracle that <u>Occasioned</u> the Blasphemy (v. 22-24)

II. The Message that <u>Refuted</u> the Blasphemy (v. 25-30)

A. The <u>devil</u> would not <u>destroy</u> his own work (v. 25-26)

B. <u>Others</u> have performed <u>exorcisms</u> by God's power (v. 27)

C. Christ is <u>stronger</u> than Satan (v. 28-29)

D. You cannot be <u>neutral</u> toward Christ (v. 30)

III. The Message that <u>Warned Against</u> the Blasphemy (v. 31-33)

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(Blasphemy Against the Spirit)

Matthew 12:22-33

1/14/2018

INTRODUCTION:

The whole Bible bears testimony to this wonderful and glorious truth: God desires to and is able to forgive sin:

Ps. 86:5 - For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Ps. 103:3 - Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

Dan. 9:9 - To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him;

Ex. 34:6-7 - And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin . . .

Mic. 7:18-19 - Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Eph. 1:7 - In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

1 Jn. 1:9 - If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 Jn. 2:12 - I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

But is there a sin that is unforgiveable? Unpardonable?

Is there a kind of sin that is beyond the mercy and grace of God?

READ: Mt. 12:31-32

The "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" is often misunderstood and misapplied. Many live in terror, fearing that they may have commmitted this hideous sin.

***Beware of the unpardonable sin; understand what blasphemy against the Spirit is.**

I. The Miracle that Occasioned the Blasphemy (v. 22-24)

V. 22

"Possessed" - to be inhabited and controlled by a demon (fallen angel)

"Blind and dumb" - the demon affected his ability to see and speak. The evil spirit veiled his eyes and tied up his tongue.

Satan (and his host of wicked demons) have power (ability), if allowed by God, to afflict with physical injury.

EX: Job (Job 2:7 - *"So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.")*

Paul (II Cor. 12:7 - *"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.")*

However, they cannot possess a believer.
An evil spirit cannot co-exist in the same vessel which houses the Holy Spirit.

"He healed him" - When Jesus heals, He completely heals. The stronghold which Satan held was immediately liberated by the Son of God.

Such miraculous power, performed by the power of the Holy Spirit (v. 28) was for the purpose of validating, proving, authenticating Jesus as the promised Messiah (*"the Son of David"* - v. 23).

V. 24

The Pharisees were not present when the miracle was performed, but they quickly caught wind of it and dismissed it.

"This fellow" - lit. this one. They did not even give Jesus the respect of calling Him by name.

"Beelzebub" - the arch fallen angel; the "lord" of the filthy host of evil spirits; Satan himself (v. 26)

The Pharisees could not deny the reality of the miracle itself (as all of Christ's miracles were irrefutably bonified), so they denied the source of the miracle.

The Pharisees did not agree with Nicodemus' evaluation of Christ's miracles (Jn. 3:2).

The Pharisees' goal was to poison the minds of the people against Christ.

II. The Message that Refuted the Blasphemy (v. 25-30)

A. The devil would not destroy his own work (v. 25-26)

V. 25

"Jesus knew their thoughts" - Jesus being omniscient knew the wicked thoughts of the Pharisees

To refute the Pharisees claim, the Lord gives an illustration to show how inconsistent, how absurd it would be for Beelzebub to cast out demons. Satan would be working against himself.

Where there is not unity, there will be destruction.

Three aspects of civilization cannot exist where there is division (schism):

--a kingdom (nation)
--a city
--a house (family)

V. 26

By casting out the demon, Jesus was destroying one part of the devil's work.

Satan would not destroy his own work. He would not fight against his own purpose.

B. Others have performed exorcisms by God's power (v. 27)

V. 27

Jesus again shows the inconsistency of the Pharisees' accusation by appealing to their descendants (***"relatives")*** who perform exorcisms.

C. Christ is stronger than Satan (v. 28-29)

V. 28

Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit at His baptism (Mt. 3:16). He then performed all of His miraculous works by the power of the Holy Spirit (mt. 4:1; Mk. 1:12; Lk. 4:1, 18; Jn. 3:34; Acts 1:2; Ro. 1:4).

And Christ did not have the Spirit's power in a limited portion (*"He giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him")*.

The Kingdom of God exists wherever the King is.
If Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit, and if by that Spirit He performed miracles, then He must be the Messiah as prophesied by Isaiah:

Is. 11:2 - *"And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord"*

Is. 61:1 - *"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.").*

The Pharisees forfeited God's kingdom because they rejected God's King - Jesus Christ.

V. 29
Jesus could not order a demon to leave a man, unless He was stronger (more powerful and more authoritative) than that demon.

The truth is, no demon is any match for Jesus Christ.

"Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world"

D. You cannot be <u>neutral</u> toward Christ (v. 30)

V. 30
There are only <u>two groups</u> of people in this world

--Those who are <u>with</u> . . . <u>against</u>
--Those who <u>gather</u> . . . <u>scatter</u>

You have one of two relationships with Christ.

Those who are "with" Christ -
1) Believe in Him
2) Submit to Him
3) Obey Him
4) Follow Him

No one is neutral toward Christ. People are either with Him (on His side) or against Him.

You are either working in harmony and unity with Christ or you are doing the devil's work.
"It is not necessary to oppose Christ in order to be against Him; it is only necessary not to be with Him." (MacArthur, p. 311).

III. The Message that Warned Against the Blasphemy (v. 31-33)

V. 31

"All manner of sin" - God is able to forgive any and ever sin (I Cor. 6:9-11).

Even *"blasphemy"* (to defame or speak evil of God) is forgivable (EX: Paul - I Tim. 1:13-14).

V. 32

Mark 3:30 specifically reveals what the blasphemy against the Spirit is: It is to attribute the Spirit's work in Christ to Satan. It is to accuse Jesus of performing His miracles by the power of an unclean Spirit.

NOTE: Because Christ is not with us in the flesh performing miracles today, this sin cannot be committed in the same sense that the Pharisees committed it.

Definition of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit:

In the context of Christ's day, the unpardonable sin is:
To Attribute the Holy Spirit's work in Christ to a demonic spirit (by Satan)
(SEE: Mark 3:30)

In our day, the unpardonable sin is:
"The willful, continued denial of the Holy Spirit's testimony concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ."

How do you know if you are committing the unpardonable sin?

Answer this: Are you accusing Jesus of having an unclean (demonic) spirit? (Mk. 3:30).

Can this sin of "blaspheming the Spirit" be committed today in any sense? Yes, because of this reason:

> The Holy Spirit's ministry is to bear witness to Christ (John 15:26) and to convict lost sinners (John 16:7-11).
>
> When someone rejects that testimony (and resists the Holy Spirit) and dies in that state, they have no chance of forgiveness.

V. 33

The good fruit of Christ's life proved that what He did, He did by the power of the Holy Spirit and not by Satan.

"YOUR WORDS ARE A MIRROR OF YOUR HEART"

Matthew 12:34-37
1/21/2018

INTRODUCTION:

***Examine your words to evaluate your heart.**

Five reasons why you should evaluate your words:

I. Your Words Expose Your True <u>NATURE</u> (v. 34a)

II. Your Words Expose What is Deep Down in Your <u>HEART</u> (v. 34b)

III. Your Words Expose Your True <u>CHARACTER</u> (whether good or bad) (v. 35)

IV. Your Words Will be Exposed in the <u>JUDGMENT</u> (v. 36)

V. Your Words Will Expose Your <u>CONDITION</u> and <u>ETERNAL DESTINY</u> (v. 37)

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III. Your Words Expose Your True _____ (whether good or bad) (v. 35)

IV. Your Words Will be Exposed in the _____ (v. 36)

V. Your Words Will Expose Your _____ and _____ _____ (v. 37)

"YOUR WORDS ARE A MIRROR OF YOUR HEART"

Matthew 12:34-37

1/21/2018

INTRODUCTION:

In the context, the Pharisees have used their tongues to blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

Definition of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit:

In the context of Christ's day: The Pharisees said that the Holy Spirit's work in Christ was done by as demonic spirit (Satan) (SEE: Mark 3:30)

In our day, what is the unpardonable sin? "The willful, continued denial of the testimony of the Holy Spirit concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ."

Such blasphemy revealed the condition of their heart and the destiny of their souls.

In the process of exposing the sin of the Pharisees, Jesus exposes the root of every person's problem: their heart.

***Examine your words to evaluate your heart.**

Five reasons why you should evaluate your words:

I. Your Words Expose Your True NATURE (v. 34a)

Christ can speak so strongly because He is God. His evaluation and judgment of the Pharisees was just.

No one could ever accuse Jesus of being weak, quiet, and unassuming.

Jesus did not shy away from exposing error and confronting sin.

Fear of "offending" should not keep believers from exposing evil.

"When in the name of love and humility, we fail to expose religions, cults, and philosophies that give men false spiritual hope or we fail to challenge those who promote irreverence and moral filth, we serve neither love nor humility, but sin." (MacArthur, p. 317).

"Generation of vipers" - offspring of snakes; brood of vipers. Jesus boldly calls the Pharisees the product of snakes (cp. Mt. 3:7; 23:33).

In this figure of speech, Jesus in effect is calling them cursed children of evil and deception. The venom of their unbelieving ancestors has flowed into their lives.

The reference to snakes would identify these religious hypocrites with Satan the "Serpent."

Just as the poisonous venom of vipers is dangerous, deceptive and deadly, so the evil false accusations made by the Pharisees toward Jesus was a poison to those who would be bitten by these false teachers. "When someone reached into the woodpile of religion, thinking to pick up a stick of truth, he could be bitten to death by those soul-damning liars" (MacArthur, p. 318).

"Being evil" - This speaks of their evil nature (which we all possess) (same phrase is in Matt. 7:11 - *"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"*) (cp. Lk. 11:13)

People do what they do because of what they <u>are</u>. People say what they say because it is their nature to say such.

- Fish swim because it is their nature to do so.
- Monkeys climb because it is their nature to do so.
- Birds fly because it is their nature to do so.
- Lions roar because it is their nature to do so.
- Mosquitoes sting because it is their nature to do so.

- People sin because it is their nature to do so.

We all from conception (Ps. 51:5) inherited a sin nature from our father Adam (Ro. 5:12) (Ps. 58:3 - *"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."*)

Just as it is impossible for a thorn bush to produce grapes (Mt. 7:16; Ja. 3:12), so it is impossible for an evil person to consistently speak good.

"It is by our conversation at <u>unguarded</u> moments that we reveal our true character" (Wiersbe, p. 43).

II. Your Words Expose What is Deep Down in Your <u>HEART</u> (v. 34b)

"The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart"

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it" (Jer 17:9)

The connection between the mouth and the heart is not some new teaching that began with Christ in the New Testament. Psalm 19:14 says: *"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."*

Solomon said that all matters of human life flow out of the heart (Prov. 4:23 - *"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."*)

"Out of the abundance of the heart" - lit. out of the overflow of the heart. That which fills the heart is sure to spill out of the drain of the mouth.

Everyone's heart has an abundance of something. People generally talk about that which they spend the most time thinking about.

The heart fills up with a certain thing (whether good or bad) and the mouth vents that which preoccupies the heart.

--What a person talks about reveals what he thinks about -- and what he thinks about reveals where his heart is.

The mouth is a spokesman for the heart. The mouth simply verbalizes the heart.

The putrefied scum that flows out of people's lips comes from the cesspool of their heart.

The contents of a defiled and dirty heart bubble out of the sewer of the mouth (SEE: Mt. 15:18-19).

SEE: MacArthur, p. 319

III. Your Words Expose Your True <u>CHARACTER</u> (whether good or bad) (v. 35)

This verse is an illustration of the statement Jesus made in v. 34.

His point is this: The good thoughts and motives which are collected, fathered, or stored up in the heart of a good man will produce good words; whereas the evil thoughts and motives which are stored up in the heart of an evil man will spill out evil words.

Many times people may give a false impression of what they think of you. However, when "their pump is primed" their words reveal what was really in their heart all the time.

"Treasure" - Greek *thesauros* means treasury or storehouse; and is the term from which we get the English Thesaurus, a treasury of words.

A person's heart is the treasury of his thoughts, ambitions, desires, loves, attitudes, and loyalties. It is the reservoir from which the mouth draws its expressions. (MacArthur, p. 319)

"A good man" - a good man is good not because he was born that way but because he was born again to become that way. The imputed and imparted righteousness of God is desperately needed by all since the Bible states, *"there is none good, but one, that is God*" (Mt. 19:17). *"There is none righteous"* (Rom. 3:10). *"For all have sinned"* (Ro. 3:23). *"There is not a just man upon earth"* (Ecc. 7:20).

How do you measure the heart of someone or your own heart? By how they (you) speak.

The barometer of the heart is read by the words of your lips. The content of the heat is clearly manifested by what you say and how you say it.

How does your tongue measure up? What kind of words do you speak at home, work, etc.?

"What we do is due to our heart."

IV. Your Words Will be Exposed in the JUDGMENT (v. 36)

"Idle" - when a car idles, it does nothing but waste gas.

This word "idle" (*argos)* refers to speech that is worthless, ineffective, unproductive and unfruitful. It is speech that does nothing -- that is nothing of any value (As God measures the value of our words).

What words would be considered "idle"?

1) Lying words (falsehood)
2) Hypocritical words (flattery)
3) Immoral words (vulgarity)
4) Cutting words (harsh, cruel, mean talk and gossip)
5) Careless words (vanity, foolish, verbosity)

The fact that we will give account for our words tells me this:

1) God hears every word we speak (Ps. 139:4 - *"For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, oh Lord, thou knowest it altogether."*)

2) God records every word we speak

3) My words are important to God

   Many justify lies, rage, gossip, foolish jesting, coarse speech, etc. on the grounds that talk is not important (after all, it does not physically injure someone)

4) I will answer to God for the content of what I say

God's inerasable records have a preserved listing of every word you have ever said.

"In the day of judgment" -There is a day when you will stand before God (Heb. 9:27).

--For the believer, it will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ (I Cor. 3; II Cor. 5)

--For the unbeliever it will be at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15)

God expects us to: *"speak the truth in love"* (Eph. 4:15) --
"speak" = a method of our communication
"the truth" = the content of our communication
"in love" = the manner of our communication

We must never blow up with our tongue (Eph. 4:26-31), but must always build up with our tongue (Eph. 4:29; cp. Col. 4:6).

WARNING: Evil speech does two things:
--It opens the door for Satan (Eph. 4:27)
--It grieves the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30)

If our speech is not constructive, we should not speak it. Before you say anything ask yourself these questions:

- Is what I'm about to say true?
- Is what I'm about to say necessary?
- Is what I'm about to say designed to help?
- Are my emotions under control?
- Is now the right time to say it?
- Will God be glorified by what I say?

V. Your Words Will Expose Your CONDITION and ETERNAL DESTINY (v. 37)

This judgment will be:

1. Personal - *"thy"*

2. Unavoidable - *"shall"*

3. Indisputable - *"words. . . justified. . . condemned"*

Based on what you said in this life

Since your words are an accurate gauge of your heart, you will be judged based on your words.

"Justified" - to be proven righteous; to be shown to be right; to be evidenced to be just.

NOTE: Our "words," like our "works" (cp. Ja. 2:21-25), do not make us righteous; but they manifest whether or not we are.

Faith alone justifies (Ro. 4-5), but faith that justifies is never alone (Ja. 2).

The content and virtue of your words will either defend you (validate your faith) or defeat you (reveal your unbelief).

"Condemned" (*kata + dikazo)* = to be proven unrighteous (note the contrast with "justified" *dikaioo*); to be shown to be worthy of judgment.

"Thine own mouth condemneth thee. . . yea, thine own lips testify against thee" (Job 15:6).

An unbridled tongue reveals a vain religion (Ja. 1:26 - *"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain"*).

In the context, one's words about Christ will be the words that will either justify or condemn that person.

The Pharisees' accusation that Christ was empowered by Satan (v. 24) will be the words that condemn them when they bow before Him one day and are compelled to confess Him as Lord (Phil. 2:11).

If you have confessed Christ as your Lord and Savior, your testimony will bear evidence to your salvation

Mt. 10:32 - *"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."*

Rom. 10:9 - *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."*

I Cor. 12:3 - *"No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost"*

If you have not confessed Christ as your Lord and Savior, but rather have used His name in vain, spoken against Him, denied Him, etc., your own testimony will be sufficient testimony to condemn you.

CONCLUSION:

You can gain a good understanding of your spiritual condition by listening to your own words.

(By no means is anyone's mouth impeccable, but their customary speech should be true, sincere, moral, kind, thoughtful, and loving)

What we need is not
"reformation" (reforming behavior, changing the outside)

But "transformation" (renewing the spirit, being recreated on the inside)

True salvation produces good words and works.

Do your words bear evidence to your salvation?

Is the answer to "clean up my mouth"? NO!

The answer is to clean up my heart!

If the source of the problem is not dealt with, you may cover up the symptoms all you want, but what is needed is a radical change on the inside, and then the outside will mend itself.

What is needed?

A "new heart" - Ezek. 36:26 - *"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."*

A "clean heart" - Ps. 51:10 - *"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."*

"CHARACTERISTICS OF A WICKED GENERATION"

Matthew 12:38-45
1/28/2018

INTRODUCTION:

***What are the characteristics of a wicked generation?**

I. **They are <u>SIGN-SEEKERS</u>** (v. 38-40)
(Rather than believing Christ's Word, <u>they want signs</u>)

II. **They are <u>SAVIOR-HARDENED</u>** (v. 41-42)
(Rather than responding to Christ's greatness, <u>they ignore Him</u>)

III. **They are <u>SELF-RIGHTEOUS</u>** (v. 43-45)
(Rather than inviting Christ into their life, <u>they vainly clean house and leave Him out</u>

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"CHARACTERISTICS OF A WICKED GENERATION"

Matthew 12:38-45
1/28/2018

INTRODUCTION: The wickedness of this generation:

The Prayer that really got some attention-Paul Harvey Radio Broadcast

When Pastor Joe Wright was asked to open the new session of the Kansas Senate, everyone was expecting the usual politically correct generalities. But on Jan. 23, 96, what they heard instead was a stirring prayer, passionately calling our country to repentance and righteousness. The response was immediate with a number of legislators walking out during the prayer. In six short weeks Central Christian Church logged more than 5,000 phone calls, with only 47 of those calls responding negatively.

Commentator Paul Harvey aired Pastor Joe Wright's prayer on the radio and received a larger response to this program than any other program Paul Harvey has ever aired. In addition, Central Christian Church is now receiving international requests for copies of this prayer from India, Africa, and Korea.

Heavenly Father, we come before You today to ask Your forgiveness and seek Your direction and guidance, We know Your Word says, "Woe on those who call evil good," but that's exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and inverted our values. We confess that:

We have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it pluralism;

We have worshipped other gods and called it multi-culturalism;

We have endorsed perversion and called it an alternative lifestyle;

We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery;

We have neglected the needy and called it self-preservation;

We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare;

We have killed our unborn and called it choice;

We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable;

We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem;

We have abused power and called it political savvy;

We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression;

We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment;

Search us, O God, and know our hearts; try us and see if there be some wicked way in us; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent here by the people of Kansas, and who have been ordained by You, to govern this great state. Grant them Your wisdom to rule and may their decisions direct us to the center of Your will. I ask it in the name of Your Son, the Living Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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What God says about society in the "last days"

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

Proverbs 30: 11-14
There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.
There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.
There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.
There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.

In this context Jesus makes frequent reference to *"this generation"* and points out the wickedness of the generation in which He lived (NOTE: the word *"generation"* occurs in v. 39, 41, 42, 45).

That generation had the most privileges, the greatest opportunities. They saw Christ, heard Him, witnessed His miracles, talked to Him face to face, heard Him preach and teach in person. Yet, they denied His miracles and rejected His message.

***What are the characteristics of a wicked generation?**

I. They are <u>SIGN-SEEKERS</u> (v. 38-40)

(Rather than believing Christ's Word, <u>they want signs</u>)

V. 38

"Master" - This name came from the lips of people who did not believe that Jesus was truly "Master." In hypocrisy they call Him "Master"; the fact that they request a "sign" from Christ proves that they didn't really view Him as "Master."

"A sign" -

A sign is basically a miracle that can be experienced by the senses. It is an objective way to validate someone or something.

Gideon showed his lack of faith (his unbelief in God's will) by throwing out a fleece of wool (Jud. 6:36-40).

The Jews sought signs (I Cor. 1:22), and Jesus gave them in abundance.

The scribes and Pharisees had on numerous occasions seen and heard about the signs Christ performed. They saw the Lord heal a palsied man (Mt. 9:1-8), they saw Him restore a dumb man possessed by a demon (9:32-34); they witnessed Him curing a man with a withered arm on the Sabbath (Mt. 12:9-13); and now recently they had heard that He cast a demon out of a man that was blind and speechless. Yet rather than believing the evidence already displayed, they demand more!

Rather than simply letting His spotless life, unselfish ministry, soul-stirring message, and indisputable miracles speak for themselves, they demand more proof, more valid evidence.

Jesus could have easily performed any sign He wanted. However, the fact that He didn't proves two things:

1) God does <u>not</u> have to <u>prove Himself</u> to anybody.

> *Ingersoll Gives God Five Minutes*
>
> Robert Ingersoll, after delivering one of his addresses, pulled his watch from his pocket and said, "According to the Bible, God has struck men to death for blasphemy. I will blaspheme Him and give Him five minutes to strike me dead and damn my soul."
>
> There was a period of perfect silence while one minute went by; two minutes passed, and people began to get nervous; three minutes, and a woman fainted; four minutes, and Ingersoll curled his lip.
>
> At five minutes, he snapped shut his watch, put it in his pocket, and said: "You see, there is no God, or He would have taken me at my word."
>
> The story was told later to Joseph Parker, who said, "And did the American gentleman think he could exhaust the patience of God in five minutes?" —H. A. Ironside

2) God does not stoop to reveal His power (by miraculous signs) to men at <u>their choosing</u>. (When He chooses to perform signs, He does so according to His will, not to satisfy the curiosity of agnostic men).

V. 39

"Evil" - sinful, wicked

"Adulterous" – speaking of spiritual adultery against God. A worldly-minded people who forsake God and embrace the philosophies and humanistic thinking of the world. They have affection for the matters and methods of the world (Ja. 4:4).

To be worldly is to live not by faith but by sight. It is to be carnally-minded. To live life based on the 5 senses. Such a mentality reasons: "If I can't touch it, taste it, see it, smell it, or hear it, I won't believe it. It must be "sensational" for it to impact me.

Many have a "Show me" attitude! Prove it to me! Convince me with the evidence I demand. (Illust. Missouri calls itself "the show me state")

The wicked always demand signs because to them "Seeing is believing."

The evil mob that surrounded the cross of Christ again chided Him for a sign. They demanded, *"If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross"* (Mt. 27:40; Mk. 15:30).

Note: The rich man who went to hell wrongly believed that a sign from dead Lazarus would convince his 5 brothers of their need of salvation (Luke 16:27-31).

If it is evil and spiritually adulteress people who seek after signs, should we be seeking after signs today?

Do we need authenticating signs from God for Him to prove to us that He is real, or that His Spirit is real, or that His Word is true? NO!

To demand God to prove Himself by giving a sign is "Satanic theology." Satan demanded that Christ prove His Messiahship by two spectacular signs (Mt. 4:5-7 – turn stones into bread; jump off of the pinnacle of the Temple).

If it is an *"evil and adulterous generation"* that seeks after a sign, what does this tell you about people who seek after tongues? Tongues are for a *"<u>sign</u>"* (I Cor. 14:22). Should Christians be seeking signs?

NOTE: Signs and sign gifts were given by God's sovereign discretion, at the Holy Spirit's will (I Cor. 12:11). Such sign gifts came upon God's people without the recipient seeking such; it wa automatic, uninvited, unsolicited.

If tongues were a legitimate gift today, why is it limited to "Christians" of certain Pentecostal and Charismatic churches and not given to fundamental Baptists? The fact that this "sign gift" does not come to those who are ignorant of it tells me it has ceased.

It is interesting to note that as this age draws toward a close, people will demonstrate how wicked they are by an increased desire to see "signs and wonders." Such a thirst will play right into the hands of Satan who will (via the Antichrist) performs powerful *"signs and lying wonders"* (II Thes. 2:9). These Satanic eschatological miracles will seem so real (since they are called *"great signs and wonders")* that they will deceive everyone except the elect (Mt. 24:24).

The only sign that the Scribes and Pharisees could look for was that Christ would die and then rise again on the third day.

V. 40

"The only sign Jesus would give to His nation was death, burial, and resurrection" (Wiersbe, p. 43).

He said, *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"* (Jn. 2:19).

"Jonas was three days and three nights" - Jesus validates the historicity of Jonah and the "whale." To deny the fact of Jonah and the whale is to call Jesus a liar.

"Three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" - Since Jesus qualifies the word for "days" with the phrase "three nights", this is an indication that He did <u>not</u> die on Friday, but on Thursday.

The Lamb was sacrificed on the 14th of Abib (Nisan) (Exod.12:6a);
Christ was sacrificed on the 14th of Abib (Passover) (Mt. 26:2; Mk.14:1)

Exod.12:6 – "And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and…kill it in the evening (Lit. between the evenings; twilight – as one day was ending and another beginning)."

Matthew 26:2 Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

Mark 14:1 After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death.

Matthew 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The 14th of Abib would correspond to Thursday, April 6th 30 AD

(See: U.S. Navy Astronomical Department Calculations of the Lunar Calendar)

13th of Abib	14th of Abib		15th of Abib		16th of Abib		17th of Abib
WEDNESDAY	**THURSDAY**		**FRIDAY**		**SATURDAY**		**SUNDAY**
Preparation for the Passover	**THE PASSOVER**		**"High Day" (Sabbath)**		**Normal Sabbath**		**First Day of the Week**
	After 6:00 pm Wednesday (the Jewish start of Thursday): 1) The Last Supper Meal 2) The Arrest/Mocking	6:00 a.m. Roman Time-Jesus brought to Pilate 9:00 am– Crucifixion 12:00 pm -Dark 3:00 – Death Burial (before 6:00 sundown)	*John 19:31*				*1 Cor. 15:4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again <u>the third day</u> according to the Scriptures:*
		Night 1	**Day 1**	**Night 2**	**Day 2**	**Night 3**	**Day 3**

It is interesting that:

The Passover Sacrifice was preceded by three days of darkness (Ex. 10:21-23) Whereas Christ's sacrificial death was preceded by three hours of dark darkness (Mark 15:33)

Christ died at just the right TIME (at Passover)

Daniel 9:26 - "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself…"

This final sign given to the Jews of Jesus' day was rejected, as they came up with the "false story that His disciples had stolen His body to create the illusion of a resurrection (Mt. 28:11-15)." (MacArthur, p. 330).

The Word of God is sufficient! Faith cometh not by "seeing signs" but by hearing the Word of God (Ro. 10:17).

II. They are <u>SAVIOR-HARDENED</u> (v. 41-42)

(Rather than responding to Christ's greatness, <u>they ignore Him</u>)

By saying “they are Savior-Hardened” I do not mean hardened by the Savior but hardened to or towards the Savior.

EX: The Gospel-hardened South. They hear it, see it, know it so well that they don't!

This land of liberty has had the greatest opportunity and privilege (with freedom, Bibles, churches, seminaries, Bible colleges, Christian literature, etc.). Yet we have abused our privileges. "If God does not judge the USA, He would have to make an apology to Sodom and Gomorrah."

V. 41

"Shall rise" = to rise again, to be resurrected. The Ninevites will be resurrected along with that evil generation of Jesus' day at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

Though the Ninevites did repent at Jonah's preaching, it does not necessarily mean that they obtained salvation or eternal life.

"A greater than Jonas is here" - the Great One is referring to Jesus Christ.

The word *"greater"* being <u>neuter</u> may also specifically refer to Christ's "<u>preaching</u>" being great than that of Jonah.

--Jonah <u>only used 8 words</u> in his preaching (5 words in the Hebrew) - *"Yet forty days, and Ninevah shall be overthrown"* (Jon. 3:4)
and yet they repented!

--Jonah was a <u>foreigner</u> to Ninevah
and yet they repented!

--Jonah preached <u>without love and compassion</u>
and yet they repented!

If the barbaric, bloodthirsty, brutal Ninevites repented at Jonah's preaching and Jesus is greater than Jonah, what does this tell you about the scribes and Pharisees? They were more wicked than the Ninevites.

"Behold" - look, see, observe, open your eyes; notice who is here!

V. 42

The Queen of Sheba was so impressed with Solomon's wisdom and house (I Ki. 10:4), His servants, attendants, and temple (10:5), that *"there was no more spirit in her"* (v. 5) [it shocked the wind out of her]. She testified: *"The half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard"* (10:7)

Yet to sit at Solomon's table and learn from Him did not compare with the privilege the Pharisees had to listen to Jesus. Do you "sit at his table and learn from Him"?

Jesus' wisdom is greater than Solomon's.

Jesus is saying: The queen heard Solomon, but you do not hear Me (and yet I am greater than Solomon). She listened to Solomon (and traveled a great distance to do so), yet you do not listen to Me.

Jesus is <u>more</u> than a <u>prophet</u>, He is greater than the prophet Jonah, and He is <u>more</u> than a king, He is greater than King Solomon.

III. They are <u>SELF-RIGHTEOUS</u> (v. 43-45)

(Rather than inviting Christ into their life, <u>they vainly clean house and leave Him out</u>)

Jesus by way of illustration (parable) depicts the religious generation of His day as having much external purity, but no internal purity (inwardly they were empty (mt. 23:27-28).

Many things on the surface may look good, but then suddenly collapse and meet a tragic end.

ILLUS:

- **sink holes** (cave in)
- **trees that fall** in a storm (when it falls, it was probably not due to the storm, wind, and rain, but to an inner rottenness that was revealed when trouble came)

We must not have an external that is false advertising (false packaging). We can't afford to be hollow, empty, void, in our lives.

V. 43

"Unclean spirit" - a reference to a filthy evil demon

"Is gone out of a man" -Perhaps due to an exorcism in the name of Jesus;

"He walketh through dry places, seeking rest" - Demons travel (or go) through waterless places looking for a place of momentary rest in vain.

NOTE: Jesus is implicitly teaching a little insight into demons. The reason they possess a person is to have an abode wherein they can rest. They perhaps find a feeling of security living in the life of a human being, assuming that as long as they live in this person they are safe from God's wrath, at least temporarily (Note how afraid of leaving the demoniac of Gadora they were - Luke 8:30-32).

V. 44

"Empty" - to be unoccupied; to have a vacancy.

This man ignored the spiritual principle that: Removed bad internals need to be replaced (ILLUS: wine is to be replaced by the Spirit - Eph. 5:18).

It is just as critical that the demon left him, as it is that someone else took up residence in his life.

"Swept" - to sweep clean every bit of dirt (badness) in the house.

The Pharisees did this - They sought with all their might not to let anything bad into their lives.

We tend to measure our righteousness by what we don't allow into our lives, rather than by what we do allow.

We wrongly base our spirituality merely on what we don't do, rather than by what we do do.

To clean house is only half the answer; it needs to be lived in.

To repent of sin is not the full answer; to receive Christ is the answer. (both repentance and faith are necessary)

The Thessalonians turned from idols to the living God (I Th. 1:9).

NOTE: An attempt to clean up America by confronting social issues, by combatting abortion, by enforcing moral standards etc., without presenting the life-changing Gospel of their need for Christ is futility!

"Garnished" - we derive our word "cosmetics" from the Greek word. It means to arrange, put in order, decorate.

ILLUS: A beauty salon - is a place to set your face in order. To make it look like it did not originally look. We tend to just want to "look good" in front of others.

A beautiful house is great! But it is no good if nobody lives there! Is anyone at home? Is Jesus living in your life?

You will never receive fullness until you admit your emptiness!

"It is much easier to reach someone who is overwhelmed with a true sense of his sin than someone who is overwhelmed with a false sense of his righteousness" (MacArthur, p. 337).

V. 45

Wickedness will always return to the empty life, and it will always come back more!

"the last state of the man is worse than the first" - SEE: II Peter 2:20-22

NOTE: *"I will return into my house"* (v. 44). The house never was turned over to anyone else; it was still the devil's property. Note: the House was still under the same ownership.

Whose house are you?

Had this man invited Christ into his life, had he surrendered to Christ to take charge of his life, the evil spirit and his evil companions could not have entered the man. A man indwelt by the Spirit of Christ (Ro. 8:9) cannot also be indwelt by a demon.

"It is not enough to clean house; we must also invite in the right tenant" (Wiersbe, p. 44).

Jesus Christ is knocking! (Rev. 3:20).

Christ desires to *"dwell in your hearts through faith"* (Eph. 3:17)

CONCLUSION:

What are the characteristics of a wicked generation?

- **They are <u>SIGN-SEEKERS</u>** (v. 38-40)
  (Rather than believing Christ's Word, <u>they want signs</u>)
- **They are <u>SAVIOR-HARDENED</u>** (v. 41-42)
  (Rather than responding to Christ's greatness, <u>they ignore Him</u>)
- **They are <u>SELF-RIGHTEOUS</u>** (v. 43-45)
  (Rather than inviting Christ into their life, <u>they vainly clean house and leave Him out</u>)

People don't need signs; they need faith in God's Word.

People don't need religion; they need a relationship.

People don't need external self-reformation; they need the Savior's internal transformation.

"ARE YOU RELATED TO JESUS?"

Matthew 12:46-50
2/11/2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 46-47

***Are you related to Jesus Christ?**

I. <u>FAMILY TIES CANNOT</u> Produce a Relationship with Christ
("Who is My mother? And who are My brethren?") (v. 48)

II. Only <u>A SPECIFIC REMNANT</u> are Related to Christ
(*"He stretched forth His hand toward <u>His disciples</u>")* (v. 49)

III. People from <u>ALL OVER THE WORLD</u> can be Related to Christ
("<u>Whosoever</u> shall do the will of My Father") (v. 50)

IV. <u>DOING GOD'S WILL</u> is Evidence that You are Related to Christ
("Whosoever shall <u>do the will</u> of My Father. . . the same <u>is</u> My brother, and sister, and mother") (v. 50)

Belonging to the family of God is a matter of prime importance!
"Ye <u>must</u> be born again!"
(John 3:7)

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INTRODUCTION: Verses 46-47

V. 46
"His mother" =Mary; the woman God used to implant His Son into, so that Jesus could become man so as to die for men.

"The Son of God became the son of man, so that we the sons of men might become the sons of God."

Mary is Jesus mother <u>not</u> in the sense that she gave Him His origin or beginning, but she provided His entrance into the human race.

She should not properly be called "the mother of God" as if to imply that she as a deity brought God the Son into existence.

It is vitally important to note that Mary was a human being, a woman of virtue, but a sinner nonetheless who needed God to be her Savior (Lk. 1:47) and needed the Son she bore to atone for her sins on Calvary's cross.

Jesus in terms of His real essence (His Spirit) did not originate in the womb of Mary, but rather He came from Heaven and via the virgin birth made an incarnate entrance into the human race.

Jesus came from Heaven! (Jn. 6:51; Phil. 2:7; II Cor. 8:9; Gal. 4:4; I Cor. 15:47)
I Tim. 1:15 - *"Christ Jesus came into the world. . . "*

"And His brethren" - Jesus half-brothers. Contrary to RCC tradition, Mary did not remain a perpetual virgin, but she had other children via her marriage to Joseph, after the birth of Christ.

The Bible teaches that Joseph and Mary did not have sexual relations <u>until</u> after she had brought forth Jesus (Mt. 1:25).

Matthew 13:55 gives a list of the half-brothers of Jesus. NOTE: Christ also had stepsisters. "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?"
Mark 6:3 - *"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at Him."*

"Stood without" - The reason they could not reach Jesus was because of the great crowd that thronged around Him (Lk. 8:19). A *"multitude sat about Him"* (Mk. 3:32).

"Desiring to speak with Him" - Whatever it was that they wanted to say to Him, to them at least it was very important. They were so zealously seeking to talk to Him, that they had evidently sent someone up front to get the message to Jesus.

Perhaps a problem had occurred at home that they needed His advice about; or more likely, they had heard about the commotion Jesus caused because of His stern condemnation of the Pharisees (Note previous context in chapter 12), and they thought to quiet Him down a bit.

This idea is backed up by Mark's account (same context and time frame) - See Mark 3:19b-21 -

"An home" = could be His own home in Nazareth.

"His friends" = his relatives; His family; lit. the ones who [grew up] alongside of him. His own family thought that "he was out of his mind" or that "he had lost his senses."

The crowd was so tightly packed into the home that it was impossible for anyone to eat (v. 20). To Jesus, doing the will of the Father was more important than food (Jn. 4:34).

V. 47

"Then one said to Him" - cp. v. 46

"While He yet talked to the people" - Interruptions tend to come at the most importune times.

Even good people with good intentions can disrupt a counselling session, a witness opportunity, a sermon (EX: people getting up during a service), etc.

Jesus "loved and cared for His family, and He understood their concern, misguided as it was. He did not, in fact, respond directly to the request of his family but rather used the occasion to teach an important truth" (MacArthur, p. 339).

***Are you related to Jesus Christ?**

I. <u>FAMILY TIES CANNOT</u> Produce a Relationship with Christ
("Who is My mother? And who are My brethren?") (v. 48)

"Who is my mother?" - This question does not deny the fact that Mary gave birth to Him. What it declares is that: Mary does not have any greater relationship to Him than anyone else who is saved. (All believers who do God's will have just as great a relationship as Mary had and has).

This question does not minimize Mary, but it sure does show what her place is.

If Mary had some exalted position as co-redeemer or mediator for Christ, this would have been the greatest setting for Christ to prove such as point. But He doesn't exalt her. he doesn't elevate her above any other believer.

These two questions are another way of saying: "Who is related to Me?" "Who makes up my family?" "Who comprises my relatives?"

SEE: John 1:12-13

As far as their spiritual relationship to Him is concerned, His brothers were not His "brothers" at this time. His brothers did not believe in Him during His public ministry (Jn. 7:5), but did after His resurrection.

II. Only <u>A SPECIFIC REMNANT</u> are Related to Christ
(*"He stretched forth His hand toward <u>His disciples</u>")* (v. 49)

With His fingers pointing directly at His disciples, Jesus is implying that not everyone is related to Him. The Bible does NOT teach universalism (that everyone will be saved). In fact, Scripture teaches that only a small portion of humanity will be saved.

As Paul said: "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a <u>remnant</u> shall be saved" (Romans 9:27; cp. Isaiah 10:22)

"Even so then at this present time also there is a <u>remnant</u> according to the election of grace. (Romans 11:5)

Jesus said the same, when He said: “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” (Matthew 7:13-14)

"Toward His disciples" - this included more than the 12; it included *"them which sat about him"* (Mk. 3:34).

Anyone who followed Christ was considered a "disciple" (in the unofficial sense of the term).

"Disciples" - a disciple is a disciplined one. One who is taught the disciplines of the Master is considered a disciple.

"Behold" - look at, see, view

As Jesus drew attention to some female followers of His, He said, "Look at my mother." As His finger pointed around the room and fell upon some men who followed Him, He said, "Look at my brother."

III. People from ALL OVER THE WORLD can be Related to Christ
("Whosoever shall do the will of My Father") (v. 50)

"Whosoever" - anyone and everyone.

The "whosoevers" of the Bible are a great encouragement:

> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Jn. 3:16
>
> For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Rom. 10:13
>
> And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Rev. 22:17

"The whosoever indicates the universality of the invitation. No one who believes is excluded. And, on the other hand, no one who does not believe will be included" (MacArthur, p. 339).

IV. DOING GOD'S WILL is Evidence that You are Related to Christ
("Whosoever shall do the will of My Father. . . the same is My brother, and sister, and mother") (v. 50)

"Shall do" - to practice; to accomplish. It's not enough to hear God's will; you must do God's will.

It is not enough to know God's will; you must do God's will (Mt. 7:21). True belief in God's will will result in changed behavior ("works" - James 2).

Those who do God's will give evidence by their doing that they have received God's salvation.

The Christian life is not a noun, but a verb! It is practical, not theoretical. it is active, not stationary. It is moving, not stagnant.

"Will" - desire; God's specific wishes, plans, goals for your life.

The only way to know God's will is to know God's Word (Ro. 10:17).

"My Father" - this phrase points to Christ's unique relationship with God. It points to His deity (Jn. 5:18 - *"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his father, making himself equal with God."*).

"In Heaven" - God is in Heaven, but He expects His will to be done on earth.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven" (Mt. 6:10; Lk. 11:2).

"The same" - lit. this one (implied - this one and no other)

"Is my brother" - Jesus does not say "becomes".

The doing of God's will does not make someone related to Christ (as if salvation was accomplished by "doing" something); rather, the doing of God's will reveals whether or not someone is related to Him.

What exactly did Jesus mean by the *"will of my Father"*?

Luke in a parallel passage gives the answer: *"My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it"* (Lk. 8:21).

God's will for you is:

1) SALVATION (God wants you to be saved)

John 6:40 - *"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."*

I Tim. 2:4 - *"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth"*

II Pet. 3:9 - *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*

Mt. 18:14 - *"Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."*

2) SPIRIT-FULLNESS (God wants you to be Spirit-filled)

Eph. 5:17-18 - *"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."*

3) SERVICE (God wants you to serve Him sincerely)

Eph. 6:6 - *"Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."*

Heb. 13:20-21 - *"Now the God of peace. . . make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."*

4) SACRIFICE (God wants you to surrender your life to Him)

II Cor. 8:5 - *"And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God."*

Rom. 12:1-2 - *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

5) SANCTIFICATION (God wants you to be sexually pure)

I Thess. 4:3 - *"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication."*

6) SUPPLICATION (God wants you to seek Him daily)

I Thess. 5:16-18 - *"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In ever thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*

7) SUBMISSION (God wants you to submit to authority)

I Pet. 2:13-15 - *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:*

8) SUFFERING (God wants you to be willing to suffer for His sake)

I Peter 3:17 - *For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.* (Compare I Peter 4:12-19)

If you are related to Jesus, you will be hearing the Word of God and obeying it!

Perfectly? No. But Consistently.

The bottom line: Are we doing what we want in life? Or what God wants?

Are we doing our will? Or God's will?

To do our will and to live for what we want is indeed Satanic Theology.
(the maxim of Satanism according to the Satanic Bible by Anton Lavey: "Do as thou wilt"

Do what you want. This is the world's life and agenda.

But if we are truly related to Christ, we have the Holy Spirit and a new heart. We now desire to do God's will.

Examine your heart. Do you live for what you want or what God wants? Do you need to be "born again"?

****

Belonging to the family of God is a matter of prime importance!
"Ye <u>must</u> be born again!"
(John 3:7)

"The Sower, Seed, & Soil"

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
2-18-2018

Introduction:

- The Sower = A messenger of God
- The Seed = The Word of God
- The Soil = The heart of man

**** Examine the condition of your heart!***

Which type of soil characterizes your heart?

I. HARD - Hearted (v. 4, 19)
***This soil characterizes the rebellious person**
(one who does not want to hear it at all).



II. FAINT - Hearted (v. 5-6, 20-21)
***This soil characterizes the non-committed person**
(one who is emotionally interested but not committed).



III. HALF - Hearted (v. 7, 22)
***This soil characterizes the easily distracted person**
(one who is preoccupied, other things are more important).



IV. WHOLE - Hearted (v. 8, 23)
***This soil characterizes the tender person**
(one who has a sincere and good heart - Luke 8:15).



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2-18-2018

Introduction:

What is the difference between someone who looks forward to reading their Bible, and someone who never or seldom wants to?

What is the difference between someone who loves coming to church and hearing a message, and someone who would rather stay home and play?

What is the difference between someone who gets something every time he reads or hears the Scriptures, and someone who is unchanged and even unchallenged whenever the Word is read or heard?

What is the difference between the two?

ANSWER: The condition of their hearts

Your heart is the door to your spirit; it is the gateway to your "inner-man."

This is why Solomon said: "Guard your heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).

Your heart is that invisible part of you that thinks, feels, and chooses. (It is the culmination of intellect, emotion, and will).

Your heart is that which loves and hates, chooses to do right and wrong.

"The LORD looketh on the heart" (I Sam. 16:7).

The Sower = A messenger of God
The Seed = The Word of God
The Soil = The heart of man

Why is the Word compared to a seed?
The Word, like a seed has life in it (Heb.4:12)
The Word, like a seed must be planted (I Cor. 3)

The Word, like a seed will take root & produce fruit if the soil is cultivated.
(Tenderized & watered - Rom.10:17)

*** Examine the condition of your heart!**

Which type of soil characterizes your heart?

I. HARD - Hearted (v. 4, 19)

***This soil characterizes the rebellious person** (one who does not want to hear it at all).

Jesus is describing a heart that "has never been softened by remorse, never broken up by conviction of sin" (MacArthur, p. 357)

The "hard-hearted" person has this attitude: "No one is going to tell me what to do!"

"Harden not your hearts" (Heb. 3:8)

"He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed" (Prov. 29:1).

Some say, "I pray! I don't need church or Bible reading." --- "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the Law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Prov. 28:9).

This is the teen who goes to church because his parents "make him."

You can't grow anything in ROCK!

II. FAINT - Hearted (v. 5-6, 20-21)

***This soil characterizes the non-committed person** (one who is emotionally interested but not committed).

"The same sun that hardens the clay will melt the wax."

The sun ("persecution") can either help the true believer to grow, or reveal that the profession of a false believer was not real, genuine, or sincere.

“No Deepness” – This shallow hearted individual had no deep conviction of sin or salvation, as evidenced by his withering away when criticism, pressure, or persecution comes to test his faith.

The "faint-hearted" person has this attitude: "It's not worth it!"

The stony heart says, "Living for Jesus is good [Okay] as long as it doesn't cost me anything." It's fine as long as all my friends are doing it. But if I ever get "made fun of" or actually opposed, I know this is "quitting time."

V. 20

"Anon with joy" - right away or immediately with much emotion.

This quick response to the gospel was very promising (especially when compared with hard soil). The superficial, "surface" response was characterized by "joy" (enthusiasm, an emotional high, great feelings, but no depth. "The gospel truth has not penetrated his heart but only the edge of his mind, and it is therefore as immediately renounced at it was immediately received." (MacArthur, p. 358)

This is the one who professes faith, gives a tear-jerking testimony, is all "on fire" for Christ, and then fizzles away when things get hot, never to be found again! [EX: Ron Stravel, Satanic cult leader]

This is the person who likes learning about the Bible in a class, chapel, or in church, so that he can get an "A" on his test, or please his teacher, or have the answers to give out to others (Ex: cults, other religions), but he himself does not totally believe it or obey it.

There is a need to abide in Christ and His Words in order to produce fruit (Jn. 15:1-8).

III. HALF - Hearted (v. 7, 22)

***This soil characterizes the easily distracted person** (one who is preoccupied, other things are more important).

The "half-hearted" person has this attitude: "This is boring!"

The thorns rob the water and minerals in the ground and choke out the sunlight from reaching the crop.

V. 22

"The care of this world" = The pre-occupations and anxieties of this present age.

--More worried about your career (job)
--More worried about your fame (status)
--More worried about paying your bills (Mt. 6:33)
--More worried about your marriage, world events, etc.

"Worry" will keep you from reading Bible and benefitting from it.

"The deceitfulness of riches" -

--Money is a deceiver (Mt. 19:23; I Tim. 6:9, 10, 17)
--Things preoccupy

The happy man is the one who has enough to live, but not enough to fall in love with it.

Something new (novel) and exciting can easily distract the half-hearted.

Why? Because they have one foot in the world while attempting to keep one foot in the Word (you can't do it - I Jn. 2:15-17).

You can't grow anything in GARBAGE!

IV. WHOLE - Hearted (v. 8, 23)

***This soil characterizes the tender person** (one who has a sincere and good heart - Luke 8:15).

The "Whole-hearted" person has this attitude: "Give me more!"

This “heart” (“soil”) is good “not because it has a different basic composition than the other kinds of soil, but because it is rightly prepared” (MacArthur, p. 361)

It was not compacted;
Not rock filled;
Not thorn infested;

Note: such preparation is done by the Spirit of God!
(ex. Lydia - And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. (Acts 16:14)

V. 23

The good ground:

1. "Heareth" (note: all "soils" heard the word - v. 19, 20, 22)

2. "Understandeth" - comprehension depends upon the condition of your heart.

   People don't understand for one of three reasons in their heart:

   1) They don't want to
   2) They don't put in the effort
   OR 3) They want to do other things (distracted).

3. "Beareth fruit" - the result of understanding the Word!

   Note: Not every Christian will bear the same amount of fruit, but all will bear fruit. “Only God knows how many apples one seed will produce”

Compare the fruitfulness of him who delights in God's Law:
"But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Psalm 1:2-3)

The average yield ration of grain crops in Israel was less than 8 to 1. (MacArthur p. 362)
Therefore, this harvest and fruitfulness is truly supernatural!

Have a soft heart while you are young. If not, it will become more calloused as you get older [Old people are "set in their ways"}

The most dangerous position to be in is to be "set in <u>your</u> ways" -- because God can no longer teach you.

What we need is <u>thirsty</u> soil!

--Not <u>cement</u> which can take no water (hard heart)

--Not rock-filled <u>shallow</u> soil which can only drink a little (faint-hearted)

--Not <u>thorn</u> infested soil which has its water robbed (half-hearted)

--But <u>fertile</u>, <u>cultivated</u> soil which will soak in the seed and water (whole-hearted)

Mt. 5:6 - "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

CONCLUSION:

"God knoweth your hearts" (Lk. 16:15).

Although I cannot see your heart, I can know your heart by your fruit.

V. 23

"Fruitfulness" =

1) Doing things pleasing to God (Jn. 15:8)

2) Doing things you can bring to Heaven

> [That your fruit should remain (last) – Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. Jn. 15:16]

a. souls (Mt. 9:37-38)

b. service for the saints (Mt. 25:34-40)

The problem is often not the preaching (or preacher) but the condition of your heart.

The problem is never the Word of God, but is the condition of your heart.

SEE: Jer. 4:3-4

"Break up your fallow (untilled) ground . . . and take away the foreskins of your heart . . ."

Our prayer needs to be:

"Take me"
"Break me"
"Mold me"
"Make me . . .
a tender-hearted Christian"

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (Ps. 51:10).

"BLINDNESS, DEAFNESS, AND HEART TROUBLE"

Matthew 13:9-17
2/25/2018

INTRODUCTION: V. 10

***Do you really want to see and hear?**

What is the condition of your spiritual health?

Observe the contrast of attitudes toward the truth:

I. Some want the Truth and some don't! (v. 11-12)
(The reason for parables)

II. Some don't want the Truth (v. 13-15)
(The problem of defective eyes, ears, and hearts)

III. Some want the Truth! (v. 16-17)
(The blessedness of open eyes, ears, and hearts)

CONCLUSION:

"BLINDNESS, DEAFNESS, AND HEART TROUBLE"

Matthew 13:9-17
2/25/2018

INTRODUCTION: V. 10

Review the parable of the sower, seed, and soil.

Note: V. 9

The disciples knew that the multitudes did not understand the messages. Because they were concerned that their Master's words be received and that the people not miss the lessons, they question Jesus.

"Unto them" - The disciples noticed that Jesus did not speak plainly in public like He did to them, so they were curious as to the reason.

"Parable" - was an analogy taken from everyday life used to illustrate a spiritual truth. The word literally means "to cast alongside." It describes a teaching method whereby the teacher, in order to explain a truth, would place a story or example alongside of the truth in order to make the truth clear.

A parable required explanation in order for it to be rightly understood. For a particular reason, Jesus would often leave the crowd "hanging" -- that is, he would not give them the interpretation of the parable, like He would to His disciples (EX: V. 18ff).

He would speak parables in public, then would explain them in private.

***Do you really want to see and hear?**

What is the condition of your spiritual health?

Observe the contrast of attitudes toward the truth:

I. Some want the Truth and some don't! (v. 11-12)

(The reason for parables)

V. 11

The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" - formerly hidden truths about God's Kingdom, which are now revealed.

"But to them it is not given" - Jesus is saying, "I am speaking in parables because it is not permissible for them to comprehend the truth I am giving."

In effect Jesus is saying that parables are given more to conceal truth than to reveal truth.

The Lord was actually being merciful by concealing the message from those who really didn't want to hear it! Reason: To hear the Truth is to become accountable for that truth. They would have heightened their condemnation every time they heard a clear presentation of the gospel yet rejected it.

The parables would either "turn some people off" or incite the interest of others who would inquire as to the meaning.

Many times we come up against a difficult passage of Scripture. It is at times like that, that we should seriously beseech God for the right interpretation.

The parables were given to:

--Stir up the interest of those who were diligent enough to seek out the meaning and
--To prevent the understanding of those who could "care less" about the meaning.

Throughout life, a person either gains or loses. He either misses out on great opportunity or cashes in. This is a law of every realm:

--It is the law of nature: "The early bird gets the worm"

--It is the law of man: Energy and effort are rewarded with productivity. Those who labor, are diligent and persistent, see, hear, and learn. They are in a position to get more and more. But the disinterested, neglectful, and lazy lose out.

V. 12

God throughout history used language as a form of judgment: Examples -

1) The Tower of Babel (Gen. 11) (Gen. 11:6-8 -*And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.")*

2) Foreign languages spoken to Israel (Is. 28:11-12 - *"For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.")*
Cp. Dt. 28:19-50; Is. 33:19

3) The sign gift of tongues (I Cor. 14:21-22 - *"In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.")*

"Whosoever hath" - hath what?

Whosoever hath eyes willing to see, ears willing to hear, and a heart willing to accept (cp. v. 13-16).

Whosoever hath a willingness to absorb, believe, embrace, and apply the truth, Jesus says, I will give that person more truth.

In a parallel passage, Jesus said: *"Unto you that hear shall more be given"* (Mk. 4:24)

Again, He said, *"Take heed how ye hear: for whosoever hath to him shall be given. . ."* (Lk. 8:18).

Do you know who the Lord can teach? He teaches those who have a desire to learn, a hunger for truth, a zeal for spiritual wisdom. They are willing to believe and obey the truth they learn.

"Whosoever hath not" - Whoever does not have a receptive eye, ear, and heart will lose the truth they were given (this is a description of verse 4 - The unreceptive heart that would not take in the seed (*"Word"*) had the seed taken away!)

"One of the most tragic sights in all the world is to see people sitting under the most glorious message, and fall asleep or be listless, inattentive, disinterested, or willfully hardened and close-minded" (The Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible, Matthew, Vol. 1, p. 296).

The Lord can teach those who are faithful stewards of the truth He has already entrusted to them. (EX:" The Parable of the Talents - Mt. 25:14-30 *V. 29)

II. Some don't want the Truth (v. 13-15)

(The problem of defective eyes, ears, and hearts)

V. 13

--How does one see, yet not see?
[They saw Jesus yet did not see Him for who He was]

--How does one hear, yet not hear?
[They heard Jesus speak, but did not hear what He said]
[Their ears heard sounds, but never understood the message]

V. 14

This prophecy, given to Isaiah to forewarn him of the hardness of the people he was to preach to. He was to preach to Israel, yet they would not comprehend or know what he said.

V. 15

"Waxed gross" = lit. to thicken. It describes a callousness which results in a dullness of feeling.

Their hearts became impregnable; could not be penetrated.

"Dull of hearing" - to become hard of hearing; to become practically deaf to the truth. (ILLUS: those Jews who heard Stephen, stopped their ears - Acts 7:57).

It's a sad state to be able to hear, yet to not get the message.

"Their eyes they have closed" -

--They chose to not see the truth.
--They deliberately decided to remain spiritually ignorant.
--They of their own will made up their minds that they didn't want to see God's way.

NOTE: To ignore the truth will not change the truth. EX: Children will often play the game of blocking their eyes and thinking that you can't see them, or that you are not there.

People can avoid the Word of God and His ways in 101 different ways, yet that will not alter it or make it go away.

"Lest at any time" - for fear that something they don't want to see might slip into their spiritual vision, and they might have subsequent feelings of guilt or responsibility because of that which they saw, they keep their eyes shut.

"Converted" - to turn around; to change your direction of going away from God, to going toward Him (Is. 55:6-7 - *"Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon")*

Many are afraid of being "converted." They are afraid of having to lose out on their own way. Some are fearful of giving up their sin. Some are fearful of becoming "religious."

However, you have nothing to lose and everything to gain!

All you lose is:

--Your present status as an "orphan" -- you become an adopted son
--Your present status as an "alien" -- You become a citizen of God's kingdom
--Your sin, guilt, and eternal condemnation (Rom. 8:1)

"And I should heal them" - They had everything to gain!

ILLUS: of someone who has the symptoms of a serious illness, but is afraid to find out what it is, or is afraid to go to the doctor.

Jesus is the Great Physician who can heal the sin-sick soul.

He wanted to remove their spiritual cancer. He wanted to replace their defective heart with a new one. He longed to give sight to their eyes and sound to their ears, but they did not want it!

III. Some want the Truth! (v. 16-17)

(The blessedness of open eyes, ears, and hearts)

V. 16

"Blessed" = fortunate

How wonderful it is to see and hear; how much more wonderful it is to see and hear the Gospel of God; to discern God's plan of salvation; to comprehend His Word

Your eyes and ears are either blessed, or they are not. The opposite of blessedness is to be under a curse.

Many saints of the Old Testament longed to see and hear the Messiah. They hoped that theirs would be the generation that would have the great privilege of welcoming the Christ. (I Pet. 1:10-11 - *"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them did signify when it testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."*)

What an awesome privilege I have had. I am so fortunate to have heard the gospel as a 16 year old boy, to attend a fundamental Bible-centered church, to enjoy a Bible college and seminary that were committed to God's Word without compromise.

CONCLUSION:
ILLUS: of Olympic athletes who had an "I want it" attitude and won!

Even believers need to search their hearts to make sure that there is an openness to receive the Word, and to make sure there are no obstacles to prevent the Word from being understood.

ILLUMINATION: THE PERCEPTION OF THE BIBLE

Illumination describes - the Holy Spirits' enlightenment of man's mind to comprehend the written Word of God.

The Bible's Teaching on Illumination:

1. Illumination is needed by the unsaved.

a. The unsaved man has a blinded mind
"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. 4:3-4)

b. The unsaved ("natural man") is without spiritual understanding.
He views spiritual things (as revealed in the Bible) as foolishness:
"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. 2:14).

2. Illumination begins at salvation.

a. Heb. 6:4 - "once enlightened"

b. Heb. 10:32 - "ye were illuminated"

3. Illumination is an ongoing work of the Holy Spirit

a. The Holy Spirit convicts men of sin, righteousness and judgment (Jn. 16:7-11).

b. The Holy Spirit is our guide into all truth (Jn. 16:12-13).

c. The Holy Spirit reveals God's Word only to believers (I Cor. 2:9-10)

d. The Holy Spirit reveals the "deep things of God" (I Cor. 2:10)

"THE WHEAT AND THE TARES"



Matthew 13:24-30, 34-43
3/4/2018

INTRODUCTION:

***If you have *"ears to hear,"* hear an important lesson about the differences between the "wheat" and the "tares."**

I. THE TWO <u>PLANTINGS</u> (v. 24-26, 37-39a)
(The <u>sowing</u> of "wheat" by Jesus and "tares" by Satan is happening today)

II. THE TWO <u>CROPS</u> (v. 27-30a)
(The <u>co-existence</u> of the "wheat with "tares" will continue during this Age)

III. THE TWO <u>HARVESTS</u> (v. 30, 39b-43)
(The <u>severance</u> of the "wheat" from the "tares" will occur at the completion of this Age) (compare: Rev. 14:14-20)

CONCLUSION: Which "seed" are you?

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"THE WHEAT AND THE TARES"

Matthew 13:24-30, 34-43
3/4/2018

INTRODUCTION:

READ vv. 24-30, 34-36

Although the disciples did not fully understand that parable, the fact that they called it the "Parable of the tares" shows they realized the major emphasis was on the tares rather than the wheat." (MacArthur, p. 376)

The Interpretation:

"Man" (v. 24) = the Son of man (Jesus Christ) (v. 37)

"His field" (v. 24) = the world (*kosmos*) (v. 38)

"Good seed" (v. 24) = the children of the kingdom (believers) (v. 38)

"Tares" (v. 25) = children of the wicked one (v. 38)

"His enemy" (v. 25) = the devil (v. 39)

"The harvest" (v. 30) = the end of the world (*aionos*) (the completion of this age) (v. 39)

"The reapers" (v. 30) = angels (v. 39)

***If you have *"ears to hear,"* hear an important lesson about the differences between the "wheat" and the "tares."**

I. THE TWO PLANTINGS (v. 24-26, 37-39a)

(The sowing of "wheat" by Jesus and "tares" by Satan is happening today)

V. 24

"The kingdom of Heaven" - This kingdom is called *"of Heaven"* because it wrought (brought about) by the God of Heaven.

(The phrases *"kingdom of heaven"* and *"kingdom of God"* are used synonymously -- compare Mt. 13:11 with Luke 8:10)

In the previous parable, the *"seed"* represented Word of God. Here the *"good seed"* represents the children of God. People who no doubt accepted the seed of God's Word into their hearts and became *"wheat."*

The *"good seed"* (children of God) are produced by Jesus Christ. He gives the increase. He is sovereign in the area of salvation.

Since the *"field"* is the "*world"* and it is called *"His field"* this means that the world (the globe) belongs to Jesus Christ. It is His world.

"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein" (Ps. 24:1; cp. Exod. 9:29; I Cor. 10:26, 28)

V. 25

"We must stay awake to make sure that Satan's ministers do not get into the true fellowship and do damage (II Pet. 2; I Jn. 4:1-6). It is when God's people go to sleep that Satan works" (Wiersbe, p. 46).

Since Satan will be bound for 1,000 years during the Millennium Kingdom (Rev. 20:1-3), this parable must refer to the time period prior to that kingdom (our present age).

"Tares" - rye grass, weeds, or darnel, which often grows up with the wheat. "One side effect of the darnel seed is that it is subject to a parasite fungus, which infects seed and is poisonous to both men and beasts" (Unger's Bible Dictionary, p. 1144-45, cited by Walvoord, p. 100).

V. 26

The most common type of tare in the Holy Land is the bearded darnel (Lolium Temulentum) which is "a poisonous grass, almost indistinguishable from the wheat while the two are growing into blade. But when they come into ear, they can be separated without difficulty" (Unger, p. 1145).

"Then appeared" - prior to the tares being clearly manifested, they looked just like wheat.

It was called "bastard wheat," because it was <u>not</u> legitimate real wheat.
I'm sure that most "tares" don't realize (think) that they are tares. Because of:

1) Their <u>proximity</u> (closeness) to the wheat (they worship together, go to church together, etc.)

2) Their <u>similarity</u> with the wheat (they drink the same water, share the same soil and sunlight, and for a while even look alike)

Just as it is often hard to tell the difference between a blade of wheat from a tare (in its early stages) because they look so much alike, so we must not forget that Satan's servants (witnesses) look great on the outside (II Cor. 11:13-15).

Ecumenical unity and evangelism plans right into the hands of Satan, who is glad to have Christians embrace his "tares" as "Brethren."

"Fruit" - "Two believers can be identified by their spiritual and practical fruit (grain) and unbelievers by their lack of it" (MacArthur, p. 378).

The wheat and tares were practically indistinguishable until the "fruit" of the wheat appeared and the manifestation of the tares appeared. This distinction will be most evident in the Last Days, when people all over this earth will be forced (by Antichrist) to show whose side they are on.

Unregenerate men can imitate true believers for only so long; eventually their true nature begins to show.

II. THE TWO CROPS (v. 27-30a)
(The co-existence of the "wheat with "tares" will continue during this Age)

V. 28
"An enemy hath done this"

"Because of this resemblance, sowing tares. . . among the wheat was sometimes done in ancient times out of spite or revenge by an enemy who wanted to destroy or at least greatly reduce the value of someone's crop. It was a common enough crime for the Romans to have had a specific law against it" (MacArthur, p. 367).

Satan's primary weapons used to fight against God's work is to seek to corrupt God's work from the inside, by planting "tares" (false believers) in the midst of the "wheat" (true Christians). Satan then uses these pawns to *"sow discord among the brethren"* (Prov. 6:19). To divide, spread rumors (gossip), teach false doctrine, draw away disciples after themselves (cause splits, schisms), etc.

"The servants" - perhaps the same beings as the *"reapers"* (v. 30), who are called *"angels"* (v. 39).

The angels no doubt abhor the infiltration of the unrighteous among the righteous, the unequal yokings that take place, the tolerance of unregenerate people to join believing congregations, colleges, and seminaries.

V. 28-29

Men question why there is evil in the world and God doesn't wipe the evil people out. The reason is, that if He were to wipe out the wicked, His judgments would also affect the righteous.

The reason why God doesn't allow angels to separate the tares from the wheat is because in so doing, their supernatural power, plagues, and judgments would affect the wheat as well.

V. 30 ***"Let both grow together" -*** Allow them to co-exist.

It is not God's will that believers move to a monastery and live in isolation from unbelievers. Jesus said: *"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil [one]"* (Jn. 17:15).

We are *"in the world*" but not *"of the world"* (v. 16).

Paul wrote: *"I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world."* (I Cor. 5:9-10)

III. THE TWO HARVESTS (v. 30, 39b-43)

(The severance of the "wheat" from the "tares" will occur at the completion of this Age) (compare: Rev. 14:14-20)

V. 30

"The harvest" - this harvest is singular because the harvest of the living wicked and living righteous will occur at the same time (season).

This harvest will also occur at a specific time. *"Time" =* season or moment of time. Known only by the Lord.

"Gather" - Note: the world "gather" is used frequently of the gathering for Armageddon (Rev. 14:19; 16:14, 16; 19:19)

"Father ye together first" - the "gathering" for Armageddon will occur before the Rapture, although the Battle of Armageddon does not occur until after the Rapture.

First the wedding of the Church (Rev. 19:7-10), then the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-21).

This *"harvest"* is described in more detail in Rev. 14:14-20 -

1. The removal of the righteous at the Rapture (v. 14-16)
2. The gathering of the wicked for Armageddon (v. 17-20)

"In bundles" - [plural] -- many.

Bundles will be gathered, but the biggest bundle will gather in the Valley of Megiddo (Rev. 9:16; 16:14, 16). This big bundle will be destroyed by Christ at His second coming (after the Rapture) but the rest will not be destroyed until after His descent during the sheep and goat judgment (Mt. 25:31-46).

"Gather the wheat into my barn" - a reference to the Rapture, when the saints will be brought to Jesus to obtain the promised kingdom.

"The harvest is the end of the world" - lit. the end (consummation) of the age (*aionos* not *kosmos*). The end of this time period; the end of the church age.

Note: Christ's reference to the "Last Day" (Jn. 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 7:37; 11:24; 12:48) also does not mean the last day of the globe as some teach, but the last day of this present age.

V. 40

"***End of this world" =*** end of this age.

This judgment is described throughout the New Testament -

Mt. 13:47-50 - Separation of the good fish from the bad

II Thess. 1:7-10 - SEE

Rev. 19:15 - *"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress*
of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

This parable is evidently not limited to the exact same timing as the separation of thesheepfromthegoats (Mt.25:31-46). Proof: Intheparableofthe"wheatandtares" it is *"angels"* that do the separation (v. 30, 29, 41), whereas in the "sheep and goats" parable, it is specifically Jesus Christ (*"the King"* alone) who separates them (Mt. 25:32-33).

The wheat and tares describes a "harvest" to occur for both immediately after the Rapture, whereas the sheep and goats describe a severance to occur when Christ is sitting on His throne prior to the establishment of His kingdom.

V. 41

"All things that offend" - All people that offend.

"Offend" - those who cause others to sin

"Iniquity" - those who commit acts and practices contrary to God's law.

V. 42

"A furnace of fire" - Hell (Lk. 16:23ff)

The weeping and gnashing of teeth is a reaction to the judgment to come mentioned frequently in Matthew (8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30).

"Each time it is used, it refers to judgment on sinners before the Millennium is established.

"Weeping" suggests sorrow and grief (emotional agony of the lost in hell)

And *"grinding of teeth"* speaks of pain (physical agony in hell)
(Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 50).

V. 43

"Shine" - We will radiate the imparted glory of Christ.

"The righteous will shine" because rather than causing others to sin while on earth, they turned sinners to righteousness (Dan. 12:3 - *"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."*)

CONCLUSION: Which "seed" are you?

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear" - These words show the seriousness of what Jesus has said. You must not be so concerned about everything else that you don't give thought as to whether you are a "wheat" stalk or a "tare."
Are you a child of God or Satan? (cp. Jn. 8:44

Lest you should be exalted in pride because you are wheat, or others are tares, you must never forget that you were once a "tare" seed before the Lord supernaturally transformed you into a wheat seed!

"THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN"

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-50
3-18-2018

INTRODUCTION:

***Are you a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven?**

Jesus, by parables, describes four facets of the Kingdom of Heaven:

I. The <u>GROWTH</u> of the Kingdom (v. 31-32)
(The Kingdom's population started small but will end large)

II. The <u>MIXTURE</u> of the Kingdom (v. 33)
(The Kingdom's saints are presently mixed in with sinners)

III. The <u>VALUE</u> of the Kingdom (v. 44-46)
(The Kingdom's worth is infinitely beyond compare)

A. The Hidden <u>Treasure</u> (v. 44)

B. The <u>Pearl</u> of Great Price (v. 45-46)

IV. The <u>PURGING</u> of the Kingdom (v. 47-50)
(The Kingdom will not be inherited by the wicked)

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"THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN"

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-50
3-18-2018

INTRODUCTION:

EX: How often we describe something by telling what it is <u>like</u>.

In this chapter, the Lord Jesus, the Master Teacher, uses analogous parables to tell what the *"Kingdom of Heaven"* is like.

<u>Timeline of the Kingdom</u>

1. Church Age - Matt.16:18
2. The Rapture-Resurrection of the "just" ones - I Thess.4:13-18
3. The Judgment Seat of Christ – Rom.14:10; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor.5:10
4. The Return for Armageddon - Rev. 19
5. The Separation of the Sheep from Goats - Matt.13:47-50 & Matt.25:31-46
6. Phase 1 of Christ's Eternal Kingdom = 1,000 Year reign of Christ "Millennium" - Rev.20:1-10
7. Great White Throne Judgment of the "unjust" and Millennial Mortals - Rev.20:11-15
8. Phase 2 of Christ's Eternal Kingdom = The Eternal State - Rev. 21-22

After painting several pictures of what the Kingdom of Heaven is like, Jesus asks a question (NOTE: v. 51-52).

"New and old" - teaching about the Kingdom does include the Old Testament promises made to Israel as well as the new promises given by Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

In order to rightly understand the Kingdom, one must have a balanced understanding of the Old Testament prophecy about the literal aspects of this Kingdom, as well as the New Testament statements of Christ which unfold the spiritual aspects of this Kingdom.

In brief, Christ is describing the New Testament spiritual salvation of people who will occupy that future messianic Kingdom promised in the Old Testament, to be realized in the Millennium.

***Are you a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven?**

Jesus, by parables, describes four facets of the Kingdom of Heaven:

I. The GROWTH of the Kingdom (v. 31-32)
(The Kingdom's population started small but will end large)

V. 31

"The Kingdom of Heaven" - is so called not because the events described occur in Heaven, but because it is a Kingdom brought about (initially on earth) by the God of Heaven. Hence, it is also called the *"Kingdom of God"* because it is a Kingdom wrought by God and not man.

"Mustard seed" - a seed noted for its small size (EX: *"faith the size of a mustard seed"*)

(NOTE: V. 32 - ***"which indeed is the least of all seeds" - "least" =*** *microteron* cp. "microscopic" = meaning smallest)

The mustard seed is not the smallest seed, but is the smallest among Palestine's garden plants (agricultural plants used for food) of which the mustard tree was one (MacArthur, p. 369).

"A man took" - This "man" no doubt again referring to the same man who *"sowed good seed in his field"* (v. 24) (i.e. the *"Son of man"* - Jesus Christ v. 37).

"In his field" - Again, it is important to note that the field (i.e. the world) is *"HIS"* -- it belongs to Jesus Christ (*"All things were created by Him and for Him"* - Col. 1:16)

V. 32

"Greatest among the herbs" - a mustard tree is technically not a tree, but an herb that is practically a tree, since it is so large for the herb family.

"The birds of the air" - some identify these "birds" with Satan and his demons (like in 13:4, 19). However, the point of this parable is not who the birds are. The point is that the mustard tree can grow so large that birds can come and lodge in its branches. The birds are mentioned simply to show the largeness of the tree (cp. Mk. 4:30-32; Lk. 13:18, 19), not necessarily to convey any spiritual significance.

Note: BE CAREFUL not to press every single detail of a parable and to find more meaning than is intended.

The point of this parable does not involve the birds, but the great growth of the tree (cp. Dan. 4:12).

The Kingdom of Christianity of which Christ speaks began small (Christ only selected 12 disciples and this small beginning grew to 120 ([Acts 1], then spread from Jerusalem, into Samaria and Judea, and into the uttermost part of the earth).

Don't despise "small things."

Just as Christ poured His whole public ministry (3-1/2 years) into only 12 men (and three in particular - the inner circle of Peter, James, and John), so churches that are committed to investing time and energy into discipling and training a core of committed believers must not be underestimated!

Eleven of the twelve disciples ended up *"turning the world upside down"* for Christ. The investment Christ made into 12 men paid off. The world has felt the shock and has never been the same since!

Never forget: "If we concern ourselves with the depth of our ministry, God will take care of the breadth of it" (MacArthur).

II. The MIXTURE of the Kingdom (v. 33)

(The Kingdom's saints are presently mixed in with sinners)

Some view the *"leaven"* in a good sense, as depicting the growth of the Kingdom of Heaven by means of the penetrating power of the gospel.

However, several evidences can be given to show that the word "leaven" is used in a negative sense to describe the presence of evil (sinners) within Christendom:

1. The metaphoric use of the word "leaven" always refers to the presence of impurity or sin in the Bible (Ex. 12:15; Lev. 2:11; Mt. 16:6; I Cor. 5:6-9; Ga. 5:9; I Tim. 4:1; Jude 12).

   "Throughout the Bible, leaven is a symbol of evil. It had to be removed from the Jewish homes during Passover (Ex. 12:15-19, 13:7). It was excluded from the sacrifices (Ex. 34:35). . . Jesus used leaven to picture hypocrisy (Lk. 12:1, false teaching (Mt. 16:6-12), and worldly compromise (Mt. 22:16-21). Paul uses leaven to picture carnality in the church (I Cor. 5:6-8) as well as false doctrine (Gal. 5:9). Sin is like leaven (yeast): it quietly grows, it corrupts, and it *"puffs up"* (I Cor. 4:18-19); 5:2; 8:1)." (Wiersbe, p. 46).

2. In the context, Jesus describes the same thought of sinners being mixed in with believers (Ex: wheat and tares parable - v. 24-30, 37-43). The "leaven" conveys a synonymous idea as the "tares" of verses 25 and 38.

3. Jesus deliberately uses the word *"hid"* (*enkrupto* - to hide inside) not the word "mix" (*sunkerannumi* or *mignumi*).

   This word "hid" describes the deliberate and diabolical work of Satan the enemy, who seeks to spread corruption inside of Christianity by secretly hiding his "leavened" unbelievers in the midst of the "meal" (God's children).

3 measures of meal would amount to about 1/2 bushel or 22 liters, which had leaven stirred into it.

--The presence of "leaven" makes it very difficult to distinguish the leaven from the meal once mixed together (cp. the wheat and tare similarity).

--The presence of "leaven" among the meal will physically expand the meal, making it to appear bigger (more in abundance) than it actually is. [Many of the people who fill the churches in America today are lost.]

III. The VALUE of the Kingdom (v. 44-46)

(The Kingdom's worth is infinitely beyond compare)

A. The Hidden Treasure (v. 44)

"Treasure" - this treasure unmistakably refers to Jesus Christ

(Some say the treasure refers to the church which Christ purchases with His blood. However, before conversion we were not a treasure, and we certainly were not hidden from His view.)

"Hid" - because the world cannot see Him. He is not recognizable to most of the world. He is overlooked, neglected, and unwanted by those who fail to see Him for who He is! (I Cor. 2:7-8 - *"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.")*

"Treasure" - This is an apt illustration of Jesus Christ, the King of the Kingdom of Heaven.

1) Since He is called *"the unspeakable (indescribable) gift"* (II Cor. 9:15)

2) Since He shines brighter than all silver and gold (Rev. 1:16)

3) Since to have Him is to have everything and to not have Him is to have nothing (I Jn. 5:12).

"Joy" - Did you ever experience the joy of finding someone extremely valuable?

Finding Christ brings inexpressible joy! (I Pet. 1:8 - *"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."*

"Selleth all that he hath" - This is an illustration of true repentance. Repentance is "a willingness to turn from everything that is keeping you from receiving Christ."

ILLUS: the man who was unwilling to sell all for Christ (SEE: Rev. 19:16-24).

"Buyeth that field" - in the parable, the reason the field is bought is because that is where the treasure is! It is the treasure and not the field that is desired. The treasure of Heaven is Jesus Christ.

ILLUS: The hymn "Fill My Cup" exclaims: "There are millions in this world who are craving the pleasures earthly things afford, but none can match the wondrous treasure that I find in Jesus Christ my Lord!"

Paul considered all things he formerly trusted in and lived for as "dung" when compared with the matchless treasure of having Christ (Phil. 3:5-7).

B. The Pearl of Great Price (v. 45-46)

V. 45

Man has always searched for precious gems and metals (job 28).

Yet such pursuits are vain. The only reason they are valuable is because they are rare and pleasing to the eye.

"For all the efforts taken to find, mine, refine, cut, polish, mount, sell and buy precious stones and metals, none of them offers anything truly worthwhile or lasting. They cannot heal a broken relationship, give peace to a troubled mind, or forgive a sinful heart. They offer little for the present and nothing for the future" (macArthur, p. 385).

"What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his soul?" (Mk. 8:365).

"Seeking goodly pearls" - many people are seeking the truth, answers, the way of salvation. However, their answer is not in *"pearls"* (plural) but *"one pearl"* (v. 46).

"One pearl of great price" - this pearl like the treasure (v. 44) refers to Jesus Christ.

"Bought it" - This parable is not teaching that you must buy salvation; or buy Jesus Christ. But what it is teaching is that when someone truly discovers the value of having Jesus Christ, they are willing to relinquish everything to have him.

As the hymnwriter said: "Turn your eyes upon Jesus; look full in His wonderful face; and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace."

Salvation is not bought with money or any material possession (Is. 55:1 - *"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.")*

Most people who consider receiving Christ as Savior and Lord do not consciously inventory all their material, social and other possessions to see if He is worth sacrificing those things for. When they discover the infinite value of salvation, they simply yield to Christ. Their focus is not on what they give up but on what they receive. But if their redemption is genuine, their lives will evidence a willingness to surrender whatever stands between them and faithfulness to their Lord." (macArthur, p. 391).

"Salvation that is not desired above everything else is not truly desired" (MacArthur, p. 390).

Do you want to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven? Then you need to see the value of the King!

ILLUS: of Spurgeon's salvation upon the invitation to "Look to Jesus" (MacArthur, p. 388-9).

IV. The <u>PURGING</u> of the Kingdom (v. 47-50)
(The Kingdom will not be inherited by the wicked)

V. 47
"A net" - this method of fishing was one of the ways Peter, James, and John fished. It involved casting a net (with floats on top and weights on bottom) into the water along the shore (men in a boat and men near shore) and dragging it (hence it is called a "dragnet") parallel with to shore and so scooping up all kinds of fish that would hug the shoreline.

V. 48
"Sat down" - this compares with how the King (Jesus Christ) will *"<u>sit</u> upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations..."* (mt. 25:31-32).

V. 49
"The end of the world" = the completion of this age

After the Rapture and after Armageddon comes this judgment to determine who will enter the Millennial Kingdom (SEE: The separation of the sheep and goats - Mt. 25:31ff. The Gentiles will be judged as well as the Jews; SEE: Ezek. 20:33-38)

V. 50
"Furnace of fire" - a reference to hell. The Lord Jesus talked much about the horrible reality of hell (Mt. 5:20; 7:13, 19, 23, 27; 10:28; 12:36; 16:18; 18:8-9; 21:43-44; 23:14-15; 24:40-41, 51; 25:30, 46).

"Wailing" - to weep in a loud cry - speaks of the emotional sorrow (because of the realization of eternal loss and ruin).

"Gnashing of teeth" - speaks of the physical pain (to be endured throughout eternity).

CONCLUSION:

<u>Timeline of the Kingdom</u>

9. Church Age - Matt.16:18
10. The Rapture-Resurrection of the “just” ones - I Thess.4:13-18
11. The Judgment Seat of Christ – Rom.14:10; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor.5:10
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"THE TRAGEDY OF UNBELIEF"

Matthew 13:53-58
3/25/2018

INTRODUCTION: Verse 53

***Beware of the dangers of unbelief!**

I. Unbelief keeps people from <u>seeing</u> Christ for who He is (v. 54-56)

II. Unbelief keeps people from <u>honoring</u> Christ with the honor He deserves (v. 57)

III. Unbelief keeps people from <u>receiving</u> from Christ what He has to give (v. 58)

Jesus is either:

<u>Liar</u> - He knew He really wasn't God but said He was
<u>Lunatic</u> - He thought He was God but really wasn't
Or **<u>LORD</u>** - He knew He was God and made truthful claims to be

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"THE TRAGEDY OF UNBELIEF"

Matthew 13:53-58
3/25/2018

INTRODUCTION: Verse 53

Some people wrongly view Christ as a mere man (a mere mortal).

EX: thehumilityofChristinHisincarnation. Hesurrenderedsomuch. Hisdeitywasveiledfrom the eyes of men (SEE Christ syllabus).

***Beware of the dangers of unbelief!**

I. Unbelief keeps people from <u>seeing</u> Christ for who He is (v. 54-56)

V. 54

"His own country" - Nazareth, how home town, his own native town, where He grew up as a boy and worked as a young man.

"He taught them" - the imperfect tense suggests that He taught them on more than one occasion.

"Astonished" = amazed, astounded, overwhelmed.

"Whence hath this man" - Where did He get such awesome wisdom from? After all:

--He didn't go to a theological seminary
--He wasn't instructed by any big-named Rabbi
--He doesn't have the initials of a doctors degree by His name

"Wisdom" - His <u>words</u>

"Works" - His <u>miracles</u>

What Jesus <u>did</u> authenticated what He <u>said</u>.

They wouldn't even utter His name, although they knew it better than anyone else, but they just said: ***"this man"*** = lit. this one, "this fellow" used with an attitude of contempt or disrespect.

V. 55

"<u>the</u> carpenter's" - Joseph was a woodworker or builder. The definite article *"the"* indicates possibly that he was the only one in town, well known to all (Rienecker, p. 42).

Mark records them also saying *"Is not this the <u>carpenter</u>?"* (showing that they were also astonished that someone of such a humble, common trade could have such spiritual wisdom and mighty miracles).

"Is not this the carpenter's son?" - Answer: No.

Jesus was virgin-born. His birth had nothing to do with Joseph (Mt. 1:18-25).

"Is not his mother called Mary?" - Yes, her name is Mary; but she is not the mother of Jesus in the same sense as other children have mothers.

Jesus came from Heaven and miraculously entered her womb, whereas all other children have their origin in the womb of their mother.

"His brethren. . ." - they were not full brothers, but half-brothers, because they did not have the same father.

Among Jesus' half brothers, James evidently became the leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13) and the writer of the book of James, and Judas (i.e. Jude) became the writer of the book of Jude.

V. 55-56

These two verses prove one thing for sure. And that is that Mary did not remain a perpetual virgin as the RCC teaches. She with Joseph had four other sons and at least two daughters.

Jesus, who had humble beginnings, a humble and ordinary family (Joseph a carpenter, Mary a mother and housewife), a humble trade . . . How could He be the Messiah?

These people were neighbors of Jesus' family; they saw Him as a child. Perhaps their own children played with Him.

No doubt they observed His unusual obedience to Mary and Joseph; they wondered why He never got in trouble. They may have been amazed that He was never accused of wrongdoing. Perhaps they were taken back by His love for people, His kindness and graciousness.

They Bible is clear that He as a boy had <u>favor</u> with people (Lk. 2:52).

V. 56

In comparing Jesus with his half brothers and sisters, a sharp contrast was noted by the people of Nazareth. They knew He was different, but would not believe He was who He said He was.

Many wrongly judge others by their education, social status, name, wealth, prestige, roots or heritage, fame, hometown, etc. None of which tells you anything about the personal character of the person.

Many today wrong consider a famous preacher on the radio or TV as more believable (more knowledgeable, more trustworthy) than their own pastor. Why? Because of his notoriety, fame, and because of his coming to you from a distance.

It is wrong to judge someone by appearance and circumstance.

What was the problem of the people of Nazareth?

1. They thought Jesus was merely human (they knew Him "*after the flesh*" - II Cor. 5:16)

   (In Luke's account (4:1-30) – after Jesus boldly stated that He was the fulfilment of Isaiah 61:1, they attempted to throw Him off of the cliff in Nazareth!)

2. They walked by sight and not by faith (II Cor. 5:7)

Examples of people who didn't recognize Jesus for who He was:

John 1:10-11 - *"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not."*

John 4:10 - *"Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."*

John 5:18 - *"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."*

John 8:19 - *"Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also."*

John 9:30 - *"The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvelous thing, that ye knew not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes."*

John 10:33 - *"The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not: but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."*

John 14:9 - *"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"*

Luke 5:21 - *"And the scribes and Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"*

Luke 23:35 - *"And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others: let him save himself, if he be the Christ, the chosen of God."*

Mark 15:31-32 - *"Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others, himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross. that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him."*

Acts 13:27 - *"For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him."*

Cp. I Cor. 2:8 - *"Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."*

The most fatal mistake a person could ever make in life is to live and die without realizing who Jesus was!

John 8:24 - *"for if ye believe not that I am (he), ye shall die in your sins."*

II. Unbelief keeps people from <u>honoring</u> Christ with the honor He deserves (v. 57)

The word "*offended*" (imperfect, passive) indicates that they allowed the influence of people, and situations and circumstances to cause them to take offense at Him over and over again. They repeatedly refused to believe in Him.

Something stood in the way of their believing in Him.

Jesus promised blessedness to whoever would not be offended at Him (Mt. 11:6 - *"And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."*)

"A prophet is not without honor" - Quoting a well-known saying, is the negative way of saying: "A prophet always has honor, except in his own hometown and in his own family."

"Honor" - to treat with value, respect, dignity.

Christ was to have equal honor with God the Father (John 5:23).

Unfortunately, familiarity often breeds contempt or less respect.

They wondered, "How in the world could a person from our own midst (from our inferior city - Jn. 1:46) possibly possess such wisdom and power?

Sometimes the hardest people to reach with the Gospel are those who know you best.

Jesus warned that your worst trouble will often come from your own family (Mt. 10:21, 35-36).

III. Unbelief keeps people from <u>receiving</u> from Christ what He has to give (v. 58)

Mark 6:5 says: *"He <u>could</u> do no mighty work"* - It's not that He did not have the ability, or that He was dependent on man's faith in order to do mighty miracles, but that the Father would not allow Him to perform miracles in front of the eyes of people who wouldn't believe no matter what He did.

Mark describes how Jesus did heal a *"few sick folk"* (6:5) (no doubt motivated by compassion)

Jesus was not in the business of performing miracles simply to entertain people; nor did He have to stoop so low as to prove Himself and thus compel people to believe. These people had already seen His *"mighty works"* (v. 54), and yet they still stubbornly refused to believe. Why should Jesus have to perform more? Such would only heighten their guilt and increase their condemnation (cp. Mt. 11:21-22).

Although the Lord Jesus has all power, He can do nothing in your life if you refuse to believe (Heb. 11:6).

Just as Jesus refused to continue to perform miracles for those who refused to believe, so He will not answer prayers today that are not prayed in faith! (Mk. 11:24; Ja. 1:6-7).

Jesus' experience with His hometown friends and neighbors must have hurt Him deeply. Luke says they were going to kill Him (Lk. 4:28-29). He loved them in a very special way because they had been his friends, his neighbors, and He wanted to do so much for them. But He was unable to, because they never recognized Him for who He was!

CONCLUSION:

They never realized who He really was -- the Lord of glory!

Do you see Jesus for who He is?

POEM: "You Call Me Lord"

If Christ were not the Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, Lord, then He is the worst imposter and most tragic deceiver in history.

Jesus is either:

Liar -He knew He really wasn't God but said He was
Lunatic -He thought He was God but really wasn't
Or **LORD** -He knew He was God and made truthful claims to be

"HEROD: A MAN HAUNTED BY SIN"

Matthew 14:1-13

10/17/93

INTRODUCTION:

***Beware of the dominating power of sin!**

A life dominated by sin will be characterized by:

I. An Attempt to Secretly <u>COVER UP</u> the Sin (v. 3-4)

II. Foolish <u>BEHAVIOR</u> and Foolish <u>DECISIONS</u> (v. 5-8)

III. A Sorrow But No <u>REPENTANCE</u> (v. 9a; Mark 6:20)

IV. A <u>CAVING IN</u> Under Peer <u>PRESSURE</u> (v. 9b-11)

V. A <u>GUILTY CONSCIENCE</u> (v. 1-2)

CONCLUSION:

"HEROD: A MAN HAUNTED BY SIN"

Matthew 14:1-13

10/17/93

INTRODUCTION:

"This true account is more incredible than the most bizarre soap opera. It is a story of infidelity, divorce, remarriage, incest, political intrigue, jealousy, spite, revenge, lewdness, lust, cold-heartedness, cruelty, brutality, violence. . . fear" (MacArthur, p. 416).

V. 1

"Herod" - the son of Herod the Great (his father attempted to secure his throne by ordering the death of all male Jewish babies under two years old, in an attempt to kill the *"King of the Jews"* - Mt. 2).

Herod had married the daughter of Aretas, king of the Nabataean Arabs, but on a trip to Rome he had visited his half-brother Philip and was deeply attracted to his wife, Herodias. He seduced her and talked her into returning with him. Herod's own wife discovered his plans, and fearing for her life, she fled to her father King Aretas. Herod divorced her and incestually married Herodias.

V. 3

"For Herodias' sake" - Perhaps the coaxing (prodding) of Herodias helped drive Herod to have John locked up.

V. 4

""It is not lawful" - The law against committing incest - Lev. 18:16 - *"Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife; it is thy brother's nakedness."*

John the Baptist's rebuke to Herod shows these facts:

1. God's law applies to all people (kings and pagan leaders included)

2. God's people must be bold enough to tell the truth to anyone.

3. God's people must uphold God's Law no matter what the cost may be.

God expects His servants to preach the truth even if it offends people -

> Eph. 5:11 - *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."*
>
> II Tim. 4:2 - *"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."*
>
> Isaiah 58:11 *"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins."*
>
> Ezek. 3:18 - *"When I saw unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand."*

John the Baptist was the first martyr to die for Christ.

V. 5

Herod, being pressured by Herodias (Mk. 6:19), had thoughts of putting John to death, but he could not for two main reasons:

1) John had a multitude of supporters who considered him a prophet (v. 5).

2) John was righteous and guilty of no wrong deserving death (SEE: Mk. 6:19-20)

"John was put in the fortress of Machaerus, located about four miles east of the Dead Sea. It stood 3,500 feet above sea level on a rocky ridge that was accessible from only one side" (Wiersbe, p. 49).

V. 10-11

"He sent and beheaded John in the prison"

1) No one can take our lives until God's purpose for our life is complete (God allowed John to live long enough to see and hear of Christ's miracles and message - Mt. 11:2-6).

2) Even the greatest of saints (Mt. 11:10-11) is not above persecution and martyrdom.

3) God's love is not diminished at all for those of His children who die such a tragic death (Rom. 8:35-37 - *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.").*

V. 11

"A charger" - a platter

What a gruesome, inhumane act!

Herodias no doubt thought that she was now free from the stigma of her sin; like many who abort their babies to cover up their shame. Such acts do nothing but heighten the guilt and condemnation.

One writer comments: *"When the dish was brought in with the bleeding head on it, no doubt [Salome] took it daintily in her hands lest a drop of it should stain her [dress] and she scurried away to her mother as if bearing her some choice dish of food from the king's table. It was not uncommon to bring the head of one who had been slain to the person who ordered it, as sure proof that the command had been obeyed."* It is reported that when the head of Cicero was brought to Fulvia, the wife of Antony, that she spat on it, pulled its tongue out and drove her hairpin through it (cited by MacArthur, p. 422).

John 3:19 - *"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."*

***Beware of the dominating power of sin!**

A life dominated by sin will be characterized by:

I. An Attempt to Secretly <u>COVER UP</u> the Sin (v. 3-4)

Luke 3:18-20 - *"And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people. But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison."*

Herod feared that John and his popularity might be a thorn in his side and cause him more trouble, perhaps even incite a rebellion. So he put him away to prevent any politically incorrect difficulty from arising (Josephus. Antiquities 18.5:1-2).

Persecution is on the horizon in this country. As the gulf between the righteous and the unrighteous broads, as the wicked do more wickedly, eventually they are not going to tolerate anything and anyone who might interfere with their abominable lifestyle.

Their goal will be to quiet down those "big-mouthed evangelists"; to silence those who confront the society's wickedness; to shut down churches that oppose homosexuality, or abortion rights.

It's all part of a cover-up attempt.

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13).

II. Foolish <u>BEHAVIOR</u> and Foolish <u>DECISIONS</u> (v. 5-8)

V. 6

Herod was so debauched that he was turned on by his own wife's daughter.

V. 7

Herod swore to give Herodias' daughter anything, even up to half of his kingdom (Mk. 6:23).

V. 8

"She, being before instructed" - Herodias plotted in advance "to have her teenage daughter perform a lascivious dance at Herod's birthday feast. Herodias knew that her husband would succumb to her daughter's charms and make some rash promise to her" (Wiersbe, p. 49). She then would get what she wanted -- John's head!

III. A Sorrow But No <u>REPENTANCE</u> (v. 9a; Mark 6:20)

Herod's sorrow was because of John's righteousness. He had some conscience left, which convicted him that he was about to execute an innocent man.

Herod listened to the truth, but remained unchanged (Mk. 6:20 - *"For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly"*)

The most frustrating thing a pastor does is present Biblical truth to satisfy the religious curiosity of people who have no intention of believing it and submitting to it.

Ezek. 33:31-32 - *"And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not."*

Being sorry is not enough. There must be repentance. There is a worldly sorrow and a Godly sorrow.

II Cor. 7:10 - *"For Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."*

Heb. 12:16-17 - *"Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."*

Herod's refusal to believe John's message was a foreshadowing of his fatal rejection of Jesus Christ (SEE: Luke 23:8-12).

IV. A CAVING IN Under Peer PRESSURE (v. 9b-11)

So as to "save face" before his friends and officials, Herod's pride would not let him do right.

Herod feared everyone but God.

He feared the multitude, John the Baptist, his wife, and his peers (MacArthur, p. 420).

Perhaps Herod feared being shamed and embarrassed by a woman's nagging tantrums before his guests or being the butt end of their jokes and amusements.

"Although Herod had no concern for principle, he had great concern for appearance. By breaking his word so soon after giving it, he would have been embarrassed in front of his dinner guests, who doubtlessly included many political and military dignitaries" (MacArthur, p. 421).

For Herod to deny his step-daughter Salome's request would give Herod's peers the idea that he was somehow favorable toward John the Baptist. There is no way a lost person will stand up for a man of God while in the midst of anti-God cronies.

So many teens give in to the pressures to conform at school. It's hard to go against the flow; it's not easy to be a minority on an issue; there is a lot of pressure when everyone else is doing it. However, we some Joseph's, Daniel's, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's!

V. A GUILTY CONSCIENCE (v. 1-2)

Herod was haunted by his remembrance of what he had done to John.

"Because of haunting guilt for having murdered John, Herod was afraid he had come back from the dead to (perhaps) seek revenge" (MacArthur, p. 417).

Although it was the *"fame of Jesus"* (v. 1) that spread throughout Palestine, Herod, because he had a guilty conscience for what he did to John the Baptist, thought he was vindicated by God and resurrected.

Herod's conscience was bothering him and no one could relieve his mental anguish. Instead of repenting for his execution of John, he thought that this one--John raised again (who was really Jesus)--needed to be killed.
Rather than mourning over the terrible sin he had committed and confessing it to God and repenting of it, Herod lived his life int he torment of fear and guilt, like so many today.

People who live with a guilty conscience:

1) Live with a paranoia, thinking that everyone is out to get them.

2) React abnormally (violently, harshly) whenever anyone hits a soft spot, strikes a vital never, or pushes the wrong buttons. No one can get too close to one who lives with a guilty conscience, because they fear you might discover something they want to keep buried.

3) Today, rather than dealing with the gnawing sin God's way (admitting it's wrong, asking forgiveness of the one(s) offended, and turning from it), society is striving to re-define it, justify it, or simply convince themselves that it was not wrong or that right and wrong are relative, there are no black and white issues.

They call good evil and evil good, so as not to live with a guilty conscience.

The Gay's agenda is to promote their lifestyle as being normal and socially acceptable, so that they won't have guilt feelings.

They view as a "bad guy" the one who calls a spade a spade. The evil one is the one who disapproves of homosexuality, who stands against abortion, who speaks up against sexual immorality.

The only sin today's society is seeing is the sin of <u>intolerance</u> or

non-acceptance!

CONCLUSION:

The Hymn: "Only Trust Him" - Come every soul by sin oppressed,
There's mercy with the Lord,
And He will surely give you rest
By trusting in His Word.

JESUS CHRIST:
The God of the Impossible

Matthew 14:14-21
4/15/2018

INTRODUCTION:

***Limited resources don't limit Jesus Christ one bit!**

Six truths to realize:

I. Realize: TURNING PEOPLE AWAY IS <u>NOT THE ANSWER</u> (v. 16a)

II. Realize: WE ARE <u>NOT ADEQUATE</u> IN OURSELVES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE MULTITUDES (v. 16b)

III. Realize: WITH JESUS NOTHING IS <u>INSIGNIFICANT</u> (v. 17)

IV. Realize: LITTLE BECOMES <u>MUCH</u> WHEN GIVEN TO JESUS (v. 18)

V. Realize: WHAT JESUS DOES FOR PEOPLE, HE OFTEN DOES <u>THROUGH HIS SERVANTS</u> (v. 19)

VI. Realize: THE INCREDIBLE IS <u>NOT IMPOSSIBLE</u> FOR JESUS (v. 20-21)

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JESUS CHRIST:
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Matthew 14:14-21
4/15/2018

INTRODUCTION:

The fact that Christ's feeding of the 5,000 occurs in all four Gospels shows its unique importance and its relevance to all people.

On two occasions, the Lord Jesus produced a miraculous feast (here, 5,000 men are fed with 5 loaves and 2 fish; and in 15:34-38, 4,000 men are fed with 7 loaves and a few sardines).

V. 14

What Jesus saw with His eye affected His heart.

The needs of the people stirred the compassion of Christ (His compassion today remains the same).

When Jeremiah saw the plight of his own Jewish people, he said, *"Mine eye affecteth mine heart"* (Lam. 3:51).

"Compassion" - (*splanchnizomai)* - one's insides; Christ's emotions and feelings were stirred!

There is something desperately wrong with us when our hearts are not moved at the plight of the multitudes around us. Jesus felt an intense compassion because of His perfect perception of hell and the torment those would face who did not receive Him (MacARthur, p. 428).

V. 15

"Jesus and His disciples desperately needed rest (Mark 6:31); yet the needs of the multitude touched His heart" (Wiersbe, p. 50).

"Evening" - (the Jews had 2 times of the day they called evening - cp. Exod. 12:6). This is a reference to the first part of "evening" (3:00 p.m.); the second evening (6:00 p.m.) occurred in verse 23 (the second evening was sundown).

The disciples--perhaps weary because of the activities and ministry of the busy day--recommend that Jesus dismiss the multitude so that they could have dinner and be on their way home.

The disciples give three reasons for such a request:

1) The location was inconvenient and incondusive.

The area where they were gathered was a *"desert place"* (a deserted, remote, "out in the middle of nowhere"). There was no answer to the need at hand where they were located. . . I should say, there appeared to be no provision in sight! God specializes in turning barren deserts into banqueting tables!

2) The time was getting late.

"The time is now past" **-** the hour was past for dismissal so that the men, women, and children could at a reasonable time make it to the villages for food and lodging.

Remember, God is not bound by the lock! He is not strapped by the timetable that straps us. His provision is always on time. God can do more in five minutes than we could do in a lifetime! No, make that a trillion lifetimes!

3) Their limited resources were inadequate to meet the needs of the multitude.

They looked at their limited earthly, human resources and saw no answer (five barley loaves and two fish).

"How easy it is for us to send people away, to make excuses, to plead a lack of resources" (Wiersbe, p. 51).

***Limited resources don't limit Jesus Christ one bit!**

Six truths to realize:

I. Realize: TURNING PEOPLE AWAY IS NOT THE ANSWER (v. 16a)

The disciples' answer to the multitudes' problem was to turn them away. This was too often their solution (EX: the little children [Mt. 19:13], the Syrophoenician women).

This was not Jesus' solution, however. He had an undying, untiring compassion toward them (Mt. 9:36).

"They need not depart" **-** It is not necessary for them to go away. All that they need is present with Christ. he is the *El Shaddai* - the all-sufficient God!

II. Realize: WE ARE <u>NOT ADEQUATE</u> IN OURSELVES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE MULTITUDES (v. 16b)

"Give ye them to eat" - Their eyes must have popped out as this statement came!

Can you imagine being put on the spot to produce a banquet (to become an instant caterer) for 10-20,000 people! And to have next to nothing to do it with?

When Jesus told His disciples to feed them, He knew <u>they</u> couldn't. He wanted them to learn a valuable lesson: What they could not do, He could. It was impossible for them to meet the needs of the multitudes, just like it is impossible for us. But He can! We are not adequate in ourselves, but He is!

No doubt as Jesus made this statement, He was testing their faith to see if they would say, "We don't have the resources, Lord, but <u>You do</u>! You can do it!"

"Give ye them to eat" - Jesus watched His frustrated disciples as they tried to solve the problem, but *"He Himself knew what He was intending to do"* (Wiersbe, p. 50) (SEE: John 6:5-9)

III. Realize: WITH JESUS NOTHING IS <u>INSIGNIFICANT</u> (v. 17)

"We have here <u>but</u>. . ." - If they had said this without the "*but*" they would have shown faith. They saw Christ perform the miraculous that day (v. 14); would providing food be impossible for such a One? Five loaves and two fish is more than enough substance for the Master.

God specializes in using small things, little things, insignificant things, or nothings! (I Cor. 1:27-29).

EXAMPLES:

--God had nothing, and from it he made the worlds (Heb. 11:3).

--From dust He made a man; from a rib He made a woman (Gen. 2).

--Abraham who had <u>no</u> children, God made the father of many nations.

--Gideon had an army of 32,000 going against the Midianites, who had 120,000. This was still too big, so God had him reduce his army to 300 (making it 400 to 1) -- and God won the victory (Jud. 7).

--Samson had the jawbone of a donkey, God used him to slay 1,000 Philistines with it (Jud. 15:15).

--David was a little boy, God empowered him to slay a 9'9'' giant Goliath.

--Jonathon said to his armor bearer, *"There is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or few"* (I Sam. 14:6), and God defeated multitudes.

--The widow of Zarephath gave Elijah her last piece of bread and God provided meal and oil for 3-1/2

When we are totally dependent upon Him, we don't have a lot. Jesus will take whatever you offer Him and use it.

The short-sighted disciples, having walked with the Lord for two years, should have known that Jesus could feed the multitude. "But they were like a person who stands in front of Niagara Falls and asks where he can find a drink" (MacArthur, p. 429).

IV. Realize: LITTLE BECOMES MUCH WHEN GIVEN TO JESUS (v. 18)

The presence of Jesus is the place of provision.

The miracle of multiplication is in His hands" (Wiersbe, p. 50).

"Little is much when God is in it."

"Little becomes much in the Master's hand."

However, much becomes little when it is stingily and selfishly kept from Christ (Hag. 1:6, 9).

V. Realize: WHAT JESUS DOES FOR PEOPLE, HE OFTEN DOES THROUGH HIS SERVANTS (v. 19)

The multitude would have to do what Christ said (*"Sit down")* in order to receive the blessing! There is blessing in obedience!

When ever anyone did what Jesus said, they were blessed!

"Looking up to Heaven" - So as to identify with God the Father, and to cause the people to recognize the source of the provision, Jesus looks up.

"He blessed" - He said a "good word" about the Father.

Our times of thanksgiving must praise God sincerely.

"Brake" - the loaves and fish were broken (each of the 12 disciples having a basket, received perhaps 1/3 or 1/2 of a loaf of bread and 1/8 to 1/4 of a fish).

The disciples were the bridge between Jesus and the multitudes. Jesus gave to the disciples, and they gave to the multitudes.

We are the bridge to the lost and dying world! Jesus has chosen to not meet their needs independently. His program is to use His people.

We have nothing of real value to give to the multitudes in our city until we get it from Christ! Don't minister without His power! Don't witness without bathing it in prayer.

Like the disciples, all we amount to are channels. Channels through which Christ can pour out His provision to others.

Remember as servants of Christ we are "distributors" not "manufacturers." (Wiersbe, p. 51).

Just as Christ used His disciples to dispense this food to the multitude, He uses you and me to dispense His Gospel to the spiritually hungry world we live in.

"The disciples to the multitude" - Although they had less than enough food to start with to feed one person, they were able to feed a multitude. Each time they reached their hands into the basket, more food appeared. God gave in proportion to the need, and more!

2 Corinthians 5 shows that we are God's tools which He uses to evangelize the lost. God "beseeches through us" for others to be "reconciled to God"

VI. Realize: THE INCREDIBLE IS <u>NOT IMPOSSIBLE</u> FOR JESUS (v. 20-21)

V. 20

"They did <u>all</u> eat" - Not one went away hungry. Each enjoyed perhaps the best bread and fish dinner they ever had (just as Jesus turned water into the <u>best</u> unfermented wine ever tasted, so this food was no doubt top choice!

"Were filled" - They ate until they were fully satisfied. Each had enough to the point that they couldn't eat another bite. They had so much that they had 12 baskets full left over!

"They took up of the fragments that remained" - John adds, *"that nothing be lost."* (Jn. 6:12). The Lord does not desire for us to waste or be bad stewards of what He gives to us.

"Twelve baskets" - each of the twelve disciples had more than enough food for themselves. *"The laborer is worthy of his hire".* God takes care of His servants.

Whatever we give to Jesus, He blesses and uses and gives back to us! (Prov. 3:9-10 - *"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.")*

V. 21

Together with the women and children there could have been perhaps 10-15,000 (maybe 25,000) people gathered.

What started out as perhaps 5 lbs. of food was multiplied to perhaps 10 thousand pounds of food to feed such a multitude!

CONCLUSION:

Can this Jesus who satisfied that hungry crowd . . .

--satisfy your hungry soul?
(He is the *"bread of life"*)

Did you know that the next day after this miracle Jesus gave a sermon about how He was "*the bread of life"*? (Jn. 6:22 ff).

"A hungry world is feeding on empty substitutes while we deprive them of the bread of life" (Wiersbe, p. 51).

--meet your every need?
(*"My God shall supply all your need"*)

--use you and use what you give to Him to bless others?

Faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains!

Not because of the "faith" but because of the object of the faith. . . Jesus Christ, the God of the impossible!

"OUR LIFE-PRESERVER"

Matthew 14:22-36
4/22/2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 22 - 23

***Jesus, our Life-Preserver, is worthy of your trust!**

5 Reasons:

I. He <u>RESPONDS</u> to Our Needs (v. 24-25)

II. He <u>RELIEVES</u> Our Fears (v. 26-29)

III. He <u>RESCUES</u> Our Souls (v. 30-31)

IV. He <u>RESTRAINS</u> Our Storms (v. 32-33)

V. He <u>REMOVES</u> Our Afflictions (v. 34-36)

CONCLUSION:

"OUR LIFE-PRESERVER"

Matthew 14:22-36
4/22/2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 22 - 23

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5 Reasons:

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II. He _____ Our Fears (v. 26-29)

III. He _____ Our Souls (v. 30-31)

IV. He _____ Our Storms (v. 32-33)

V. He _____ Our Afflictions (v. 34-36)

CONCLUSION:

"OUR LIFE-PRESERVER"

Matthew 14:22-36
4/22/2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 22 - 23

Illus: The importance of wearing a life-preserver while boating or swimming (for small children or inexperienced swimmers).

V. 22

"Constrained" = to compel; to strongly urge or to make someone do something.

Why did Jesus make the disciples board ship and set sail for the other side of the Sea of Galilee? Why now? Why at night?

Reason: Jesus knew a storm was coming, and He wanted His disciples to be right in the midst of it.

He set them up for a dramatic lesson they would never forget.

"To go before Him"- Jesus purposely did not go with them. He intentionally stayed back. The disciples would soon learn that He didn't need a boat! He could walk across the body of water.

V. 23

"When the evening was come" - the second evening (sundown). (cp. v. 15 - the first evening from 3:00 - 6:00)

Although Jesus had constant fellowship with the Father, He also set apart specific blocks of time to do nothing but commune with God the Father. While on earth, Jesus did everything and went everywhere under the direction of the Father (Jn. 8:28-29; Heb. 10:7).

If it was important for the Son of God to communicate with the Father, how much more vital is it that we (sinners) do so.

No doubt Jesus was praying (interceding) on behalf of His disciples (cp. Rom. 8:34; Heb. 4:14-16). He had been with them for 2 years, and yet they did not yet recognize Him for who He was - *"the Son of God"* (v. 33).

After this episode, they will see Him for who He is.

Mark 6:52 - *"For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened."*

Because the disciples did not catch the impact of Christ's feeding the 5,000 men, because it didn't yet dawn on them that Christ was God in the flesh, because they were spiritually insensitive as to who Jesus was -- He sends them into a storm, not to destroy them, but to enlighten them.

***Jesus, our Life-Preserver, is worthy of your trust!**

5 Reasons:

I. He <u>RESPONDS</u> to Our Needs (v. 24-25)

V. 24

The Sea of Galilee, though a small body of water, has storms arise suddenly, with winds and waves like that of ocean storms. (a *"great wind blew"* - John 6:18).

Illus: When in 1991, Pop and I were caught in a storm on Lake Herrington in Maine.

The little boat the disciples were in was in the middle of the lake and was helpless.

"Tossed with the waves" - to be battered and buffeted by the waves. With the boat far from land and the waters relentlessly beating into it, in the darkness of night, no doubt the thought of impending death went through the disciples' minds.

V. 25

"The fourth watch" = 3 - 6 a.m.

the first watch = 6 - 9 p.m.
the second watch = 9 - 12 p.m.
the third watch = 12 - 3 a.m.

Now it is the ***"fourth watch"*** - just before dawn. A trip that should have taken just a couple of hours, has now extended to 10 or 11 hours of agony, desperation, and *"straining at the oars"* (Mk. 6:48) for their very lives.

Jesus did not go to them immediately. Why the delay?

--To teach the disciples to trust the Lord's love and care for them

--To heighten the effect of Christ's rescue. Once their own strength and skill had been exhausted, the praise for deliverance would go to Christ and not themselves.

--The delay gave the miracle more impact (EX: Lazarus' death for 4 days)

Mark's Gospel reveals an interesting fact. In pitch darkness (somewhere between 3 - 6 a.m.), while Jesus was alone on the land (some 3 miles away from them), *"He saw them toiling in towing"*. He, whose "eye is on the sparrow," has His eye on His people. You are never out of His sight!

David often felt that God seemed far away or that God had abandoned him.

"Jesus went unto them" - As He did, He gave the appearance that He was going to <u>on by</u> (Lk. 6:48).

Sometimes it seems that God has by-passed us, that He is disinterested in helping us, but this is not true.

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you" (Is. 43:2).

II. He RELIEVES Our Fears (v. 26-29)

V. 26

Why did Jesus walk on the water? "To show His disciples that the very thing they feared (the sea) was only a staircase for Him to come to them" (Wiersbe, p. 52).

"Troubled" - terrified, frightened severely.

"It is a spirit" - lit. It is a phantom or a ghost!

"They cried out for fear" - These are grown men, some are tough and rugged fishermen. Yet they are screaming hysterically at what they see!

V. 27

"Be of good cheer" - Be encouraged, take courage (relax, don't worry).

How often we are afraid of divinely ordained situations and circumstances. Traumatic events that are actually for our well being.

"It is I" - Other than by the sound of the Voice, how would the disciples know who it was, with the wind blowing.

"It is I" might not mean much, unless Jesus had been more specific - "It is Me, Jesus."

The Greek text, however, reveals that what Jesus said was a phrase which was a title Himself, a title which identified Him as Jehovah God (cp. Jn. 8:58, 18:6 with Exod. 3:13-14).

He said literally: ***"I AM"*** *(ego eimi)*

Illus: the song "Anywhere With Jesus"

For an obedient child of God, the safest place in the universe is in the presence of Jesus.

"When believers are in the place of obedience, they are in the place of safety, no matter what the circumstances" (MacArthur, p. 442). The safest place is in the will of God.

EX: the 3 Hebrew youths in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3)
EX: Paul at Corinth (Acts 18:9-10)
EX: John, who thought he would die, was comforted by the Son of God (Rev. 1:17-

18)

When life seems hopeless, the believer is never alone and forsaken.

> Joshua 1:5 -*"There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."*
>
> Heb. 13:5-6*"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."*

V. 28

"Bid me come unto thee" - It is uncertain as to why Peter made such a request.

--Perhaps he was so thrilled to know it was Jesus, he wanted to get closer to the One who could keep him safe.

--Perhaps He wanted to experience the thrill of defying gravity and walking on water for himself.

V. 29

"He said, Come" - When Jesus says "Come" we need not fear (Illus: small children put faith in their parents as they leap into a pool deeper than they are tall).

Whatever the Lord says to do, though Satan may intimidate and incite apprehension in our hearts, we need not fear if Jesus is near!

Mt. 28:20 - He promises His presence with us as we witness, until the end of the age.

Note: If you get tempted to walk on water or test God by doing something He didn't tell you to do, don't expect God to bail you out. Unless Jesus says "Come," you had better not do it! And He only speaks by His Word, the Bible.

III. He RESCUES Our Souls (v. 30-31)

V. 30

"From the relative safety of the boat, the feat did not seem so terrifying; but once Peter got out of the boat. . . the situation appeared radically different" (MacArthur, p. 443).

The real test of faith comes not when life is smooth, calm, and pleasant, but when we are in the thick of the storm. When we by faith "step out on a limb" to do something for God we have never done before!

'But when he saw the wind" - Too often we let what we "see" intimidate us.

Circumstances can look impossible when we take our eyes off of the One with whom *"nothing is impossible"* (Mt. 19:26; Lk. 1:37; Lk. 18:27). Don't take your eyes off of Jesus and put them on your circumstances or yourself or some man!

It's amazing how quickly faith can turn to doubt and fear. Just a few seconds earlier, Peter recognized that Christ had power over the elements, now the elements seize his attention and focus.

At this moment, Peter's environment or circumstances seemed bigger than Jesus Christ.

"He was afraid" - Fear is always due to a lack of faith.

What is fear? Fear (worry, anxiety, etc.) is simply taking your eyes off of God and putting them either on yourself, others, or (as in Peter's case) your circumstances.

"Beginning to sink" - With the loss of faith came the loss of Peter's ability to stand on the water.

We sink when we doubt God. The bottom of our lives falls out from underneath us when we get our focus off of Christ.

"Lord, save me" - Rescue me, Lord!

"And immediately (without delay, promptly, right on the spot) ***Jesus stretched forth His hand" -*** Whenever anyone in sincerity recognizes that they are sinking deep in sin, and headed for Hell, and says "Lord, save me," Jesus immediately saves them! (Rom. 10:13).

V. 31

"O thou of little faith" **-** Could Jesus say this of you?

Why ***"didst thou doubt"***?

People doubt when they:

1) Question God's trustworthiness (Is He reliable?)

2) Question God's ability (Can He do it?)

3) Question God's promises (His Word) (Is He believable?)

4) Focus on the circumstances rather than on His faithfulness

IV. He RESTRAINS Our Storms (v. 32-33)

V. 32

As soon as they stepped on board, the wind stopped. Why so soon? It was not neededanymore. Thepurposeforthatstormwasaccomplished. Jesususedittoglorify Himself.

Not only did Jesus calm the storm and silence the *"great wind that blew"* (Jn. 6:18), but when this took place, *"immediately the ship was at the land whither they went"* (Jn. 6:21). One minute they are *"int he midst of the sea"* - the next, they were at land!

V. 33

"Worshipped Him" - Since only God is to be worshipped (Ex. 34:14; Mt. 4:10), and since Jesus accepted worship (Mt. 2:11, 8:2, 9:18, 15:25, 28:9, 17), He must be God!

"Thou art the Son of God" = a confession of deity. The title "Son of God" was a title recognizing that He was God. The phrase "Son of God" identified Him with God in Heaven, just as "Son of Man" (mt. 9:6) identified Him with man while on earth. He was the God-man.

"When Jesus calmed the first storm (Mt. 8:23-27), the disciples said, *"What manner of man is this?"* But now their clear testimony was, *"Thou art the Son of God"* (Wiersbe, p. 52).

V. He <u>REMOVES</u> Our Afflictions (v. 34-36)

V. 35

"<u>All</u> that were diseased" - No problem was too big for Jesus!

V. 36

They begged Jesus to simply touch the lower portion or fringe of His garment. It was not the garment that healed them, it was the One wearing it.

"As many as" - all. Everyone who touched His garment were healed. No one was rejected. No one was turned away. (cp. John 1:12 - *"But <u>as many as</u> received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"*; cp. John 6:37)

"Perfectly whole" - Completely healed. All who Jesus healed got completely healed, no persisting after effects remained. Jesus does nothing half way!

CONCLUSION: The Need to Look UP

THE BUZZARD:

If you put a buzzard in a pen that is 6 feet by 8 feet and is entirely open at the top, the bird, in spite of its ability to fly, will be an absolute prisoner. The reason is that a buzzard always begins a flight from the ground with a run of 10 to 12 feet. Without space to run, as is its habit, it will not even attempt to fly, but will remain a prisoner for life in a small jail with no top.

THE BAT:

The ordinary bat that flies around at night, a remarkable nimble creature in the air, cannot take off from a level place. If it is placed on the floor or flat ground, all it can do is shuffle about helplessly and, no doubt, painfully, until it reaches some slight elevation from which it can throw itself into the air. Then, at once, it takes off like a flash.

THE BUMBLEBEE:

A bumblebee, if dropped into an open tumbler, will be there until it dies, unless it is taken out. It never sees the means of escape at the top, but persists in trying to find some way out through the sides near the bottom. It will seek a way where none exists, until it completely destroys itself.

PEOPLE:

In many ways, we are like the buzzard, the bat, and the bumblebee. We struggle about with all our problems and frustrations, never realizing that all we have to do is look up!

Sorrow looks back, Worry looks around, but faith looks up!

"THE TRAP OF TRADITION"

Matthew 15:1-9
4/29/2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 2

***Beware of the evils of man-made tradition!**

Man-made tradition results in three evil traps:

I. Man-Made Tradition leads to the trap of:
<u>TRANSGRESSING</u> God's Word (v. 3-6a)
(Tradition offers a religious <u>justification</u> for sin)
". . . ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition"

II. Man-Made Tradition leads to the trap of:
<u>IGNORING</u> God's Word (v. 6b)
(Tradition results in a religious <u>disregard</u> for God's commands)
". . . ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition"

III. Man-Made Tradition leads to the trap of:
<u>REPLACING</u> God's Word (v. 7-9)
(Tradition becomes a religious <u>substitute</u> for sound doctrine)
". . . teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"



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"THE TRAP OF TRADITION"

Matthew 15:1-9
4/29/2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 2

Many ask the question today: "Why are there so many religions?"

"The Bible Plus_____"

The Bible teaches that there is a true religion (Ja. 1:27) and false religions (II Cor. 11:13-15).

Wherever there is the real, Satan (to confuse and distort) will always seek to introduce the unreal.

Today, the pure waters of Bible Christianity are muddied by "tradition" Christianity.

Today, some who profess Christ possess a living faith; but others - a "dead faith." Some trust the grace of God for salvation, others the works of man.

Some believe in the finished and sufficient work of Christ at Calvary; and others propose that Christ did not pay it all.

Such conflicts are not new.

v. 1

"Scribes and Pharisees which were of Jerusalem" - The Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem were the ultra-orthodox, extremist, strictest sect.

Several religious Pharisees and a few, select, prestigious scribes (who no doubt carried heavy ecclesiastical weight) formed a delegation and apparently travelled from Jerusalem up north to the Galilean region so as to accuse Jesus of breaking their traditional religious rules.

V. 2

"Why do thy disciples transgress" = This is an indirect way of accusing Jesus. This is a way of saying: "Why didn't you indoctrinate them right?" Since a disciple would naturally be *"as his master"* (Mt. 10:25), if the disciples erred, it was because the master taught them such error.

"In making this accusation, these religious leaders were forcing Jesus to deal with the very foundation of their religious faith. If Jesus rejected the sacred traditions of the nation, then He was a heretic!" (Wiersbe, p. 53)

"The tradition of the elders" -

> ***"Elders" =*** honored rabbis of the past, who passed on a vain substitute teaching in the place of the Word of God (I Pet. 1:18; Gal. 1:14)
>
> ***"Tradition" =*** unwritten interpretations of the O.T. Law, that were passed down from generation to generation, which became the ultimate authority for scribal teachings.
>
> This "tradition" was not good tradition or passed-on teachings from God (II Th. 2:15; 3:6), but had its source in men. From the Pharisees' own mouth, it was the ***"tradition of the elders."***
>
> ***"They wash not their hands" -*** This does not mean they ate with dirty hands, but that they didn't continually wash their hands while eating, using finger bowls, like the Scribes and Pharisees.
>
> The Old Testament's Law concerning hand washing had nothing to do with the common Israelite. God had a special ceremonial law only for the Aaronic priests who had to wash their hands before eating any of the holy bread used in temple worship, and to keep themselves from being unclean or defiled as they served at the temple (Lev. 22:6 - *"The soul which hath touched any such shall be unclean until even, and shall not eat of the holy things, unless he wash his flesh with water.")*
>
> "These traditions were originally the 'oral law' which (said the rabbis) Moses gave to the elders, and they passed down to the nation. This oral law was finally written down and became the Mishnah. Unfortunately, the Mishnah became more important and more authoritative than the original Law of Moses" (Wiersbe, p. 53).

Just as Roman Catholics look to church dogma to discover what Scripture "really means," most Jews of Jesus' day looked to the traditions of the elders" (MacArthur, p. 452).

For a detailed study of the Jews' ceremonial rinsing, see Edersheim's The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Vol. 2, pp. 10-13.

Two Religions:

External religion says that if a person keeps the outside clean, then the inside will be clean.

Internal religion says that if a person is clean on the inside, then he will keep the outside clean
(SEE: "The Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible, p. 341)

God very seriously warns us by saying: *"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."* (Col. 2:8)

***Beware of the evils of man-made tradition!**

Man-made tradition results in three evil traps:

I. Man-Made Tradition leads to the trap of:
<u>TRANSGRESSING</u> God's Word (v. 3-6a)
(Tradition offers a religious <u>justification</u> for sin)
". . . ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition"

V. 3

"But He answered" - Jesus answers their question with a question so as to show how they had violated God's Law.

"Transgress" = to overstep a fixed boundary. To cross over into forbidden territory.

"The <u>commandment</u> of <u>God</u>" - This phrase is a deliberate contrast with ***"The <u>tradition</u> of the <u>elders</u>"*** (v. 2)

V. 4

"Honor" = to treat with value. To view as worthy of respect and special treatment.

One who honors his father and mother respects their position as parents and treats them with dignity. Such a son would do anything to meet the needs of his folks.

"Curseth" - to speak bad or evil about.

God was so strong about children respecting their parents, that He instituted capital punishment for anyone who cursed out, verbally abused, or refused to submit to and obey his/her parents

> Ex. 21:17 - *"And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death."*
> Lev. 20:9 - *"For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him."*
> Dt. 27:16 -*"Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen."*
> Prov. 30:17 - *The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it."*

V. 5

"But ye say" - a contrast to Verse 4 - *"For God commanded."*

"It is a gift" - the catch-all word they used was the Hebrew word *corban* which meant "it is a gift" (Mk. 7:11).

"Corban" (Mk. 7:11) - "Was the transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning a "gift." The word referred to something devoted to God by an inviolable vow.

"If a son declared that the amount needed to support his parents was *corban*, the scribes said that he was exempt from his duty to care for his parents as prescribed in the Law. Evidently, too, he was not really obliged to devote that sum to the temple" (Ryrie Study Bible note, p. 1411).

Even if children owed their parents money, even if they were obligated to them, if they pronounced their money *corban* - this vow relieved them of paying back their parents.

The justification for not providing for one's aged parents got so extreme that eventually they did nothing at all for them.

By their false teaching, they did not allow a child to do anything for his father or his mother (Mk. 7:12).

V. 6

"True religion" gives and meets needs. It is practical. It touches lives (Ja. 1:27 - *"True religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."*)

II. Man-Made Tradition leads to the trap of:
<u>IGNORING</u> God's Word (v. 6b)
(Tradition results in a religious <u>disregard</u> for God's commands)
". . . ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition"

***"None effect"* -** nullified, invalidated. The Word of God was ignored, abandoned, and disobeyed because of the conflicting predominance of man-made tradition.

Why are multitudes indifferent, inattentive, or negligent toward the Bible or Bible teaching? They don't see it as important or worthy of their concern.

How can "religious" people ignore clear commands of Scripture? Answer: They buy into an authority other than Scripture.

Examples: of the specific injunctions of Scripture violated by traditionalist Roman Catholics.

Why do people like "tradition" over the Bible?

--Tradition often accommodates the lifestyle of the sinner, whereas the Bible demands a change of lifestyle.

--Tradition focuses on external ceremony and ritual, whereas the Bible focuses on internal purity and true Godliness (the most hard-hearted unbeliever could easily practice a religious ritual).

--Tradition keeps the worshippers doing and giving, offering eternal life as the reward; whereas the Bible declares you can do nothing to earn eternal life. You must humble yourself and receive it from Jesus Christ by grace.

A cult is any religion which has as its <u>authority</u> something other than the Bible (whether it be a pope, guru, prophet, society (EX: Watch Tower), or book (EX: Book of Mormon).

A "mathematical formula" for determining a Cult:

*A **Cult** is any organized religion which:*

1. **ADDS** to the Scripture
2. **SUBTRACTS** from Christ
3. **MULTIPLIES** Salvation Requirements
4. **DIVIDES** from the Church

As Baptists, one of the distinctives of fundamental Baptist is that we believe that the Bible is our only authority for faith and practice. Our authority is not:

--Not Catholic tradition
--Not charismatic new revelation
--Not cultic authoritative gurus and leaders
--Not creeds
--Not commentaries by human authors
--Not church constitutions

(creeds, commentaries, and constitutions are beneficial only to the degree that they are true to sacred Scripture. But they are fallible and must be open for modification and revision.

III. Man-Made Tradition leads to the trap of:
<u>REPLACING</u> God's Word (v. 7-9)
(Tradition becomes a religious <u>substitute</u> for sound doctrine)
". . . teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"

V. 7

***"Hypocrites"* -** play actors, mask wearers, pretenders.

They had a pretense, facade, or show of religiosity, but did not have a heart for God.

Jesus authenticates the book of Isaiah and paraphrases Isaiah 29:13, which sadly proclaims, "*Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of man."*

V. 8

Many can pray elaborate, ornate, fancy prayers.

They can seem so spiritual and can impress the listeners with their fair-sounding words and religious phrases, yet their heart is light years away from God.

True love is action oriented, not mere words (I Jn. 3:18 - *"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.")*

Traditions do not require the <u>heart</u> in order to do them. "Tradition can be followed mechanically and thoughtlessly without conviction, sincerity, or purity of heart. Because traditions are made by men, they can be accomplished by men. They require no faith, no trust, no dependence on God. Not only that, but they appeal to the flesh by feeding pride and self-righteousness. Often, as in this case, they also serve self-interest" (MacArthur, p. 455).

Beware of the trap of "mechanical" Christian living. Such as going through the motions, but not putting your heart into it. Doing but not being! Doing the work of the Lord without being close to the Lord of the work!

V. 9

Their worship was a hollow, empty, void, meaningless ritual!

The Delusion of man-made religion (See: Col.2:20-23)

1. The world's religion "sounds" spiritual, but it is not (v. 20-22)

   What "ordinances" is Paul speaking about? Such superstitious or legalistic taboos as:

   "You should not touch"
   "You should not taste"
   "You should not handle"

   True spirituality is not a matter of a list of man-made DO's and DON'Ts.

   v.22 - No material thing is to be viewed as a god or idol, but the things God has given us are to be used.

2. The world's religion "looks" spiritual, but it is not (v. 23)

   "A shew of wisdom" = to have the appearance of spiritual wisdom.

   "Is will-worship" = a system of worship that stems from the will of man. Self made worship; man-made worship.

   To the world's eyes, that which looks religious must be:

   1) "Humility" - Pretentious holiness dressed in religious garb and actions

   2) "Neglecting of the body" - human taboos and hard treatment of the physical body.

      --Asceticism -- Monkery -- Nunnery -- are not the secret to moral purity and God-honoring spirituality.

Man-made tradition is a great danger to true Godliness. Without the person even noticing, it becomes a substitute for God's truth.

"Teaching for doctrines" - Their doctrinal instruction did not focus on the Scriptures. it was rooted and based on the rules and regulations of men! Only the Word of God is profitable for doctrine (II Tim. 3:16).

The traditions even affirmed that "the words of scribes are more lovely than the words of the Law," and it became a greater offense in Judaism to transgress the teaching of some rabbi (like the revered Hillel) than to transgress the teaching of Scripture (citied by MacArthur, p. 452).

"People obey tradition (not to please God) but to please men and gain status (Gal. 1:14)." (Wiersbe, p. 53)

When man's wisdom is elevated above God's, man falls into the same trap eve did when Satan induced her to trust her own wisdom above God's. This led to the Fall and to every subsequent sin and evil in the world" (MacArthur, p. 456).

CONCLUSION:

Anything that leads to <u>disobedience</u> to God's Word is not of God!

Anything that robs your <u>interest</u> in God's Word is not of God!

And anything that <u>takes the place of</u> God's Word is not of God!

Ritual, or Reality, which do you have?

You must have reality!

TRADITION

(Study by C.E.C.)

BASIC Roman Catholic BELIEF

One source of Divine revelation, the other being Sacred scripture (see 31).

During the years between the beginning of the Church and the completed scripture, people relied on the Apostles' oral teachings. Then, as cultures were growing, they felt that the Bible was not able to meet their needs, so tradition was developed to meet the demands of men of all ages. This teaching authority resided in the pope (see 216) and authorized theologians. Because of this, tradition became a meaningful part of life.

St. Robert Bellarmine had five rules for recognizing the true Apostolic Tradition.

(1) When the Universal Church accepts as a dogma of faith something which is not found in the Divine Scriptures, it must be said to originate from the Tradition of the Apostles.

(2) When the Universal Church observes something which no one, except God, would have been able to establish and which, in any case, is not found to be written down anywhere, it must be said that it was transmitted by Christ himself and by his Apostles.

(3) Whatever has been observed in the Universal Church and throughout all ages past is rightly believed to have been instituted by the Apostles, even if it is the kind of observation which could have been instituted by the Church.

(4) When, by common consent, all the Doctors of the Church, either in General Council or in their individual writings in books, teach that something descends from Apostolic Tradition this must be believed to be Apostolic Tradition.

(5) It must be believed to be descended without a doubt from Apostolic Tradition that which is held as such in Churches where the succession from the Apostles is integral and continual. **(From 30 DAYS, No. 5, 1992, pp 68ff.)**

POST VATICAN II

"The sacred synod encourages the sons of the Church who engage in biblical studies constantly to renew their efforts with complete dedication and in accordance with the mind of the Church. Sacred theology relies on the written Word of God, taken together with Sacred Tradition" (DEI VERBUM, Vatican II document).

From DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON DIVINE REVELATION, Vatican II, Sections 9,10.

"There exist a close connection and communication between sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring, in a certain way merge into a unity and tends toward the same end. ... Consequently, it is not from the sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both sacred tradition and sacred scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of devotion and reverence. Sacred Tradition and sacred scripture form one sacred deposit of the Word of God which is entrusted to the church.

From SIMPLICITY, John Michael Talbot, page 54. "Care must be taken, though, that the Scriptures not be studied in isolation from the ongoing teaching of the church. True, we have the Spirit of God within us to guide and direct us. We have an objective body of teaching in the Scriptures. But remember: it was the church that authenticated these Scriptures, and it is the teaching office of the church which provides the commentary or the instruction to interpret these biblical documents. A balance must be maintained between tradition and Scripture.

CATHOLIC JOURNALS

From 30 DAYS, No. 5, 1992, page 68. "A dangerous trend is gaining ground in the Church diminishing the Revelation so that it becomes just a facet of Scripture. One sign of this tendency is that even Church documents no longer make recourse to Apostolic Tradition, which is without error just as the Scriptures are without error. And like the Scriptures it is born of the Divine Source, Jesus Christ. Five ways to recognize the true Apostolic Traditions, as indicated by this cardinal and saint. (For St. Robert Bellarmine's five ways, see in Basic R.C. Beliefs, above."

CHRISTIAN COMMENT

In order to make God's Word meaningful, the Holy Spirit was sent to be the Infallible Teacher of the Church; He can interpret scripture for any culture. Before the New Testament scriptures were available, Christian teachers used available epistles and the Old Testament. In II Thessalonians 2:15, the word tradition means teachings, and Paul states these were "by word or epistle." The epistle was the Word of God, and Paul's oral teaching was based on Old Testament scripture (Acts 26:22).

Roman Catholic tradition not only adds to the Word of God, it severely alters it.

C.E.C., BOX 99141, LOUISVILLE, KY 40269

"SPIRITUAL DEFILEMENT"



Matthew 15:10-20
5/20/2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 10-11

***Hear and understand the true source of defilement.**

I. Spiritual Defilement is <u>MISUNDERSTOOD</u> by Legalists Who Base Spirituality on <u>EXTERNAL MAN-MADE RULES</u> (v. 12-16)

II. Spiritual Defilement is a <u>MATTER</u> of the <u>INSIDE</u> Not the <u>OUTSIDE</u> (v. 17-18)

III. Spiritual Defilement is <u>MANIFESTED</u> by the <u>POLLUTION</u> That Comes Out of the <u>HEART</u> (v. 18-20)

"SPIRITUAL DEFILEMENT"



Matthew 15:10-20
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II. Spiritual Defilement is a <u>MATTER</u> of the _____ Not the ___ _____
(v. 17-18)

III. Spiritual Defilement is <u>MANIFESTED</u> by the _____ That Comes Out of the _____ (v. 18-20)

"SPIRITUAL DEFILEMENT"

Matthew 15:10-20
5/20/2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 10-11

The key thought in verses 10-20 centers around the word *"defile"* which occurs five times in verses 11, 18, and 20.

To be *"defiled"* is to be contaminated, to be polluted. When you are defiled, you feel unclean, unholy, ungodly. You feel dirty, stained.

V. 10
"He called the multitude" - After being confronted by a select group of Pharisees and Scribes, Jesus brings the hot issue out to the general public -- to teach them a vital lesson lest they fall into the Pharisees and Scribes' trap.

"Hear and understand" - Hearing is of no value if you don't comprehend.

Jesus' call to listen carefully and to pay close attention introduces a message of great importance (MacArthur, p. 457).

V. 11
In the context, the Pharisees and Scribes were accusing Jesus' disciples of violating their sacred tradition and defiling themselves by eating with unwashed hands (unceremonially impure hands) (15:2).

True defilement as God sees it does <u>not</u> occur when a little dirt goes down the throat into the stomach. (Ill. My Granddaughter Margaret – Everything goes into the mouth; Sand, Dirt, Dog poop; you name it!)

"<u>Into</u> the mouth. . . <u>out of</u> the mouth" - It is <u>not</u> what <u>enters</u> your mouth that pollutes you, but what <u>exits</u> your mouth that pollutes you (James 3:6 - *"And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell."*)

It is not food that defiles (which will be a predominant false doctrine in the last days - I Tim. 4:1-5).

A man is <u>not made unclean</u> by things; (*"there is nothing unclean of itself"* - Rom. 14:14); he is made unclean because of his polluted heart. It is he himself who takes things and does unclean things with them.

***Hear and understand the true source of defilement.**

I. Spiritual Defilement is MISUNDERSTOOD by Legalists Who Base Spirituality on EXTERNAL MAN-MADE RULES (v. 12-16)

V. 12

"After they heard this saying" - When Jesus rebuked their tradition and teaching that one is not defiled by a failure to ceremonially wash his hands before eating. The truth often hurts!

Anyone who is easily offended reveals a lack of love for God's Word.

"*Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them"* (Ps. 119:165).

The disciples were no doubt worried that problems would result because of their master's bold repudiation of the Pharisees' tradition; they also were perhaps worried that because of Christ's contradiction of their tradition, the Pharisees and scribes would not come to trust in and follow Christ but would be repulsed and repelled from Him.

If God's truth drives anyone away, it is because they were not open to it.

Preaching the Bible "as it is to men as they are" will either:

--Drive away those whom God has not planted
--Draw together those whom God has planted

One thing is true, Jesus was not afraid of the Pharisees (cp. Mt. 23:13-30).

V. 13

Many religious teachers (like the Pharisees of old) look like a real "plant" for God. They appear to be "good seed." They may even be very religiously impressive or attractive (II Cor. 11:15).

However, unless God planted them, they will not remain. They either planted themselves or some other men planted them into ecclesiastical work, but God did not. He must call a man into the ministry.

"Shall be rooted up" - to be pulled up by the roots. Their semblance of stability will one day be removed. They, like "chaff," will be blown away (Ps. 1:4-6).

These *"plants"* are the "tares" that were planted by Satan, but will one day be *"gathered up and burned with fire"* (Mt. 13:40-42).

V. 14

"Let them alone" = Leave them; don't bother with them; i.e. don't associate with them, separate from them.

God's people have no business fellowshiping with religious leaders who have forsaken the Bible. The saved are not to work with those who hold man-made tradition as their authority. Unless they show an obvious openness to submit to Biblical truth, God's people should not waste their time debating them.

The command is *"Come out from among them"* (II Cor. 6:17), not "stay in among them."

They were blinded by their ***"tradition"*** (v. 3-9); by their man-made religious rules and regulations.

They can't see, and the ones they lead can't see. As Isaiah said, *"Their eyes they have closed"* (Mt. 13:14-15).

Only one who sees can lead the blind.

Before you seek to advise someone else, make sure you know the truth and can back it up with solid evidence in God's Word (Ja. 3:1).

V. 15

"Declare unto us this parable" - Clearly explain what you mean by verse 11.

V. 16

Even the disciples lacked spiritual discernment.

II. Spiritual Defilement is a <u>MATTER</u> of the <u>INSIDE</u> Not the <u>OUTSIDE</u> (v. 17-18)

V. 17

I am in favor of cleanliness in food preparation! Clean hands, clean utinsels, clean cooking environment etc. However, to conduct a religious ceremony by cleaning your hands in a finger bowl before each bite is quite extreme!

Quite bluntly, Jesus is saying: *"From the mouth to the belly into the sewer."*

What's the big deal about being concerned about that which is going to be purified (purged) in the stomach and intestines (Mk. 7:19), digested, utilized, and then emptied into the drain or latrine? It's not going to be ceremonially clean when it exits the body, so why be so unnecessarily worked up about it entering your body with ceremonial cleanness.

Whatever enters the mouth passes through the system and "comes out in human waste. [But] food never touches the heart" (Mk. 7:19) (Wiersbe, p. 54).

V. 18

Not only does what comes out of the mouth defile, but it reveals a defilement deeply rooted in the heart.

(EX: One vomits because of a problem in the stomach; so one speaks evil because of a problem with the heart) (SEE: Mt. 12:34-37)

Where is the problem. . . the black smoke pouring out of the exhaust pipe, or the motor with cracked rings?

The heart (*kardia)* refers to the innermost core of our being. Our thoughts, feelings, and decision-making ability; the control center for our intellect, emotion, and will. The seat of our <u>motives</u>. That which triggers our words, thoughts, and actions.

The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9).

Such teaching about God's concern for the heart should not have shocked the Jews, because in their Old Testament God said:

"The Lord looks at the heart" (I Sam. 16:6-7)
"Serve the Lord with all your heart" (Dt. 10:13)
"Circumcise your heart" (Dt. 10:16)

III. Spiritual Defilement is MANIFESTED by the POLLUTION That Comes Out of the HEART (v. 18-20)

V. 18

Note: that the word *"heart"* is singular, whereas the things that proceed out are in the plural (V. 18-19).

Reason: Many evil sins can come from the same heart.

What are the culprits that defile us? What villains march out of our hearts and defile us?

First on God's list of defiling sins is the sin of evil speech. The tongue is the first area that discloses (uncovers, reveals, manifests) the condition of our hearts.

Where your mouth is, that's where your heart is. One's mouth is a mirror (perfect reflection) of their heart.

"The mouth is the most dominant revealer of internal pollution, because it is through our words that hatred, deception, cruelty, blasphemy, and most other evils are most clearly manifest" (MacArthur, p. 458).

Sins of the Tongue:

--Gossip (reveals a hateful heart)
--Yelling (reveals an angry heart)
--Vulgarity (reveals a foul and vain heart)
--Boasting (reveals an arrogant heart)
--Criticism (reveals a jealous or unforgiving heart)

Eph. 4:29 -*"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."*

5:4 -*"Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks."*

V. 19

"Evil thoughts" come from the heart.

"And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" (Mt. 9:4).

In Gen. 6:5 it is recorded: *"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."*

"Evil thoughts" - Morally sinful thinking. *"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."*

Thoughts that defile:

1. Lustful thoughts (reveals a covetous heart)
   Lust = Adultery

2. Vengeful thoughts (reveals a vindicative heart)
   Anger = Murder

3. Vain thoughts (reveals an empty heart)

"You are not what you think you are; You are what you think"

"Murders" - to intentionally take the life of an innocent person.

--Abortion is murder
--Suicide is murder
--Homicide is murder

Murder is always motivated by what is in the heart. (anger, jealousy, selfishness, etc., are the catalyst to murder).

"Adulteries" - marital unfaithfulness (used of sexual affairs after marriage). This is such a serious sin that the Old Testament required the death penalty for offenders (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22-24).

"Fornications" - Used of sexual relations before marriage (I Cor. 7:20.

This word (*pornea*) would also include every form of immoral sex: homosexuality, bestiality; pornography, incest, rape, masturbation, etc.

"Thefts" = Stealing what does not belong to you.

Stealing reflects:
--a discontented heart (not satisfied with what you have)
--a covetous heart (envious of what others have)
--a deceptive heart (most stealing occurs in the secret or in the dark)
--a dishonest heart (does not believe in God's principle of *"work"*
- Eph. 4:28
- *"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth")*

"False witness" - Those who testify falsely; those who tell lies; those who twist the truth.

Lying and insincerity are related twins. Both are forms of hypocrisy. The intent of the heart is to deceive.

The motive for lying is most often selfishness (people lie for self-preservation, self gain).

You are never more like the devil than when you lie (Jn. 8:44 - *"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."*)

A lie is never justified. It is never right to lie. Lies don't come in two colors either! A half truth is a whole lie.

"Blasphemies" - to slander or speak evil of:--God (the Father, Son, or Spirit)
--Truth (the Bible)

Such blasphemy shows that the person does not fear God!

Mark 7:20-23 gives a more extensive list of defiling sins (included are: covetousness, wickedness, lasciviousness [sensual lewdness], evil eye [envy and jealousy], pride, and foolishness).

CONCLUSION:

If you are unsaved, you need Christ to dwell in your hearts
(You need a new heart - Jer. 31:33 - But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people).

If you are saved:

1. Ask God to <u>purify</u> your heart

   Ps. 51:10 - *"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."*

   (cp. Mt. 5:8)

2. Guard the <u>gates</u> to your heart

   Prov. 4:23 - *"Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."*

   Eye gate - Ps. 119:37
   Ear gate

3. Feed the <u>Word</u> to your heart

   "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (Ps. 119:11).

   "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rev. 12:2).

The reason we should be "undefiled" is so that we might:

--know the will of God (Rom. 12:1-2)

--be more like Jesus (Heb. 7:26)

--be usable for the Master (II Tim. 2:21)

"GREAT IS THY FAITH"

Matthew 15:21-28
5/27/2018

INTRODUCTION:

***What is a great faith?**

I. She had faith in Christ despite enormous <u>OBSTACLES</u> (v. 22)
(A <u>Desperate</u> Faith)

--A <u>Social</u> Obstacle - *"A <u>woman</u> of <u>Canaan</u>"*

--A <u>Sin</u> Obstacle - *"Have <u>mercy</u> on me"*

--A <u>Supernatural</u> Obstacle - *"Grievously vexed with a <u>devil</u>"*

II. She had faith in Christ despite apparent <u>REJECTION</u> (v. 23-26)
(A <u>Persistent</u> Faith)

III. She had faith in Christ for a <u>SMALL "CRUMB"</u> of blessing (v. 27-28)
(A <u>Big</u> Faith)

CONCLUSION: **The <u>Reward</u> of Faith (v. 28b)**

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(A _____ Faith)

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(A _____ Faith)

CONCLUSION: **The _____ of Faith (v. 28b)**

"GREAT IS THY FAITH"

Matthew 15:21-28
5/27/2018

INTRODUCTION:

Hebrews 11 - The Heroes of the Faith

V. 21

Mark's gospel reveals that on this occasion Jesus actually *"entered into a house, and would have no man know it, but He could not be hid. For a certain woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of Him, and came and fell at His feet"* (Mark 7:24-25).

***What is a great faith?**

I. She had faith in Christ despite enormous <u>OBSTACLES</u> (v. 22)
(A <u>Desperate</u> Faith)

--A <u>Social</u> Obstacle - *"A <u>woman</u> of <u>Canaan</u>"*

***"Canaan"* -** the part of Canaan situated on the North West coast (modern-day Lebanon)

According to Mark's gospel: *"The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation"* (that is, she was a despised <u>Syrian</u> from the region of Phoenicia).

She had faith and kept trusting God for a miracle when it seemed everything was against her:

--the fact that she was a <u>Gentile</u> Greek was against her
--the fact that she was a <u>Syrian</u> was against her
--the fact that she was a <u>woman</u> was against her ("for most Jewish rabbis paid little attention to women" - Wiersbe, p. 55)
--and the fact that her daughter had such a <u>serious problem</u> was against her!

--A <u>Sin</u> Obstacle - ***"Have <u>mercy</u> on me"***

"<u>Cried</u> unto Him" - the imperfect tense indicates that she in desperation kept on crying out; she continued over and over again to beg Jesus.

"Have <u>mercy</u> upon me" - In humility she kept saying, "Have compassion or pity on me."

By requesting mercy, she is admitting that she does not deserve to have what she requests.

She recognized that Jesus had the authority to show mercy. She believed Jesus was *"the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth"* (Exod. 34:6).

"By definition, the person who asks for mercy asks for something undeserved. This woman did not come demanding, but pleading. She did not ask Jesus' help on the basis of her own goodness, but on the basis of His" (MacArthur, p. 469).

Faith is of <u>no</u> value, unless it is directed at the right object.

(Faith is not effective if the object of that faith is impotent; also faith is not blind, nor am I speaking about "Faith in faith." Some say: "I believe in love"; "I believe in believing"; or "I believe it will all work out." Such faith is powerless if the true and living God is not the object of it.")

"O Lord" - A testimony that she believed in Christ's authority, sovereignty, and deity. Jesus is Adonai and Yahweh. She was confessing that Jesus was "Lord." (Rom. 10:9; Phil. 2:10)

"Thou Son of David" - she believed that Jesus was the Messiah. This was a royal title pointing to Christ's right to sit on the throne of David as Israel's king!

"After the irreverent treatment of the Lord by the Scribes and Pharisees -- who had called Him a drunk, a companion of sinners, and demon-controlled -- it must have been refreshing for Jesus to hear this Gentile woman come to Him with such respect and submission" (MacArthur, p. 471).

--A Supernatural Obstacle - ***"Grievously vexed with a devil"***

"Grievously vexed" - Severely or badly controlled by a demon.

Her demonized daughter was seriously afflicted by a fallen evil spirit, that no doubt affected her intellect (her thoughts); emotion (her feelings), and will. This demon no doubt controlled her speech and actions.

What she said and what she did was so evil, so bizarre, so unlike her natural behavior, so supernatural, that her mother knew beyond a doubt that her own "flesh and blood," her own beloved daughter was dominated, manipulated, controlled by a messenger of Satan.

This woman's faith was great in light of her pagan culture and background; in light of the little or no written revelation she had about Christ; and in light of the enormity of her daughter's bondage.

II. She had faith in Christ despite apparent <u>REJECTION</u> (v. 23-26)
(A <u>Persistent</u> Faith)

V. 23

"But He answered her not a word" -

Not out of disrespect or disinterest, but Jesus remained silent to:

1) Make sure that everyone heard her request
2) Make a dramatic point

Sometimes the hardest response to accept (from God) is no response at all.

Her persistence became so annoying that she was beginning to get on the disciple's nerves. They began to beg Him and urge Him to send her away, let her go!

"Send her away" - "We are not sure whether they meant, "Give her what she wants and get rid of her" or just "Get rid of her!" In either case, they were not showing much compassion for either her or her demonized daughter" (Wiersbe, p. 54)

With their backs to the women, the disciples gave the reason for their request: "She is behind us crying out and she is not letting up!"

Do something! Anything! Just get this woman off our backs.

V. 24

In order to fulfill some Old Testament promises made to national Israel, Christ went to the <u>Jew first</u> (Ro. 9:4-5).

When He sent the disciples out to witness and perform miracles in Matthew 10, He commanded them saying: *"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the <u>lost sheep of the house of Israel</u>" (Mt. 10:5-6)*

Jesus' mission was to *"seek and to save"* the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He came with an intention to *"save <u>His people</u>* [Israel] *from their sins"* (Mt. 1:21).

He was fulfilling promises made to national Israel:

> Acts 13:32-33a -*"And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again"*
>
> Acts 13:23 -*"Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus"*
>
> John 1:11 -*"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."*
>
> Matthew 21:37 -*"But last of all He sent unto them His Son, saying, they will reverence my Son"*

Christ's top priority was to minister to His chosen nation, Israel (to reveal Himself as their Messiah and to offer them the Kingdom), but He always extended Himself to open hearts and never refused a person of any race or culture who came to Him in faith (MacArthur, p. 467).

Not one person who sincerely came to Him was turned away (Jn. 6:37).

On this occasion, Jesus is not saying these things to discourage or to turn away this woman, but to draw out her faith as a testimony.

(EX: How God told Moses He would destroy Israel only to draw out Moses' faith in God's integrity [Ex. 32:10-14; Num. 14:11-20])

When the *"lost sheep of the house of Israel"* rejected their Messiah, He then turned to the Gentiles (which was His plan all along) (cp. Mt. 21:28-22:14).

What God is showing more and more in Matthew's gospel is the growing antagonism and rejection of Christ by the "house of Israel" and the great faith of the Gentiles (cp. the Centurion - see Mt. 8:5-12).

If Jesus had no intention of ministering to Gentiles, He would not have travelled into Tyre and Sidon - Gentile territory!

God intended His Gospel to be *"to the Jew first but also to the Greek"* (Rom. 1:1b).. The Great Commission was to *"make disciples of all nations"* (mt. 28:19), to *"preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mk. 16:15), to carry the gospel from Jerusalem unto the *"uttermost part of the earth"* (Acts 1:8).

"Keep in mind that our Lord responded to this woman as He did, not to destroy her faith, but to develop it" (Wiersbe, p. 54).

Jesus purposely "put up the barriers, not to keep her away but to draw her closer. He also used the occasion to show the disciples the value of persistent faith and to help them distinguish between the genuine and the superficial (Ex: in Mt. 19:16-22, Jesus placed barriers before the young man to test the genuineness of his plea for eternal life)" (MacArthur, p. 472).

Though the answer was delayed, though the answer was long in coming, she did not quit. She persisted! She didn't faint in prayer!

"Great faith does not give up; it is not deterred by obstacles, setbacks, or disappointments" (MacArthur, p. 471).

V. 25

"Worshipped Him" **-**She in desperation and deep humility fell down on her fact in front of Jesus and briefly and to the point pleaded, *"Lord, help me!"*

I'm sure that Christ knowing this woman's deep misery, sincerity, earnestness and need, was touched by her cry for "help."

However, in order to make a point and to draw out her faith for all to see and hear, He responds in a peculiar, seemingly harsh and unfeeling manner.

V. 26

Jesus is saying: It is not right (suitable or proper) to take the children's [the children of Israel] bread [Christ's spiritual nourishment and power] and cast it to dogs [Gentiles].

"Dogs" = little household pet dogs (not filthy, wild, garbage-eating street dogs).

"Dogs" **-** Jesus is quoting terminology used by Israelites toward Gentiles and Samaritans. Back then, many Jews despised and belittled the Gentiles, viewed them as unclean canines.

After such a response, most people would have indignantly said, "So much for your God of love, your message of compassion, and your narrow, bigoted religion. I want nothing to do with a God or religion like that" (MacArthur, p. 4720.

"Her seeking heart would not give up. Like Abraham, she grew strong in faith through God's testing (Rom. 4:20), and like Jacob wrestling with the Lord (Gen. 32:26), she would not let go until He blessed her. She fulfilled the pledge of Jeremiah 29:13-14, *"And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found by you, declares the Lord*"" (MacArthur, p. 474).

III. She had faith in Christ for a <u>SMALL "CRUMB"</u> of blessing (v. 27-28)
(A <u>Big</u> Faith)

V. 27
"Truth, Lord" - this woman recognized God's dealings with the children of Israel.

With an "incredible flash of insight" this woman picked up on Christ's own illustration and brought it to a grant conclusion.

This woman humbly refers to herself as a "dog" who would eat any crumb of blessing that would come her way!

"Their master's table" = Israel's Messiah's table

Israel had a banquet full of opportunity, a banquet table of blessings, a feast of miracles, healings, messages, yet they ignored and for the most part did not hunger and thirst for what Christ offered.

Yet the dogs (Gentiles) did. The hungry Gentiles salivated for any morsel of spiritual food that would fall from Christ's table!

(Here in the USA, we have so much, *"rich and increased with goods,"* yet some people in other third world countries do more with *"crumbs"* than what we do with steak dinners!)

This woman is saying: "Lord, just a little crumb will do" Only utter the word and my daughter will be healed!

This woman recognized that even a "crumb" of blessing would be more than adequate!

She would be satisfied with merely a crumb. Just a "tiny left-over" of Jesus' great power could heal her daughter.

V. 28
With much feeling and emotion (just as the lady said, *"O Lord"* [v. 22]), Jesus says, *woman, great is thy faith!"*

Compare her *"great faith"* with that *"little faith"* of Peter and the disciples (8:26; 16:8)

"Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt" - You may have the exact help and miracle that you desire.

CONCLUSION: **The <u>Reward</u> of Faith (v. 28b)**

"That very hour" - at that same time that Jesus said these words, the woman's daughter had the demon leave her body.

Jesus does not need any time at all to accomplish the most incredible of miracles! What He desires gets accomplished the very moment He wills it to be.

This miracle was performed from a distance. Christ did not have to be physically present to perform the miraculous. All He had to do was say the word (or think the thought) and He could heal someone who was on the opposite end of the earth!

Mark adds this detail: *"And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed"* (Mk. 7:30).

I can just imagine the amazement, joy, and wonder of this woman upon seeing her daughter (formerly wild, vicious, foaming at the mouth, out of control) now calmly and peacefully lying on the bed.

This woman wouldn't quit! She kept on asking until she received, she continued seeking until she found, she persisted knocking until it was opened to her (Mt. 7:7).

"A REFUSAL TO BELIEVE DESPITE THE EVIDENCE"

Matthew 15:29 - 16:12

6/3/2018

INTRODUCTION:

The undeniable, overwhelming, irrefutable evidence (15:29-39)

***Beware of a stubborn refusal to believe; Beware of a weak reluctance to believe!**

Two wrong responses:

I. *No Faith* - Requires SIGNS in order to believe (16:1-5)

II. *Little Faith* - Fails to REMEMBER God's past faithfulness (16:6-12)

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6/3/2018

INTRODUCTION:

The undeniable, overwhelming, irrefutable evidence (15:29-39)

V. 30

By this time, Christ's fame had spread so widely that He did not have to come to the multitudes; rather, they came to Him!

Although Jesus had recently been to the Galilean region (14:34-35), many people had not had the opportunity to have Him heal their loves ones. So now they hear He has come back!

They swiftly gather their ailing relatives and friends and bring them to the miracle worker of Nazareth.

Their response was probably the result of a deaf and dumb man's testimony of a miracle Jesus did for him (Mk. 7:31-37).

They collected everyone they cared about and either led them, carried them, or assisted them to Jesus. They then ***"cast them down"*** (lit. in haste, speedily or quickly) - placed them in front of Jesus.

They brought to Jesus. . .

"the lame" - those who couldn't walk
the ***"blind"*** - those who couldn't see
the ***"dumb"*** - those who couldn't hear
the ***"maimed"*** - those who couldn't function normally
(the cripple who had limbs that were deformed and incapable of use)

V. 31

Although the multitude had enough faith to believe their loved ones could be healed, they ***"wondered"*** with amazement when they witnessed the immediate, complete, supernatural miracles take place before their very eyes! Such amazement resulted in God being glorified (not just any God . . . but the God of Israel as opposed to the pagan deities that were impotent to do the wonders Jesus did).

V. 32

"Compassion" - deep feelings, whereby His heart went out to the hungry multitudes.

V. 33
Such a question reveals how hardened their hearts must have been when Jesus fed the 5,000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish.

This miracle (of reproducing food, turning scraps into a banquet feast, turning 5 lbs. of food into 10,000 lbs) was repeated because the disciple's hearts did not get the impact of the first miraculous feeding (*"For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened"* - Mk. 6:52).

V. 34
"Seven, and a few little fish" - This is more to work with than Jesus had at the prior miracle.

V. 36
Again, Jesus meets the needs of the multitude through the instrument of His disciples (just as He reaches multitudes with the Gospel through the witness of His saints).

Each time the disciples reached into their basket, more bread and fish appeared.

V. 37
"Seven baskets full = seven large baskets

The ***"four thousand men"*** who were fed along with women and children may have totaled anywhere from 10,000 to 15,000.

V. 32-38
Several of the same principles from Matthew 14:14-21 (the feeding of the 5,000) are re-emphasized here: Six truths to realize:

1.Jesus has compassion for people (even their material needs burden Him) (v. 32)
2.We are not adequate in ourselves to meet the needs of the multitudes (v. 33).
3.With Jesus, nothing is insignificant (v. 34-35).
4.What Jesus does, He often does through His servants (v. 36).
5.Little becomes much when given to Jesus (v. 36-37).
6.The incredible is not impossible for Jesus (v. 38)

***Beware of a stubborn refusal to believe or a weak reluctance to believe!**
***Beware of two wrong responses to Christ and His miracle-working, life-changing power!**

When are we stubborn, mule-headed, or unyielding to the evidence God has revealed?

What is a sick, infirm, weak faith?

Two wrong responses:

I. *No Faith* - Requires SIGNS in order to believe (16:1-5)

V. 1

"Tempting" - Since Christ is God, He could not be *"tempted with evil"* (Ja. 1:13) from inside Himself (Ja. 1:14). All attempts to trap Him came from an external source.

Their temptation came in the form of a test. A test for Him to prove Himself (just as their father, the Devil, attempted - Matthew 4).

"The Pharisees also with the Sadducees" -

The Pharisees were the religious self-righteous (who believed in the supernatural, in miracles, in spiritual power).

The Sadducees were the religious liberals (who did not believe in the supernatural, miracles, nor spiritual power).

The Pharisees believed in miracles, but denied Christ's deity; therefore they did not believe Jesus could perform miracles.

The Sadducees did not believe in miracles and therefore did not believe Jesus could perform them.

It is interesting how these two groups of totally different theological beliefs (Acts 23:8) could come together (find common ground, converge, unite) to attack Christ!

The world's different philosophers, different religions, different world views, etc. all find a common bond in attacking Christianity. They all can unite over a shared antagonism toward Christ (EX: Pilate and Herod, who were enemies became *"friends"* over their mutual unjust dealings with Jesus [Lk. 23:12]).

"A sign from Heaven" - lit. a sign out of the Heaven

At their bidding, they wanted Christ to send a lightning bolt down from Heaven, or alter the constellations.

After all the signs that Christ had done, these religious leaders had the audacity to demand more!

They saw His miracles (mt. 9:1-8; 9:32-34; 12:9-13). They heard the testimony of others who experienced His miracles (Jn. 9:19ff). They no doubt heard about the multitudes who were just miraculously cured and fed on the other side of the Lake (Mt. 15:30-39).

Yet rather than believing, they want more evidence.

V. 2
By looking at the sky and sun at sundown, they were able with some accuracy to determine tomorrow's weather.

"Those sayings correspond to the age-old mariner's ditty: 'Red sky at night, sailor's delight; red sky in the morning, sailors take warning'." (MacArthur, p. 5-6).

V. 3
In the morning, the appearance of the sky and clouds could serve as an accurate gage for the day's forecast.

"Hypocrites" - play actors; two-faced religious pretenders.

"You cannot discern" - People can discern only what they want to discern. If they don't want to believe, they keep their head in the sane and avoid the obvious, compelling evidence (evolutionistic thinking is one example of deliberate ignorance).

"The signs of the times" -

"Signs" = the objective, <u>miraculous indicators</u> or evidences validating Christ (signs always vindicate God's message and messenger).

Christ had for two years performed hundreds of signs up and down Palestine. They had more than enough testimony and proof of His credentials

"Of the times" - the seasons in which Christ walked the earth.

They had the privilege of living at a moment of history when signs were dispersed with convincing abundance and authenticity.

"Why did our Lord talk about the weather? To reveal to His enemies their own dishonesty and stubborn blindness. They could examine the evidence in God's world and draw valid conclusions, but they would not examine the evidence He had presented" (Wiersbe, p. 56).

Nothing is wrong with signs; however, something is desperately wrong with seeking them.

1) Those who seeks "signs" demonstrate a lack of faith (they <u>disbelieve</u> God) (rather than believing God's Word, they want evidence that will satisfy the carnal senses)

   Examples:
   --Gideon and the fleece (Judg. 6:37ff)
   --the rich man in hell (Lk. 16:30-31)

   "We walk by faith not by sight" (II Cor. 5:7)

2) Those who demand signs ask God to lower Himself and stoop down to their level to do what they say when they say to do it (they <u>dethrone</u> God).

   God sends signs at His will not at the will of man!

3) To seek a sign is to be dissatisfied with the <u>evidences</u> God has already given (Ps. 19:1; SEE: Rom. 1:18-22).

In this context, Christ has given more than enough signs to prove Himself!

V. 4

"Wicked" = morally evil

"Adulterous" = spiritual adultery with the world (Ja. 4:4) (not faithful to God; but buying into the world's philosophy that "seeing is believing")

To be worldly is to be carnally-minded. To live life based on the 5 senses. Such a mentality reasons: "If I can't touch it, taste it, see it, smell it, or hear it, I won't believe it. It must be "sensational" for it to impact me.

Many have a "Show me" attitude! Prove it to me! Convince me with the evidence I demand.

The wicked always demand signs because to them "Seeing is believing."

The evil mob that surrounded the cross of Christ again chided Him for a sign. They demanded, *"If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross"* (Mt. 27:40; Mk. 15:30).

If it is evil and spiritually adulteress people who seek after signs, should we be seeking after signs today?

Do we need authenticating signs from God for Him to prove to us that He is real, or that His Spirit is real, or that His Word is true? NO!

To demand God to prove Himself by giving a sign is "Satanic theology." Satan demanded that Christ prove His Messiahship by two spectacular signs (Mt. 4:5-7).

NOTE: Signs and sign gifts were given by God's sovereign discretion, at the Holy Spirit's will (I Cor. 12:11). Such sign gifts came upon God's people without the recipient seeking such; it wa automatic, uninvited, unsolicited.

If ***"a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign"***, what does this tell you about people who seek signs and sign gifts? (EX: tongues which are a *"sign"* - I Cor. 14:22).

It is interesting to note that as this age draws toward a close, people will demonstrate how wicked they are by an increased desire to see "signs and wonders." Such a thirst will play right into the hands of Satan who will (via the Antichrist) performs powerful *"signs and lying wonders"* (II Thes. 2:9). These Satanic eschatological miracles will seem so real (since they are called *"great signs and wonders")* that they will deceive everyone except the elect (Mt. 24:24).

V. 1-4

Folks, you don't need the "sign gift" of tongues to:

1) prove you have <u>salvation</u> (Ti. 1:2; I Jn. 5:11-13)
2) prove you have the <u>Holy Spirit</u> (Rom. 8:9)
3) prove you have the <u>baptism</u> of the Spirit (I Cor. 12:13)

Just believe God's Word! Trust His promises! You are complete in Christ! (Col. 2:10)

Example: How people want "signs" today:

--"Lord, if you don't want me to marry this unsaved man, break us up" (God's will has already been revealed - II Cor. 6).

--"Lord, if you want me to witness, make him/her bring up the topic of conversation.

--"Lord, if you want me to give to you through my local church, give me a raise in pay"

--"Lord, if you don't want me to get a divorce, take my boyfriend/girlfriend out of my life"

*God has already spoken on these matters!

V. 4

"Shall no sign be given unto it" - Christ did perform more signs and wonders, but not for the Pharisees and Sadducees to see.

"The sign of the prophet Jonas" - Just as Jonah was 3 days sin the great sea creature's belly and then expelled, so Christ would be 3 days in the tomb and then resurrected (cp. Mt. 12:40).

(This sign was also rejected, and a lie was invented - Mt. 28:11-15)

"And He left them and departed" - Christ just turned around and left them hanging, with none of the sign proofs they had demanded.

He confidently departed, not worried about the fact that they remained unbelievers.

Note: One mark of insecurity is a feeling that you have to "prove yourself" to people. The insecure are always defending themselves, trying to prove themselves.

Christ knew who He was and had proven it by His spotless life, His soul-stirring messages, and His undeniable miracles. He did not have to succumb to the existential, carnal wishes of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

V. 4b

Even if Jesus gave a sign from Heaven which they could not refute, they would simply attribute it to Satan like they had done earlier (Mt. 12:24).

"The French atheist Voltaire declared, "Even if a miracle should be wrought in the open marketplace before a thousand sober witnesses, I would rather mistrust my senses than to admit a miracle." Unbelief will always find a way to reject the truth." (MacArthur, p. 5).

II. ***Little Faith*** **- Fails to REMEMBER God's past faithfulness (16:6-12)**

V. 5

"They had forgotten to take bread" **-** They intended to bring a supply of food over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, but it slipped their preoccupied minds.

V. 6

"Take heed" **-** look out; keep your eyes open, stay alert.

"Beware" **-** hold onto this, hold your mind or attention to this; be on guard against this.

"Leaven" **-** the false teaching (v. 12) of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

1. Pharisees - their false teaching was a works righteousness based on the tradition of the elders (they added to the authority of scripture).

2. Sadducees - their false teaching was a skeptical, liberal, humanistic denial of spiritual realities (they denied the authority of Scripture).

Jesus also warned to beware of the leaven of:

3. "Herod" - (Mk. 8:15) - this false teaching was worldly secularism)pleasure seeking, living to please the flesh, indulgence, sensual living - cp. Mt. 14:1-10) (he ignored the authority of Scripture).

V. 7

Because Jesus warned against ***"leaven"***, the disciples--because they had bread on their mind--thought He was warning them not to eat the physical bread that a Pharisee of Sadducee might offer them! They thought He was warning them not to eat that bread, which may have been laced with poison.

They no doubt argued and fought over someone's failure to remember to pack the bagels, challah, or pita!

V. 8

"O ye of little faith" **-** contrast with the Syrophoenician woman's *"great faith"* (15:28).

Why should they have worried about bread when they had the "Wonder Bread" bakery walking right next to them!

Why would they need to fear hunger when the "Tastee" bakery, or better yet General Mills, Quaker Oats, and every other granary and produce company at their disposal!

"***"Little faith"*** was one of our Lord's favorite names for His disciples (Mt. 6:30; 8:26; 14:31). Of course, 'little faith' is better than no faith" (Wiersbe, p. 57).

V. 9

They failed to:

1) ***"Understand"*** - realize who Jesus was!

2) ***"Remember" -*** They forgot what Jesus could do!

"Baskets" - (v. 9) (*kophinos)* a wicker basket (perhaps like a picnic basket size)

"Baskets" - (v. 10) (*spuris*) a big round, circular, plated reed basket; the size of a hamper, large enough to hold a man (Acts 9:25).

Jesus is saying: "If I were concerned about our having bread, I would simply create some Myself. . ." (MacArthur, p. 13).

V. 11

How often we are like the disciples in soon forgetting how great our God is! We fail to remember His faithfulness of the past!

We, like O.T. Israel, experience the great Exodus, then we worry about the Red Sea; we experience the Red Sea, then worry about drinking water; we experience manna, then worry about meat; we experience victory over Pharaoh's army and concern ourselves with the Philistines!

Our Lord, who took care of us in the past, will not abandon us in the present!

He who met our needs will not suddenly forsake us!

Phil. 1:6 - *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ"*

What God starts, He finishes.
What God begins, He completes.

--He who taught you His plan of salvation will teach you the whole counsel of God (Col. 1:9).

--He who fed you will not let you starve to death (Mt. 6)

--He who protected you will not let Satan prevail against you (Mt. 16:18)

--He who lives in you via His Spirit will not abandon you (I Cor. 6:19; Heb. 13:5)

--He who called you to Himself and His work will equip you for every task He calls you to (Phil. 4:13)

--He who loves you will not ever stop (Rom. 8:31-39)

--He who redeemed you from sin and Satan will sanctify you (I Th. 5:24 - *"Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.")*

--He who saved you will keep you saved (Rom. 5:9-10)

--He who satisfied our concerns about life after death and gave us eternal life will satisfy your needs in this temporal life (I Tim. 6:17 -*"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who given us richly all things to enjoy"*

CONCLUSION:

Let His faithfulness to you in the past sustain you in the present and future!

SEE: Deut. 8:1-18

How big is your faith? How hungry are you for God's truth?

"The story is told of a blind French girl who was given a copy of the gospel of Mark in braille. As she read and reread the book, she came to have faith in Christ, and the book became more precious with each reading. She read it so much that she developed callouses on her fingers that eventually prevented her from feeling the raised dots. She was so determined to read God's Word that she peeled the skin off the tips of her fingers to make them more sensitive, but in doing so she permanently damaged the nerves. Devastated, she picked up the book to kiss it farewell, only to discover that her lips were even more sensitive than her fingers." (MacArthur, p. 16).

"WHO DO YOU SAY JESUS IS?"

Matthew 16:13-20
6/10/2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 13 - 15

The Question of All Questions:
***Who do you say Jesus is?**

The Scriptures reveal Him to be:

I. The DIVINE MESSIAH (v. 16-17)

II. The CHURCH'S MASTER (v. 18-19)

A. Christ is the FOUNDATION of the Church (v. 18a)
"upon this Rock"

B. Christ is the BUILDER of the Church (v. 18b)
"I will build"

C. Christ is the POSSESSOR of the Church (v. 18c)
"My Church"

D. Christ is the PROTECTOR of the Church (v. 18d)
"The gates of hell shall not prevail against it"

E. Christ is the SOVEREIGN DIRECTOR of the Church (v. 19)
"I will give. . . keys. . ; shall have been bound . . . loosed in heaven"

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V. 13
CAESAREA PHILIPPI
Located 25 miles north of the sea of Galilee at the south western base of Mount Hermon. Augustus Caesar presented the town with the surrounding country to Herod the Great, who built a temple there in honor of the emperor. Herod's son, Philip the Tetrarch, enlarged the town and named it Caesarea Philippi, to distinguish it from the Caesarea on the shores of the Mediterranean.

The city and its architecture all serve as devotion to Pan, the Mythological Ancient Greek god of the shepherds, flocks and forests. The site itself is built into the side of a mountain and much of the original Greek architecture remains. Panias was a violent city where human sacrifices were constantly being made. In the side of the mountain there is a large cave. During rituals the Greeks would offer sacrifices to the gods by dropping human sacrifices into a hole higher up the mountain. If blood came out of the cave at the bottom then the sacrifice had been rejected and another one had to be made. If the water stayed translucent then the gods had accepted the sacrifice.

Today it is called Banyas, this being the Arabic form. From here we have one of the three sources of the Jordan River.

It was in this region, in contrast to the pagan worship of Pan, that Jesus questions His disciples as to His identity. Perhaps as the disciples crossed over into the territory of Herod Philip (*"Philippi")*, they began talking about how this was the tetrarchy of the Roman leader Herod Philip, which naturally led to questions about the importance (or non-importance) of the Caesars and the Herods, and this set the stage for Jesus to be revealed as the *"Christ."*

"The Son of man" - a title showing how Christ humbled Himself in the incarnation in becoming man. A title which also identified Jesus as the Messiah (Dan. 7:13).

"If anyone else asked, 'Whom do men say that I am?' we would think him either mad or arrogant" (Wiersbe, p. 57).

But Jesus, knowing who He really was, quizzed the disciples to see if they recognized His true identity.

V. 14

"They said" - plural; no doubt each of the disciples had input on this questions. It's easy to say what others think. The question that comes up later is *"Who do <u>you</u> say that I am?"* (and only Peter is bold enough to speak up).

"John the Baptist" - Herod Antipas thought this (Mt. 14:2).

No, he could not be John the Baptist, because John prepared the way for Christ and was not worthy even to untie Jesus' shoe.

"Elias" - Elijah, who was to come before the *"Great and dreadful day of the Lord"* (Mal. 4:5)

No, he could not be Elijah, because Elijah (like John did for His first coming) will prepare the way for Jesus' second coming.

Jeremias" - No, He was not Jeremiah, although Jesus (Mt. 23:37) like Jeremiah (Jer. 9:1) wept over the sinful lostness of the nation of Israel.

"Of one of the prophets" - No, Jesus was not a mere man, a mere prophet.

Many today have mistaken notions as to who Jesus is.

--To the Jehovah's Witnesses, He is Michael the Archangel
--To the Mormons, He is the brother of Lucifer
--To the Muslims He was the forerunner of Mohammed
--To the theological liberals, He was a "good man"

"One thing is clear: We can never make a true decision about Jesus Christ by taking a poll of the people" (Wiersbe, p. 57).

People have all kinds of ideas as to who Jesus is!

V. 15

"Who do <u>you</u> say that I am?" -

As far as you are concerned, it doesn't matter what others think of Christ. The question is: **"Who do <u>you</u> say He is?"**

Your whole eternity hinges on how you answer that question (Rom. 10:9)

"If ye believe not that I am [He], ye shall die in your sins" (Jn. 8:24)

The eunuch gave the right answer: *"And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the on Son of God."*

The Question of All Questions:
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The Scriptures reveal Him to be:

I. The DIVINE MESSIAH (v. 16-17)

V. 16

V. 15 - *"Whom say ye"* (plural) - The question was asked to all the disciples, but no one had the conviction to admit that Jesus was the *"Christ"* except Peter (v. 16)

"Thou art the Christ" - the definite article *"the"* points to these facts:

1) There is only one "Christ" (not many - Mt. 24:5)

2) Jesus is the specific One promised in the Old Testament; the word *Christos* when "used without the article has the character of a personal name; without the article, it is a title of the one promised in the Old Testament" (Reinecker, p. 49).

"Christ" - the Messiah, the Anointed One (Is. 61:1; Lk. 4:18; Acts 10:38); the Deliverer

--the One whom the Jews expected to come and deliver them (Zech. 12 - 14)

--the One whom Daniel said would die for the sins of others - Dan. 9:25, 26

From the outset of the disciples following Jesus they recognized Him as the Messiah (Jn. 1:41). Now Jesus for 2 1/2 years has proven it before their eyes and ears. And Peter unashamedly recognizes it.

Jesus is the only One who could and did fulfill the Old Testament promises of Messiah:

Here are some of the O.T. prophecies and their fulfillment in the incarnate person of Jesus Christ:

Prophecy of the Messiah	Prophecy	Fulfillment
Messiah would come at an appointed time	Dan. 9:25-26	Mark 1:15
Messiah would be born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matt.2:1-6
Messiah would be born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matt.1:18-25
Messiah would die for the sins of the world	Is.52:13-53:12	Luke 22:37 Acts 8:28-35
Messiah would be hated	Ps.69:4 Is.49:7	Jn.15:24,25
Messiah would be rejected	Psalm 118:22	Mt.21:42
Messiah would be betrayed	Psalm 41:9	Jn.13:18-21
Messiah would be forsaken	Zech.13:7	Mk.14:27
Messiah would be sold	Zech.11:12	Mt.26:15
Messiah would be smitten	Micah 5:1	Mt.27:30
Messiah would be spit upon	Is.50:6	Mk.14:65
Messiah would be nailed	Psalm 22:16	Jn.20:25
Messiah would be forsaken	Psalm 22:1	Mt.27:46
Messiah would be mocked	Psalm 22:7,8	Mt.27:39-44
Messiah would be pierced	Zech.12:10	Jn.19:34,37
Messiah would be raised from the dead	Psalm 16:10	Acts 2:22-27
Messiah would come (again) in judgement	Zech.12-14	Rev.19

"The Son of the living God" - Peter not only confessed Christ's messiahship, but His deity as well!

Just as Jesus' title *"son of man"* (v. 13) identifies Christ as "man", the title *"son of God"* identifies Christ as God! (Jn. 5:18)

V. 17

"Blessed" = extremely fortunate; showered with heavenly, spiritual blessings. (in this case, the blessedness was a spiritual understanding that the Father in Heaven gave to Peter).

"Simon Barjonah" - Simon the Son of Jonah (John). This was Peter's original name before Jesus gave him the name *"Cephas"* which is Aramaic meaning "a stone" (Jn. 1:42).

"Flesh and blood" - no human; no man gave Peter this belief (cp. Gal. 1:16). God the Father opened his spiritual eyes.

Unless God opens one's eyes (Heb. 6:4; 10:32; Eph. 1:18) and heart (Acts 16:14), they will remain blind to spiritual truth.

Hence, the new birth is said not to originate from *"blood nor the will of the flesh"* (Jn 1:13).

"Revealed" - opened up; manifested; uncovered

II. The CHURCH'S MASTER (v. 18-19)

A. Christ is the FOUNDATION of the Church (v. 18a)

"upon this Rock"

V. 18

"Peter (petros). . . rock (petra)" -

Petros = masculine name

Petra = feminine noun

Petros - " a detached stone or boulder (Vine, p. 302), or a stone that might be thrown or easily moved

Petra - "a mass of rock"; bed-rock; a huge foundation (upon which something may be built - Mt. 7:24, 25; 27:51, 60; Mk. 15:46; Lk. 6:48).

Jesus deliberately uses a play on words in the Greek to show that He does not mean (refer to) Peter when He uses the word *"rock"*.

Since the name *"Petros"* means a piece of the rock and not the rock itself, it would make no sense for Jesus to say, *"You are a piece of a rock and upon you I will build My church."*

No one can build anything on a "stone," but you can build on a bedrock!

"This Rock" **- Three Views**

1) **<u>Peter</u>** (Roman Catholic View)

Peter could not be the first Pope for several reasons:

(1) The word pope means "father." Peter would never have violated the command of his Lord Jesus and allowed others to call him "Father." (Mt. 23:9)

(2) Popes received <u>worship</u>; Peter rejected it (Acts 10:26)

(3) Popes cannot be married; Peter was (Mt. 8:14)

(4) Only <u>Peter</u> is said to possess the keys of the kingdom (no successors are ever mentioned) (Mt. 16:19)

(5) The Catholic church was not even in existence till Constantine enforced Christianity as the state religion

(6) Peter warned against ecclesiastical leadership lording it over God's Church (I Pet. 5:3)

(7) Peter never referred to himself as a "pope" but as an *"apostle"* Pet. 1:1) and *"elder"* (I Pet. 5:1) and a *"servant"* of Jesus Christ (II Pet. 1:1).

(8) Peter blundered (cp. Mt. 16:22-23; 26:669-75; Gal. 2:11-14). The RCC says that a Pope never makes a mistake when speaking "ex cathedra," that he is the infallible teacher of doctrine.

The only infallible teacher of truth is the <u>Holy Spirit</u>. It is blasphemous to give such credit to a mere man.

2) Peter's <u>Confession</u>

(i.e. upon this solid testimony that *"You are the Christ the Son of the living God")*

It is true that the boulder of truth that Jesus was the "Christ" was indeed the message the Apostles preached. And it was upon this truth the Church was built.

*Peter on the Day of Pentecost preached *"Christ"* to <u>Jews</u> and the church began (Acts 2:31, 2:38, 3:18).

*Philip preached *"Christ"* to the Samaritans (Acts 8:5).

*Paul preached *"Christ"* to the Jews and Gentiles (Acts 9:20, 22; 17:3; 18:5, 28).

*** **3) Christ**

The words *"thou. . . this"* show that Jesus is pointing (perhaps with His finger).

"You (pointing to Peter) are a piece of a rock, and upon this Rock (pointing to Himself), He says: I will build my Church."

The proof that Christ was referring to Himself when He used the word *"rock"* is because only He (not Peter nor anyone else) is called a *"Rock"* (*petra)* in the Scriptures:

I Cor. 10:4 - *"And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ."*

He is the "*<u>rock</u> of offense*" (Rom. 9:33; I Pet. 2:8).

Christ (not Peter) is the foundation upon which the Church is built.

I Cor. 3:11 - *"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ"*

I Pet. 2:4, 6 - *"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. . . Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded."*

Cp. Isaiah 8:14, 28:16; Psalm 118:22

No one is a "Rock" except *"our God."* **SEE:** Psalm 18:2, 31; 46

Cp. Psalm 28:1, 31:3, 42:9, 661:2, 62:6-7, 71:3, 78:35, 95:1, etc.

If Jesus were saying that He would build His church on (*upon*) Peter, then clearly Peter would have been the greatest one in the kingdom. However, even the disciples did not take this to be the point, or else they would not have disputed among themselves who would be the greatest in the Kingdom (Mt. 20:20-21, 24-28).

B. Christ is the BUILDER of the Church (v. 18b)
"I will build"

"I will build" - the Church is not built by man, but by Christ. We may be His tools, but He is the builder.

"*And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved"* (Acts 2:47)

"I will [future tense] ***build My Church" -*** the Church had not been built yet; but was a work to begin in a future time from when Jesus made this statement.

The Church began at Pentecost (Acts 2), a time which Peter refers to as the *"beginning"* (Acts 11:15).

C. Christ is the <u>POSSESSOR</u> of the Church (v. 18c)
"My Church"

"<u>My</u> Church" - The Church belongs to Jesus Christ

--The Church is called *"the bride, the <u>Lamb's</u> wife"* (Rev. 21:9; cp. Eph. 5)

--The Church is called: *"the church of <u>God</u>"* (Acts 20:28; I Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; II Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; I Tim. 3:5)

--The Church is called *"the flock of <u>God</u>"* (I Pet. 5:2)

This church is not "my church" or even "our church"; it is His church.

"***"My <u>church</u>" -*** the church (singular) is a called-out group of believers who will one day assemble in Heaven. Not the local church; but the Church in prospect is what Christ is referring to. The wider spectrum o "the church"; all true regenerate believers, all over the earth from Pentecost till the Rapture.

(this wider, general, greater body of believers is the meaning of the word *eklesia* in the following passages:

Mt. 16:18 - "I will build my Church"
I Cor.12:28 - "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers..."
I Cor. 15:9 - "I persecuted the Church of God"
Gal. 1:13 - "I persecuted the Church of God"
Eph. 1:22,23 "Gave Him to be head over all things to the Church"
Eph. 3:10 - "Be made known through the Church"
Eph. 3:21 - "Might be glory in the Church"
Eph. 5:23-32 - "...Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for her..."
Phil. 3:6 - "Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church"
Col. 1:18 - "He is the Head of the Body, the Church..."
Col. 1:24 - "For His body's sake, which is the Church."
Heb. 12:23 "To the general assembly and Churchof the firstborn (ones), which are written in Heaven..."

NOTE: The general (generic) usage of the word "Church" is often described as:
"<u>The</u> Church" (Eph. 3:10, 21)
"The Church <u>of God</u>" (I Cor. 15:9)

D. Christ is the <u>PROTECTOR</u> of the Church (v. 18d)
"The gates of hell shall not prevail against it"

"The <u>gates</u> of Hell" - a reference to where the dignitaries and rulers sat.

"The gates stood for those who held government and administered" (Vine, p. 141).

EX: the "gates" in the Old Testament were places where those in public authority and power sat (Gen. 19:1, 22:17, 24:60; Deut. 21:19, 22:15, 22:24, 25:7; Ruth 4:1, 11; Esther 4:6, 5:13; Ps. 127:5; Prov. 24:7).

The ***"gates of <u>Hell</u>"*** is a reference to the *"principalities...powers...rulers of the darkness of this world... spiritual wickedness in high places"* (Eph. 6:12)

I.e. it is a reference to Satan and his high-ranking powerful spirits.

Satan and his host of demons are not in Hell yet (Mt. 8:29), but are associated with "Hell" because everlasting fire was created for them (Mt. 25:41) and Satan will be trapped there forever one day (Rev. 20:10).

"Shall not prevail against it" - There is no way the hoards of hell can overcome, overpower, have strength against or gain mastery over Christ's regenerate believers!

By Christ's death, He destroyed him who had the power of death (that is, the devil) and He delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. 2:14-15).

"*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them* (the false prophets)*: because <u>greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world</u>"* (I Jn. 4:4)

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31)

E. Christ is the <u>SOVEREIGN DIRECTOR</u> of the Church (v. 19)
"<u>I</u> will give. . . keys. . ; shall have been bound . . . loosed in <u>heaven</u>"

"<u>I</u> will give" - Jesus alone has the authority to give such "keys" since He has all authority in Heaven and earth (Mt. 28:18; Rev. 1:18)

"I <u>will</u> give" - future. Jesus gave the keys on the Day of Pentecost.

"Unto thee" - singular (<u>Peter</u> only, not a succession of Popes).

How do Roman Catholic leaders interpret this verse?

Archbishop John F. Whealon says: "This one apostle was made doorkeeper of Heaven. If he opens, we enter. If he closes, we do not enter. His <u>control</u>, then, reaches <u>from earth</u> to Heaven according to this divine promise. . . . It makes good sense for us to be friends of Peter if he is our doorkeeper to Heaven." (Columbia, March, 1991, p. 16).

A Roman Catholic once said to a Baptist: "You are in the wrong church; you should belong to the church which has the keys!" The Bible-believing Christian replied, "I don't need the keys. I have the 'Door'!" (Jn. 10:9)

"The keys of the kingdom of Heaven" - the keys to unlock the Gospel of God's kingdom.

The "*keys*" do <u>not</u> suggest that Peter is at the Gates of Heaven and He decides who enters and who does not.

Rather, the keys represent that which unlocks knowledge to people who are spiritually ignorant.

(EX: In Luke 11:52, Jesus said the Pharisees had taken away *"the key of knowledge."* Not only had they failed to enter the kingdom themselves, but they had hindered others from doing so.)

"A key is of great need when a door is locked, but once the door is unlocked, the key loses its importance. . . **After Peter unlocked the mystery of the Gospel to the <u>Jews</u> (Acts 2), <u>Samaritans</u> (Acts 8:14-17) and <u>Gentiles</u> (Acts 110; 11:8-18),** the door was never again locked, so the keys were never again used. After using the keys, Peter himself fades from view (in Acts)" (Vatican Bank, C.E.C., Box 99141, Louisville, KY 40269).

"Shall be bound. . . shall be loosed" - perfect tense, passive voice participles.

Lit. *"shall have been bound (by God). . . shall have been loosed (by God)"*

In other words, Peter was only confirming something that already had been decided in Heaven!

If Peter said that something was "binding" for Christians not to do, it is because God already decided such a prohibition. If Peter said that something could be done (*"loosed"*), it is because God in Heaven already decreed the allowance.

What Jesus is saying is: *"And whatever you bind on earth [forbid to be done], shall have been already bound...in Heaven; and whatever you loose on earth [permit to be done] shall have already been loosed in Heaven."* (Dr. Kenneth S. Wuest, The Expanded Translation; cited by Wiersbe, p. 59)

In order to understand this concept of "binding and loosing" observe how the local church in Matthew 18:18 is given the authority to make decisions regarding church discipline. Such decisions made by the local church would simply be confirmations of what God had already decided in Heaven.

"Jesus did not say that God would obey what they did on earth, but that they should do on earth whatever God had already willed." (Wiersbe, p. 59).

How would Peter know what to "bind" or "loose"? The Word of God which came to him via Christ's teachings while on earth or by direct revelation (Acts 10).

How does a local church make decisions of "binding" and "loosing"? The Word of God, the Bible.

CONCLUSION:

V. 20

The reason for this serious warning is because Jesus did not want the people to make Him King (Jn. 6:15); He had to die on a cross first (Mt. 16:21-28).

PETER

BASIC R.C. BELIEF

Peter went to Rome in 43 A.D., wrote his Epistles from there and was martyred there. His bones were found under the Vatican. This forms the basis for the Pope being is successor to Peter and Head of the Church.

A Roman Catholic in the Shrine Bookstore in Necedah (see 327), Wisconsin told me that one of the proofs he had for the validity of Roman Catholicism is that he saw a faded painting in the catacombs of Naples, and he was told this was an original painting of St. Peter saying Mass (see 184) on his way to Rome, where he ruled as Pope (see 216).

POST VATICAN II

In CATHOLICISM AND FUNDAMENTALISM, page 203, Karl Keating quotes Eusebius Pamphilius as giving the precise date of 42 when the Apostle Peter is sent to Rome. In the previous paragraph (quoted again in THIS ROCK, December 1990), Lactantius was quoted as saying, "When Nero was already reigning Peter came to Rome..." Nero began his reign in 54, so one of the two authoritative ancient writers was at least 12 years off in his calculations. If one history book says Columbus discovered America in 1492, and another says it happened in 1504, at least one of them is wrong.

God never promised to preserve the writings of the Church fathers and historians. The Catholic Encyclopedia (Volume VI, page 136) admits, "Substituting of false documents and tampering with genuine ones was quite a trade in the Middle Ages."

CHRISTIAN COMMENT

Peter was apostle to the Circumcision (Galatians 2:7-8) and the people whom Paul salutes as Christians in Rome (60 A.D.) are all of Gentile name (Romans 16:3-15). At about this same time, Peter wrote his first epistle from Babylon (see 27).

In 52 A.D., 9 years after he was supposed to go to Rome, Peter is in Jerusalem, telling of his experience with the Gentile Cornelius, but not breathing a word about any Gentile ministry in Rome. In Romans 16, Paul greeted 26 Christians in Rome. If Peter were Bishop of Rome, why was he left out? (Romans 16:3-15).

If Peter's being in Rome is so important, why does the scripture point away from any connection of Peter and Rome? Even if there were, there is no scriptural link between Peter in Rome and a Papacy in Rome.

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KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

BASIC R.C. BELIEF

The spiritual jurisdiction of the Church, in virtue of which power sins may be forgiven (see 114), indulgences (see 151) granted and penalties inflicted.

The binding and loosing power (Matthew 16:19; 18:18) is identical to the jurisdiction exercised by the Pope (see 216) as the head of the Church and the priest in the Confessional (see 67).

The "power of the keys" was given to Peter (see 213); the Pope, as successor to Peter, has full power of the keys. All priests participate in this power to a lesser degree.

POST VATICAN II

These same scriptures are cited in Vatican II document Lumen Gentium as basis for the Pope's absolute and the Bishops' relative power over the Church.

CHRISTIAN COMMENT

The Apostles couldn't have understood the above to be the case, as they didn't have any Confessional in the early Church. They proclaimed the

Gospel, which was the power of God to the loosing of the sins for all who believed, and to the binding of the sins of those who rejected (Romans 1:16).

There are two suppositions that must be proved if we are to accept the Roman Catholic position. It must be proved that the keys represented absolute jurisdiction for Peter, and that this jurisdiction passed, by Apostolic Succession (see 21) to other Bishops of Rome. There is no evidence that whatever prerogatives were given to Peter were to be perpetuated in Rome. The Bishop of Rome achieved supremacy because he was in the chief city, and in response to his own ambition. Peter received his ministry directly from the Lord Jesus Christ.

As Peter alone is mentioned as having received keys, there must have been a privilege that was uniquely his. A key is of great need when a door is locked, but once a door is unlocked, the key loses its importance. Peter used the key to open the door to the Church to the Jews (Acts 2) and the Gentiles (Acts 10). The door was never again locked, so the keys were never again used. After using the keys, Peter himself fades from view.

Peter's loss of prominence in the latter part of Acts is God's way of showing that, like all godly men, Peter had a definite ministry, but that he wasn't eternal. As he declined, God raised up others to carry on the task of preaching the Gospel.

Jesus Christ is Giver of ministry gifts in the Church (Ephesians 4:8-13). The office of the Papacy was first bestowed by Imperial decree and is now voted on by men.

C.E.C., BOX 99141, LOUISVILLE, KY 40269

POPE

BASIC R.C. BELIEF

The name given to the Supreme head of the Roman Catholic Church; from papa, father. The pope is often called the Holy Father (Ed-see John 17:11).

Full title: Bishop of Rome, Vicar of Jesus Christ, Successor of the

Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Patriarch of the West, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Sovereign of the State of the Vatican City, now Gloriously Reigning. For these last 3 words are sometimes substituted "Servant of the Servants of God."

In 533, John II became the first pope to change his name, but the practice did not become general until 1009, when a man named Peter was elected pope and changed his name to Sergius IV. After that it became normal for a pope to take a new name.

From THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE POPES-SAINT PETER TO JOHN PAUL II by Michael Walsh, S.J., Chapter I:

"There has been a great debate over (Matthew 16:18) because, was we shall see, this is the crucial text by which the popes attempted to justify their claim to rule over the whole church, and not just over their local community in Rome.

But whatever the interpretation of the facts, the facts themselves are these: in Aramaic, the language Jesus was using, the word `Peter' and the word `rock' are the same: kepha. Until Jesus bestowed it on Simon, kepha was not a personal name, and neither was its Greek equivalent, Petros ... But the name kepha was translated into Greek as Petros. So those who were writing and translating the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles clearly did not want the significance of the word kepha (meaning rock) to be lost."

Scriptural "proof" for the primacy of the pope is Matthew 16:18-19. In explaining this, Dr. Murray, Maynooth, Ireland, said: "By saying these words, Jesus appointed Peter supreme head of the Church, and gave him full authority to legislate for it; to teach, to inspect and judge; to reject and denounce all false doctrines, and to declare what is the true Faith; to appoint all its clergy and teachers and to arrange their work; in short, the whole church, its officers, its constitution, its work, were entrusted to Peter."

From THE NEW CATHOLIC DICTIONARY, Imprimatur, Cardinal Hayes, New York, page 356: "Fabian, SAINT, POPE (236-250), b. Rome; d. there. A dove descended on his head while he attended the papal election. Considering this a sign from heaven he was elected by acclamation. Little is known of his reign."

From HOW TO FIND THE TRUE CHURCH, page 45, "Peter acted as chief of the apostles, as for instance, at the election of Matthias. . . at the first council, after much discussion Peter gave his opinion to which all

submitted."

From OUR SUNDAY VISITOR, April 18, 1915. "The letters inscribed on the Pope's miter are these: VICARIUS FILII DEI, which is Latin for VICAR OF THE SON OF GOD." (Editor's Note-The numerical value for VICARIUS FILII DEI is 666)

POST VATICAN II

Roman Catholic ecumenists play down fears of papal jurisdiction over Protestants. They are saying that the Pope is a fellow bishop of all bishops in Christendom. Because he comes from the See where Peter and Paul were martyred he has a prominence that he uses to help his fellow bishops.

The Vatican II document LUMEN GENTIUM says, "For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ namely, and as pastor of the entire church, has full supreme and universal power over the whole church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered" (Vatican II, edited by Austin Flannery, O.P., page 375).

From INTRODUCING CONTEMPORARY CATHOLICISM by Theo Weston. "Underlying conflict concerning the unfinished and, according to some, one-sided treatment of the papal primacy by Vatican I."

From CURRENT TRENDS IN THEOLOGY by Jesuits Wolf and Schall, page 223, "At the first Vatican Council the Church developed in detail the function of the Pope in the life of the church. But the Council broke up before there was time to balance this announcement of papal prerogatives and papal duties with a definition of the status of the bishops in the church, or to balance the statement on the hierarchy with complimentary statements on the role of the laity in the Church."

During a visit to Des Moines, Iowa (1979), John Paul II was welcomed by a Roman Catholic choir singing, "Joy to the world, the Pope has come" (BAPTIST BULLETIN, DEC. 1979).

(From KEEPERS OF THE KEYS, Wilton Wynn, Random House, New York. 1988, p. 11 - "In the year 236 a farmer named Fabian wandered into Rome and stopped to watch the clergy and people select a pope. A dove landed on Fabian's head, and the assembly instantly acclaimed him pope."

In Matthew 16:18, "petra" is used for Rock and means foundation stone; "petros" is used for Peter and means a small stone. See I Peter 2:4-5.

When Jesus first met Peter (John 1:42), He said to him, "Thy name shall be Cephas" (an Aramaic word that Catholic apologists insist can mean rock or stone), but the Holy Spirit defined it by saying "which is by interpretation, a stone (Greek: petros).

If Dr. Murray is correct in his interpretation, why didn't Peter choose Matthias in Acts 1 instead of having to cast lots?

Five witnesses can be summoned to answer the question, "Did you understand that Jesus proclaimed Peter to be the infallible primate in Matthew 16:18-19?" See if these witnesses testify that Peter exerted the two papal prerogatives, primacy and infallibility. (a) Jesus (Matthew 16:23); (b) The Apostles (Luke 22:24; Acts 8:14); (c) James (Acts 15:19); (d) Paul (Galatians 2:11); (e) Peter (I Peter 5:1; II Peter 1:1).

From paper by Hugh Greene, WAS PETER (CEPHAS) THE ROCK?: "The word kepha is derived from two ancient Hebrew (Chaldee-Aramaic) words. The first is keph, meaning a hollow rock. The other is kaphaph, meaning to be bent over, or the hollow palm of one's hand. (Strong's EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE AND DICTIONARY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS, Numbers 3710, 3721 in the Hebrew section.)

"Therefore it is obvious that kepha, or Cephas, Peter's new name was never meant to mean or signify a massive, immovable foundation such as a mountain, or BEDROCK. Quite the contrary, Jesus (who used the word kepha in John 1:42) wanted to show the complete difference between Peter and Himself with regards to who He would build His church upon."

Three Catholic publications which enjoyed wide acceptance among pre-Vatican II Roman Catholics were THE FAITH OF MILLIONS by John O'Brien, published by Our Sunday Visitor (designated below as FM); WHAT'S THE TRUTH ABOUT CATHOLICS (WT) by John O'Brien, published by Our Sunday Visitor and THE STORY OF THE POPE (SP), Dell Publications. All three had the official imprimatur of Bishop Noll (O'Brien's books) and Cardinal Spellman. While none is infallible, they are certainly authoritative.

Alex Dunlap, Founder of The Conversion Center, quoted from these three books regarding the number of popes, and about specific names of popes.

Following are his findings:

FM - 261 popes; WT - 262 popes, SP - 258 popes (all through Pius XII)
Pope #5: FM - Evaristus; WT - Anacletus
Pope #137: FM - John XIV; WT - Donus II
Pope #207: FM - Martin V; WT - John XXII, XXIII or XXIV.

Further, Alex cites the removal in 1947 of pope Donus, who had been pope in 973 but was found by the Vatican "never to have existed." This, with the removal of sainthood from popes Felix II, Liberius, Anastasio, Stephen III

and Stephen V constitutes what Alex aptly called "The Confusion of the Popes."

CATHOLIC JOURNALS

The Roman Catholic paper TWIN CIRCLE, July 1, 1979, stated: "It is customary for the pope to speak using the plural form `We' which means `the Holy Spirit and I'.

C.E.C., BOX 99141, LOUISVILLE, KY 40269

"GET THEE BEHIND ME, SATAN!"

Matthew 16:21-28
6-24-2018

INTRODUCTION: Verse 21

***Don't be ignorant of Satan's devices!** (II Corinthians 2:11)

I. SATAN'S ATTACK (v. 22-23)

A. Satan will often attack right after a great victory (v. 22a)

B. Satan can attack even through the well-intended advice of a believer who is not Spirit-filled (v. 22b)

C. Satan cannot possess a Christian but can attack the thought life of a believer (v. 23a)

D. Satan's attacks are always with a goal to thwart the cause of Christ (v. 23b)

E. Satan attacks because he abhors the things of God and adores the things of men (v. 23c)

II. SATAN'S DEFEAT (v. 24-26)

How to have victory over Satan's humanistic snare:

A. **Say NO to self. . .** *and say YES to God's will (v. 24a)*

B. **DIE to self. . .** *and LIVE for Christ (v. 24b)*

C. **LOSE your self. . .** *and FIND real life in Christ (v. 25-26)*

CONCLUSION: Christ's REWARDS (v. 27-28)

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A. Satan will often attack <u>right after a</u> _____ (v. 22a)

B. Satan can attack even through the _____ _____ of a believer who is not Spirit-filled (v. 22b)

C. Satan cannot possess a Christian but <u>can attack the</u> _____ _____ of a believer (v. 23a)

D. Satan's attacks are always with <u>a goal to</u> _____ _____ (v. 23b)

E. Satan attacks because he _____ <u>the things of</u> _____ and _____ <u>the things of</u> _____ (v. 23c)

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A. **Say** _____ **to self. . .** *and say <u>YES</u> to God's will (v. 24a)*

B. _____ **to self. . .** *and <u>LIVE</u> for Christ (v. 24b)*

C. _____ **your self. . .** *and <u>FIND</u> real life in Christ (v. 25-26)*

CONCLUSION: Christ's <u>REWARDS</u> (v. 27-28)

"GET THEE BEHIND ME, SATAN!"

Matthew 16:21-28
6-24-2018

INTRODUCTION: Verse 21

Throughout the Bible God contrasts His view of things with man's (MacArthur, p. 35).

Isaiah 55:8-9 - *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith 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."*

Prov. 14:12 - *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."*

Psalm 92:5-6 - *"O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this."*

V. 21

"From that time" - this is the first time Jesus plainly mentions His death in Matthew's gospel.

After being declared the *"Christ"* (the Messiah), it was not an easy thing for the disciples to learn that the Messiah would have to die.

"He must go. . . and suffer" - the death of Christ on Calvary was not an accident; it was ordained by God (Is. 53; Dan. 9:26), and nothing could hinder its fulfillment! (Lk. 24:26)

Jesus had to die to fulfill Scripture (Ps. 16:22; Is. 53; Dan. 9:25-26) to shed His blood (Heb. 9:22) to atone for man's sin and to ransom us (Mt. 20:28).

"Raised again the third day" - this revelation of the resurrection definitely went over the disciples' head (or it went "in one ear and out the other") because their minds were blank to this promise until after Christ appeared to them after His resurrection (Jn. 20:9).

What Jesus reveals here did not fit in with Peter's ideas; it did not match his theology; it did not suit his taste; it did not thrill his soul; it did not square with what Peter anticipated.

***Don't be ignorant of Satan's devices!** (II Corinthians 2:11)

I. SATAN'S <u>ATTACK</u> (v. 22-23)

A. Satan will often attack <u>right after a great victory</u> (v. 22a)

It's scary how quickly Satan can work on a person.

One minute Peter makes the most glorious statement (v. 16), and the next, he makes the biggest blunder with his mouth that he could ever make!

Peter, now with over-confidence, speaking as an acknowledged leader of the disciples (16:19), evidently puffed up with sinful pride, takes it upon himself to question (yea, deny) the words of the Messiah.

B. Satan can attack even through the <u>well-intended advice</u> of a believer who is not Spirit-filled (v. 22b)

"Then Peter took Him" - Peter grabbed hold of Jesus and took Him aside.

"Began to rebuke Him" - this same word *"rebuke"* is used of Jesus rebuking demonic spirits (Mt. 17:18; Mk. 1:25, 9:25).

"Be it far from thee" = lit. "May mercy be upon you!" (like our idiom: "May God have pity/mercy on you!")

Peter in total shock and bewilderment said something like: "May God be gracious to you!"

Peter addressing Jesus as ***"Lord"*** <u>rings hollow</u>, since he is placing his will over Christ's (MacArthur, p. 40).

"This shall not be unto Thee" - Peter uses a double negative (*ou ma*) to stress the absolute impossibility of such a thing happening.

Suffering and death for a mere mortal, yes. But not for the Christ!

Before you are too quick to judge Peter, how often have you (by your thoughts, words, or actions in life) contradicted the Lord's will for you?

The irrational actions and words by Peter show that a diabolical force was motivating and prompting him.

What was Satan saying through Peter? "You deserve something better than God's will."

Satan had earlier offered Jesus a kingdom without a cross (Mt. 4:8-10).

Peter never expected this response from Jesus. In his mind, he thought such a remark to Jesus would show how much he cared for Jesus. (ILLUS: like the paster in Minnesota who told me I should not go to NYC because of all the crime in the city).

Apparently, Jesus was not looking at him when Peter rebuked Him. As they walked, Peter with his arm on Jesus' arm or shoulder, begins to rebuke Him, upon which Jesus turns around, looks Peter straight in the face, and says: ***"Get thee behind me, Satan."*** (ie.e. "Get away from my face, Satan!").

While Michael the archangel would not dare make a railing accusation against Satan (Jude 9), Jesus did not spare!

C. Satan cannot possess a Christian but <u>can attack the thought life</u> of a believer (v. 23a)

Mark 8:33 says that when Jesus turned around and *"looked on his disciples"* - He intended all of his disciples to hear what He was about to say. They, too, (not just Peter) no doubt had the same wicked thought as Peter. It's just that only impetuous Peter had the "quick draw" mouth to say something.

"Before Peter had a chance to finish his objections, Jesus abruptly cut him off and accused him of being the mouthpiece for His adversary, Satan." (MacArthur, p. 41).

"Satan" = adversary; opponent; enemy

"Said unto Peter" - *"He rebuked Peter"* (Mk. 8:33).

Satan on this occasion did <u>not possess</u> Peter, but he did influence Peter's thoughts (Satan cannot possess a believer, but he can put thoughts into our heads. This is why it is so important to continually flood our minds with God's thoughts-- the Bible!)

D. Satan's attacks are always with <u>a goal to thwart the cause of Christ</u> (v. 23b)

"Offense" = *scandalon* (Eng. "scandal") - a deceitful trap or snare; an obstacle designed to hinder or stop someone.

Although there was no way Satan could trap, snare, or stop Christ from fulfilling His mission of going through with the cross, the Devil tried his best (cp. *"Come down from the cross"* - Mt. 27:40, 42; Mk. 15:30).

Satan has no interest in God's cause at all. His doom is sealed; the eternal Lake of Fire awaits him (Rev. 20:10), and he will seek to do anything he can to thwart, disrupt, or de-rail the things of God.

E. Satan attacks because he <u>abhors the things of God</u> and <u>adores the things of men</u> (v. 23c)

"Savourest" = to have a mindset that is totally focused on one thing. To be mentally obsessed with something.

For Satan, his thoughts were (and are) not one bit for the divine cause of God, but for the things of lost, unregenerate, hell-bound men.

Satan passionately hates the things of God. What are the "<u>things of God</u>" (which Satan hates)??

These are all areas Satan attacks:

--The <u>Son</u> of God
Mt. 4:3 - *"And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."*

--The <u>Word</u> of God
Lk. 4:4 - *"And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."*

--The <u>will</u> of God
Mk. 3:35 - *"For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother,*

and my sister, and mother."

--The <u>church</u> of God
I Cor. 11:22 - *"What? Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not."*
Gal. 1:13 - *"For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it"* (cp. I Cor. 10:32; 15:9)

--The <u>kingdom</u> of God
Acts 14:22 - *"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."*

--The <u>righteousness</u> of God
Rom. 10:3 - *"For they begin ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."*

--The <u>grace</u> of God
I Cor. 1:4 - *"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ"*
cp. Titus 2:11

--The <u>glory</u> of God
I Cor. 10:31 - *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."*

--The <u>man</u> of God
I Tim. 6:11 - *"But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith..."* (cp. II Tim. 3:17)

--The <u>peace</u> of God (via prayer)
Phil. 4:6-7 - *"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

What things does Satan savor? What things of men (unsaved carnal humanity) does Satan love to promote?

"Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of **men**."
What are the "things…of men"?

--The glory of men
Mt. 6:2, 5
Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

--The commandments of men
Mt. 15:9
But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

--The traditions of men
Col. 2:8; cp. Mk. 7:8
Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

--The heart of men
Mk. 7:21; cp. Jer. 17:9
For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

--The praise of men
Jn. 12:43
For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

--The ungodliness and unrighteousness of men
Ro. 1:18
For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

--The wisdom of men
I Cor. 2:5
That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

--The <u>sleight</u> (deceit) of men
Eph. 4:14
That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

--The <u>lusts</u> of men
I Peter 4:2
That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

--The <u>sight</u> of men
Rev. 13:13
And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

II. SATAN'S DEFEAT (v. 24-26)

How to have victory over Satan's humanistic snare:

A. **Say NO to self. . .** *and say YES to God's will (v. 24a)*

"If any man will come after Me" - "If any one desires (wishes) to follow me" - This does not refer to the means to salvation, but to sanctification; not relationship with Christ, but fellowship with Christ.

"Deny himself" - (*aparneomai* - a strengthened form of *arneomai*) - meaning to utterly say "no" to oneself; to turn away from your own self-centered ways; to totally disregard one's own selfish ways.

When a conflict of wills occurs (God's will vs. our old nature's) and we by the power of God's Spirit under the direction of God's Word choose to say "No" to selfish impulses, we have denied self.

When our flesh screams out for gratification (outside of God's ordained boundaries) and we don't give in but rather disregard temptation's cry, we have denied self.

True Christian maturity is not when we do right because we feel like it, but when we do right when we don't feel like it.

B. **DIE to self. . .** *and LIVE for Christ (v. 24b)*

"Take up - the imperative anticipates willingness to do so. You must decide or choose to take it up.

The "cross" to which Jesus refers is not a physical handicap nor a "nagging wife" nor a "domineering mother-in-law" (MacArthur, p. 48).

"His cross" - Each one of us must take our own cross, our own instrument of death.

Each must die to self for oneself!

Such cross bearing is to be *"daily"* according to Luke 9:23.

In response to Peter's repulsive remark against suffering and dying (v. 22),

Jesus tells him that unless He is willing to suffer, he cannot be a true disciple of Christ.

The "cross" was a common symbol of death. Many were hung on them, but none of their own volition. The purpose of the cross was not to bear it, but to die on it.

Jesus calls upon us to radically abandon our life for the purpose of living for Him! To die to our own plans, our own ambitions, our own desires, our own goals, our own praise and glory, our own fame and fortune. . . all for the purpose of fulfilling His plans, ambitions, desires. . .

Gal. 2:20 - *"I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."*

"The only good Christian is a dead Christian" (dead to self, that is).

"And follow Me" - Jesus is not calling upon us to deny self and die to self for no purpose. Our purpose is to free us from that which keeps us from following Christ.

How well you follow Christ can be measured by how often you choose His ways over yours!

C. **<u>LOSE</u> your self. . .** *and <u>FIND</u> real life in Christ (v. 25-26)*

"For" = Because. Jesus gives a reason why we must be willing to die to self.

The reason is simple: Those whose sole interest is to preserve one's life will end up losing his life.

The greatest test of verse 25 will come in the future Great Tribulation (Mt. 24:21), when the test will be: "Take the mark 666 or die" (Rev. 13). Those who do take it show by doing so their allegiance to Satan and his diabolical "Antichrist." They think they will live, when in reality, they will die for eternity! (Rev. 14:9-11).

"For My sake" - Our sacrifice of self is not in vain. It is for Jesus. Everything we do should be for Him.

"For to me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21)

"Soul" - the immaterial part of man (used synonymously with *"spirit"* in this verse).

The soul is the inner real you. it is that aspect of you which will exist forever, even after death (Rev. 6:9).

What do you gain if you acquire the whole world (with all its temporary gold, luxury, pleasure, fame, etc.) and yet lose your soul forever!

"Give in exchange" - What would you trade for your soul? There is nothing as valuable, important, vital, or precious to you as your own soul!

Many have forfeited their "soul" for a cheap, temporary, brief, fleeting moment of happiness

--for the foolish farmer it was his self-sufficiency and material security
(Lk.12:20)
--for the rich man it was his sumptuous living (Lk. 16)
--for Judas it was a bag of 20 pieces of silver
--for those who receive the mark of the Beast, it will be to *"buy and sell"* (to keep their business open) (Rev. 13)

So many sell out so cheaply!

--For many today it's a sexual encounter that leads to AIDS. . . it's a drug high that leads to an overdose and death. . . it's a bottle that leads to a car crash. . . .

CONCLUSION: **Christ's <u>REWARDS</u>** (v. 27-28)

"The glory of His Father" = the same glory (brilliant brightness) the Father has.

For the Son to share the glory of God, He must be equal with God, because God said He would not share His glory with another (Is. 42:8).

"With His angels" - cp. Mt. 24:31 - *"And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."*

"<u>Then</u> He shall reward" - Christ rewards his people (those who were willing to deny self and die to self and follow Him) at the moment of the Rapture.

"Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me."

"Every man" = i.e. every man who has a reward coming! There are no rewards for the unsaved, only punishment.

"According to his works" - The rewards are based on your practice, your over-all life emphasis, your selfless conduct.

"Some standing here" - namely, Peter, James and John (17:1)

This verse was fulfilled in 17:2. Christ's kingdom was "seen" by this inner circle on the Mount of Transfiguration (a preview of His coming splendor).

"THE UNVEILING OF CHRIST"

(The Transfiguration)
Matthew 17:1-13
7/1/2018

INTRODUCTION:

See Christ for who He is!

I. His Bright <u>GLORY</u> Was Unveiled (v. 2)

II. His Special <u>UNIQUENESS</u> Was Unveiled (v. 3-7)

III. His Humble <u>INCARNATION</u> Was Unveiled (v. 8-13)

"THE UNVEILING OF CHRIST"

(The Transfiguration)
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INTRODUCTION:

Read the poem: *"The Incomparable Christ"*

Who was this Jesus Christ?

When the Son of God became the Son of man, His divine glory was veiled from human view. In His incarnation He took on all the features of mortality and humanness with one exception: He did not have a sin nature (Heb. 4:15; Jn. 8:46; II Cor. 5:21).

Christ's incarnation involved a change in His position and state.

Note the humility of Christ as evident by the following changes He underwent in becoming man:

a. A change in His dwelling-place
(from the presence of the Father to the presence of men - Jn. 6:51)

b. A change in His possessions
(from riches to poverty - II Cor. 8:9)

c. A change in His reputation among men
(from glory to obscurity - Jn. 17:5; Phil. 2:6, 7)

d. A change in His position
(from equality with God [in authority] to servanthood - Mt. 20:26-28; Phil. 2:6, 7)

e. A change in His form (bodily appearance)
(from the form of God to the likeness of men - Phil. 2:6-8)

Christ only surrendered the use of certain divine attributes.

EX: the ability to do all (omnipotence; Mt. 28:19)
the ability to know all (omniscience; Mk. 13:32)
the ability to decide all (omnisapience; Lk. 2:52)
the ability to be everywhere (omnipresence; Jn. 14:28)

Christ possessed the essential elements of human nature.

a) Jesus had a body (Heb. 2:14, 16; I Jn. 4:2, 3)
b) Jesus had a soul (Mt. 26:38)
c) Jesus had a spirit (Lk. 23:46)

Jesus exercised all the attributes of human existence.

a) Birth (including pre-natal development -Lk. 2:6, 7)
b) Growth and development (Lk. 2:40, 52)
c) Physical appetites
   (1) Hunger (Mt. 4:2)
   (2) Thirst (Jn. 19:28)
   (3) Sleep (Mt. 8:24)
d) Emotions
   (1) Anger (Mk. 3:5)
   (2) Sorrow (Jn. 11:35)
   (3) Compassion (Jn. 13:23)
   (4) Anguish of soul (Jn. 12:27)
e) Human restrictions and limitations
   (1) Fatigue (weariness - Jn. 4:6)
   (2) Exhaustion (Lk. 22:43)
   (3) Time/space limitations (Mk. 11:13)
   (4) Death (Jn. 19:30)

V. 1

"After six days" - Jesus would fulfill His promise of 16:28 right after He gave it, so the prophecy would be fresh in the disciples' minds.

"After six days" - six full days (excluding this day, plus the day of the actual Transfiguration) - totally eight days - Luke 9:28).

"Peter, James, and John" - This core group of disciples formed an "inner circle" which is often singled out as having a particularly close relationship with Christ (cp. Mk. 1:29, 5:37, 13:3, 14:33; Lk. 8:51). They were all of the same trade and were close companions with each other before following Christ (Lk. 5:10).

Why three men? Three would be an adequate witness to verify or confirm this vision: *"On the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed"* (Dt. 19:15; Mt. 18:20) (cited by MacArthur, p. 62).

"An high mountain" - "The text does not name the place where this miracle took place. It was probably on Mount Hermon, which is close to Caesarea Philippi (16:13)" (Wiersbe, p. 60).

In Matthew 17:1-13, God (as it were) pulls back the curtain and unveils who Jesus really is!

As Peter previously revealed Jesus to be the Christ with words (Mt. 16:16), now God the Father reveals Jesus to be the Christ with a vision (a visual, three-dimensional, sensational appearance of who Jesus really is).

***See Christ for who He is!**

I. His Bright GLORY Was Unveiled (v. 2)

"Transfigured" - aorist passive voice - The Father transformed the incarnate Son to give the disciples a preview of the same glory Christ will display when He comes to establish His future eternal kingdom.

"Transfigured" - *metamorphoo* - to undergo a change in form, to be totally transformed

[While believers are commanded to be transformed inwardly (Rom. 12:2), Christ was transformed externally (outwardly) on this occasion.]

According to Luke 9:29, this alteration of Christ's appearance occurred *"as He prayed"*. As Jesus prayed, the disciples slept (Lk. 9:32), and when they awoke *"they saw His glory."*

"As the sun" - John saw the blazing glory of Christ in Rev. 1:13-18 and described *"His countenance"* as being *"as the sun shineth in his strength*" (at high noon) (Rev. 1:16).

This is the same bright, brilliant intense supernatural light that blinded Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9:3.

Ezekiel also saw the glory of Christ, which will one day fill His temple (Ezek. 43:1-2, 4).

"Many years later, John recalled this event as the Spirit led Him to write: *"And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14). (cited by Wiersbe, p. 61)*

(Jesus is called: *"the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person"* (Heb. 1:3).

"Raiment was white as the light" - Mark includes this detail - Mark 9:3 - *"And His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them."*

Such whiteness speaks of the absolute purity, holiness and righteousness of Christ, just as the white garments of the saints signify their righteousness in Christ (Rev. 3:4, 5; 6:11; 19:8, 14; cp. Is. 1:18).

Such a garment of brilliant white also identifies Jesus with the *"Ancient of days"* in Dan. 7:9 - *"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire."*

This display of Christ is a picture of His glory (Lk. 9:32) that will be manifested at His second coming (Rapture) (Mt. 16:27, 24:30, 25:31; cp. Jn. 1:14, 12:41, 17:24; I Pet. 1:11, 4:13).

When Christ returns He will destroy the Antichrist *"with the brightness of His coming"* (II Th. 2:8)

II. His Special <u>UNIQUENESS</u> Was Unveiled (v. 3-7)

V. 3

"Moses and Elijah" - Two men representing the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah). Many believe these two men will be the two witness of Rev. 11:3, who will perform the same miracles as Moses and Elijah did in the Old Testament (EX: Moses - water into blood; Elijah - draught for 3 1/2 years) (Rev. 11:6).

Elijah is sure to return (Mal. 4:5; Mt. 17:10-11).

"Talking to Him" - What was the subject of their holy conversation?

These two prophets of old (Moses and Elijah) appeared (somehow, miraculously materialized ***"in glory"*** - in glorified form) and spoke with Jesus concerning ***"His decease"*** (lit. "his exodus") from the earth by death at Mt. Calvary in the city of Jerusalem (Lk. 9:31).

(Note: The timing of this discussion is very significant because it falls upon the heels of Peter's [Satan's] denial of Christ's suffering and death (Mt. 16:22) -- What carnal Peter denied, Moses and Elijah confirmed.

V. 4

When Peter said this, he did <u>not</u> realize what he was saying (Lk. 9:33b).

Peter instantly wakes up out of his slumber and impetuously requests permission to build three tabernacles (tents, booths, or shelters, like that built in the Old Testament) - ***"one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah***".

Why does Peter ask to build such things?

Peter, being a Jew, recalled the bright, Skekinah glory that filled the O. T. tabernacle (Exod. 40:34-38). Now, seeing the splendid glory of Christ, he asks to build three tabernacles to house the glorified Christ as well as the glorified Moses and Elijah.

What is wrong with such a request? Answer: Peter gives Jesus, Moses , and Elijah "equal billing." He wrongly puts them on par with the Son of God. So now the Father comes on the scene and straightens this matter out.

V. 5

This ***"bright cloud"*** overshadowed (enveloped) them - while the words were in Peter's mouth, suddenly this extremely brilliant cloud (like a white fog) falls upon them, sending a fearful feeling through their "spines" (Lk. 9:34), and a voice (which Peter never forgot - II Pet. 1:17, 18) began to speak out of the cloud.

The voice of God the Father said: ***"This (one)*** **[not the other two - Moses and Elijah)** ***is my beloved*** (Eph. 1:6) ***Son" --*** The Father proclaims the UNIQUENESS of the Son! Jesus was not a mere prophet (like Moses and Elijah).

"In whom I am well pleased" - As Jesus testified - *"I do always those things that please Him"* (Jn. 8:29).

These are almost the identical words the Father spoke at Christ's baptism (Mt. 3:17).

"Hear ye Him" - Listen to Him! Give Him your ear! Give attention to Jesus!

The Pharisees questioned: *"Why hear ye Him?"* (Jn. 10:20). Jesus responded: *"My sheep hear my voice"* (Jn. 10:27) and *"He that hath ears, let him hear."* (Mt. 13:9, 43).

He was saying, in effect, "If my Son tells you He must go to Jerusalem to suffer and die, believe Him. If he tells you He will be raised up on the third day, believe Him. If He tells you to take up your own cross and follow Him, that is what you are to do. If He says He will come again in glory, then believe Him and live accordingly" (MacArthur, p. 68).

"The Father will not permit His beloved Son to be put on the same level as Moses and Elijah" (Wiersbe, p. 63).

Christ's glory will not be shared with another (is. 42:8). Christ alone must be honored with the same honor given only to the Father (Jn. 5:23).

Beware of detracting from Christ (beware of robbing Him of the glory He alone deserves).

V. 6

"They fell on their face" - This is always the response of a fear of God (EX: John in Rev. 1:17).

No one sees the glory of God or hears His voice and remains the same!

V. 7

"Touched them" - a touch of comfort (cp. Rev. 1:18).

"Be not afraid" - there is no need to fear when Jesus is near!

III. His Humble <u>INCARNATION</u> Was Unveiled (v. 8-13)

V. 8

The cloud now left, the voice ceased, Moses and Elijah was gone, Jesus' glory was again veiled. He was back to His incarnate human physical body.

Several things reveal the humility of Christ's incarnation:

--He was transformed back into *"flesh and blood"* (v. 8)

--He called Himself *"the Son of <u>Man</u>"* (v. 9, 12)

--He would *"suffer"* at the hands of mortals (v. 12)

V. 9

This vision was to be kept secret until after Christ's resurrection. Why? Probably because they would not believe it until then. Another reason is that Jesus wanted His Messianic glory to be confidential until after He had died to atone for man's sin.

There can be no kingdom without a cross!

V. 10

The disciples are wondering, "If you are going to die and rise again and then establish your kingdom," (cp. Mt. 16:28), "why do the Scribes say 'Elijah must come first?'" (ie. before the inauguration of Your Kingdom)

They asked in effect: How does this chronology work? Where does Elijah's coming fit into all this?

V. 11

"Elias truly (certainly, assuredly) shall (will in the future) come" - Before the "Day of the Lord" God promised that He would send the man who never died (II Ki. 2:1, 11) back to the earth to prepare the way for the Lord's coming (Mal. 4:5).

Jesus does not deny the promise of Mal. 4:5. He affirms it.

V. 12

However, He also says that there was a sense in which Elijah already came - He was mistreated (as Jesus would be) in the person of John the Baptist (v. 13).

V. 13

When asked "Are you Elijah?" John said, "I am not" (Jn. 1:21).

John was not literally Elijah, but as Luke 1:17 says, he prepared the way for Christ *"in the spirit and power of Elias"*

Just as John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ's first coming (Mal. 3:1; Mt. 11:10), Elijah (perhaps as one of God's two witnesses - Rev. 11:3) will prepare the way for Christ's second coming (Mal. 4:1, 5).

And this "Elijah" is not Rev. Sun Yung Moon, nor any other self-appointed prophet!

CONCLUSION:

"POWER OVER THE IMPOSSIBLE"

Matthew 17:14-21

7-8-2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 14-19

1. A desperate man (v. 14-16)
   a. His son's condition was critical and apparently helpless
   b. Others had tried to help but failed

2. A doubtful man (v. 17; Mark 9:22, 24)

***Three Keys to Power Over the Impossible:**

I. FAITH (v. 20)
(Total confidence in God's power)

II. PRAYER (v. 21a)
(Total dependence on God's power)

III. FASTING (v. 21b)
(Total desperation for God's power)

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"POWER OVER THE IMPOSSIBLE"

Matthew 17:14-21

7-8-2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 14-19

1. A <u>desperate</u> man (v. 14-16)

V. 14

"Kneeling down" - In desperation the man races over to Jesus, falls down on His knees and tells Jesus His plight.

V. 15

"Mercy" = compassionate pity

"My son" - This young boy (perhaps a teen) was the father's ***"<u>only</u>"*** son (Lk. 9:38), and he had this demonic possession ever since he was a *"child"* (Mk. 9:21).

a. His son's condition was critical and apparently helpless

V. 15

"Lunatick" - lit. moonstruck; the boy had wild, out of control epileptic fits, which in ancient days the people thought was somehow mysteriously influenced by the moon (Vine, p. 37).

Mark and Luke's gospels give more details concerning the frenzied, irrational behavior of this poor young soul.

1) The boy couldn't speak because of a demonic spirit which caused him to be mute and deaf (Mk. 9:17, 25).

2) The boy would suddenly be seized (or grabbed) by the demon, which would take over the boy's "motor skills" and the spirit would tear at him, dashing him to the ground (Mk. 9:18a).

3) The boy would foam at the mouth (sending saliva flowing down the child's face) and would grind his teeth (in pain) (Mk. 9:18b).

4) The boy would stiffen out and become rigid (*"pineth away"* - KJV - Mk. 9:18c).

5) The boy would suddenly and uncontrollably cry out (Lk. 9:39).

6) The demonic spirit would rarely (*"scarcely"*) ever leave the child but would maul him, continually leaving him black and blue with bruises (Lk. 9:39).

"Sore vexed" - really bad off

Often, in an attempt to destroy the boy, the demon would compel him to fall into fire (to burn him to death), or into water (to drawn him).

(Satan, *"the thief cometh. . . to kill and to destroy"* - Jn. 10:10).

b. Others had tried to help but failed

V. 16

"<u>Thy</u> disciples" - This man implicitly connects Jesus to the impotency of his disciples.

"They could not cure him" - And no man can do that which is in the realm of the supernatural. This was a case only God could cure!

2. A <u>doubtful</u> man (v. 17; Mark 9:22, 24)

V. 17
"Then Jesus answered" -

Mark 9:19 - says *"He answered <u>him</u>"* - He directed His comment toward this man as well as the crowd (including the scribes and His own disciples).

SEE: Mark 9:22, 24

"If thou canst do anything. . ." (v. 22) - This father did not say, "If you <u>will</u>" but he questions Christ's <u>ability</u>.

"Faithless" = to be without belief; to be without trust (more and more this seems to describe our generation).

"Perverse" = to be perverted by someone; to be distorted or twisted. The idea here is that this people to whom Jesus is speaking had been turned aside from a strong confidence in Christ.

"How long" - Jesus had been proving Himself for months and months with indisputable miracles, and yet the hardness of men's hearts would not let the truth of who He was sink in.

V. 18

At Jesus rebuke of the demon, the child was released:

1) Completely
2) Permanently
And 3) Instantly (after one last shove - Mk. 9:26)

V. 19

"Apart" - Perhaps with shame and embarrassment, the disciples in privacy ask Jesus why they had failed.

Part of the answer to their question was in their question itself. (***"We")**

It is faith in God not in yourself.

***Three Keys to Power Over the Impossible:**

I. FAITH (v. 20)
(Total confidence in God's power)

"Unbelief" = the problem was not (as the critical text implies) a smallness of faith. Rather, their problem was an absence of faith (for Jesus in this very verse tells what a little faith (in the right Person) could accomplish.

"Mustard seed" - known for its smallness among the plant seeds.

It's not the size of your faith, it's the genuineness, sincerity, and right object of your faith that ***"moves mountains"***!

"Nothing shall be impossible" - That is, nothing outside of the will of God (cp. Paul's thorn remained - II Cor. 12). (You cannot possibly have real faith in an unBiblical request).

Heb. 11:6 - *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him"*

"Faith honors God and therefore God honors faith."

"<u>Belief</u>" is a major prerequisite to answered prayer.

Mark 11:24 - *"Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire,m when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."*

James 1:6-7 - *"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."*

How dare we question the ability of the One who created the universe!

How could we question the power of the One who has adequately proven Himself able in the past?

We need the "Faith of our Fathers"!

II. <u>PRAYER</u> (v. 21a)
(Total <u>dependence</u> on God's power)

This text, though omitted in the critical text, was nonetheless clearly stated by Christ (SEE: Mark 9:29).

"This kind" - This supernatural kind of Satanic grip on a person's life; this impossible kind; this hard kind; this humanly hopeless kind.

"Prayer" = points to serious, purposeful prayer. Not nonchalant, half-hearted chatter to God, but an intensity of a soul that pours out his request with humility, dependency, fervency, and faith!

Did you know that there is one thing that astonishes (amazes) God?

Isaiah 59:16 - *"And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessors: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him."*

Note: Even in urgent times like these, we have less praying going on than ever!

God was shocked (astonished) at Israel's prayerlessness when the need for prayer was so great (Is. 59:16).

We need to be people of real prayer before a time of crisis in order to be effective pray-ers in a time of crisis.

"The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (accomplishes much)" (Ja. 5:16).

"Call unto Me and I will answer thee and shew thee <u>great</u> and <u>mighty</u> things, which thou knowest not" (Jer. 33:3).

Prayer unites puny man to the omnipotent God.

Prayer is most essential, the most needed activity, yet often the most neglected.

The most important person in any church is the one who prays the most.
The most influential person in any church is the one who prays the most.
(Dr. Bob Jones III)

What was it that brought the Communist wall down in Russia? The sovereign God of Heaven was no doubt moved by the prayers of His praying Russian saints (Prayer unleashes the power of God).

Although God is sovereign and does according to His will, prayer changes things!

Mysteriously, prayer moves God to work on our behalf, to do that which we cannot do by human power and wisdom.

(SEE: II Chron. 20:3-12, 15 - the prayer of Jehoshaphat)

III. FASTING (v. 21b)
(Total desperation for God's power)

"Fasting" - The Greek word translated "fasting" is nesteia (ne = a negative prefix; and esthio = to eat); hence, the word means to "not eat"

"Fasting" was (and is) a voluntary abstinence from eating food so as to spend the time normally spend in preparing and consuming food in prayer.

Note: Food preparation was a process which demanded more time than in our instant-microwave society.

"Fasting" and "Prayer" are constantly tied together (Ezra 8:23; Neh. 1:4; Mt. 17:21; Mk. 9:292; Acts 13:3; I Cor. 7:5)

You can pray without fasting, but you cannot fast Biblically without praying. Fasting is an affirmation of intense prayer, a corollary of deep spiritual struggle before God. It is never an isolated act of a ceremony or ritual that has some inherent efficacy or merit" (MacArthur, p. 404).

"Fasting" is most often practiced when someone is so burdened (upset) with something that food has no appeal. Their heart is focused on an urgent need so the person mourns and cries out to God for help. Ex: David for his son (II Sam. 12:16, 22); Nehemiah for God's city (Neh. 1:4).

"Fasting" is the response of a burdened or broken heart that is so absorbed with the interests of others or the will of God that one sets aside his own needs and desires and humbles himself and cries out to God with a sincere heart for mercy.

"Fasting" is never a command for a N.T. believer. Jesus said men ought "*always to pray*" but not men ought "always to fast." The words ***"When ye fast"*** assume that believers will do so in their life, but does not command it.

"Fasting" - Points to the intensity of the felt need. To be so overwhelmed, so burdened, so distressed with a need for the mighty hand of god that food (or any earthly pleasure) is the farthest thing from your mind.

God never commands us to *"fast"* but He says when you do, do so sincerely (Mt. 6:16-18) and not with ulterior motives (EX: health and dietary reasons).

CONCLUSION:

When was the last time you were so burdened for a ....

lost relative,
a wayward teen,
a deeply hurting person,
a satanically-deceived backslider,

...That your mind fled the mundane (food, etc.) and was obsessed with the need to grip onto God?

"Jonathan Edwards comments that when God has something very great to accomplish for His church, it is His will that there should precede it the extraordinary prayers of His people, quoting from Ezekiel 36:37 "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do this for them." In Zechariah 12:10 it is revealed that, when God is about to accomplish great things for His church, He will begin by a remarkable pouring out of "the Spirit of grace and supplication." It is the invariable constitution of the kingdom of heaven that blessings of great magnitude are not imparted except to prayers of the deepest urgency.

History demonstrates this principal. The common precursor to revivals has been prevailing prayer. Pentecost, which was the first Christian revival, followed ten days of intense prayer characterized by whole-hearted unity (Acts 1:14, 2:1-4).

Before the Second Great Awakening (late 1850s), Jeremiah Lamphier called a prayer meeting in downtown New York. Within six months 10,000 businessmen were praying for revival, and within two years about 2,000,000 people were added to the churches.

The same pattern is found before the 1859 revival in Ulster, Ireland. James McQuilkin and three others began to meet in a school house every week for prayer and Bible study. They kept themselves warm with armfuls of peat gathered on the way to the school house every Friday evening. While peat warmed their bodies, the Spirit kindled the fire in their hearts. By the end of 1858, the participants at the prayer meeting had grown to fifty. Intercession without distraction to other subjects was made for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on themselves and the country. Their prayers and possibly many more were wonderfully answered in 1859 when an estimated 100,000 were added to the churches in Ulster.

These accounts and many others illustrate prayer as the genesis of revival. The beginning of a time of revival invariably has been marked by quickening of the ordinary prayer meetings, resulting in new vitality, more participation, more sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit, and more unction in intercession.

Therefore, in times of special need and of the church's weakness, there is a biblical and historical warrant to resort to extraordinary prayer for revival. Isn't spiritual apathy and powerlessness in the church today a crisis which calls for urgent prayer?"

http://www.evanwiggs.com/revival/prinpray/callpray.html

"SOMETHING TOO HARD TO IMAGINE"

Matthew 17:22-27

7-15-2018

INTRODUCTION:

Many times things don't work out as we thought they would. Such was the dilemma of the disciples. --They had found the Messiah! They had seen His miracles! They had visions of grandeur! But God's ways are not man's ways.

***Observe two totally incredible, yet unselfish, amazing acts of Christ!**

For the disciples. . .

I. It was hard to imagine that
the LORD would have to <u>DIE</u> --- But He did! (v. 22-23)
(He gave His life <u>to save others</u>)

II. It was hard to imagine that
the LORD would have to <u>pay TAXES</u> --- But He did! (v. 24-27)
(He paid taxes <u>to not offend others</u>)

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For the disciples. . .

I. It was hard to imagine that the LORD would have to DIE --- But He did! (v. 22-23)
(He gave His life to save others)

V. 22

"The Son of man" - a common title Christ used of Himself to point to His Messiahship (Dan. 7:13) and His humility [points to the incarnation of Christ and His partaking of human "flesh and blood" (Heb. 2:14) so that He could die].

"Betrayed" = By Judas Iscariot with a kiss (Mt. 26:48-50).

V. 23

This is the third time Jesus mentioned His suffering, death, and resurrection (cp. Mt. 16:21, 17:12); and still it didn't "sink in" (Lk. 9:44).

"They shall kill Him" = His death, however, was no accident; it was prophesied in the O.T. (Dan. 9:26; Is. 53). A life voluntarily given by Christ (Jn. 10:18 - *"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."*) by the will of the Father (Jn. 19:10-11 - *"Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have not power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.")* to be substitute payment for the sins of the world.

"Exceeding sorry" = to be so grieved that you are in pain; in agony over it. They were in deep distress.

Why were the disciples "***sorry***" when Christ just said, *"The third day He shall be raised again"*?

The concept of the Messiah suffering and dying was (in their minds) absurd, impossible, "out of the question" (Luke 9:44-45 - *"Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask Him of that saying."*)

They then were so hung up and pre-occupied with Christ telling them that He was going to die that His statement about His resurrection went in one ear and out of the other. His statement went right over their heads (Mk. 9:32 - *"But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him")*

The idea of a literal, physical resurrection of Messiah was foreign to their idea of things.

Perhaps the disciples "may have taken Jesus' reference to *"the third day"* as merely figurative" (MacArthur, p. 85) and not literal. Always take everything God says literally unless there is a compelling contextual or theological reason to take it otherwise.

Why was it necessary that Christ die? And why die by crucifixion?

Could not God devise another plan to rescue lost sinners? Why death? Why the Cross?

> A very good question has been asked by many:
> Why is the way to God exclusively through Jesus Christ? Why is Christ's Work on the Cross the only way to our attaining forgiveness of sins and eternal life?
>
> Wouldn't it make more sense to have some other way of forgiveness and redemption? Couldn't God have devised another means of Salvation? Couldn't there be an easier way? A less offensive way?

It must be noted that the Cross has always been a subject of attack. The Apostle Paul dealt with this issue back in ancient Corinth when he wrote to the Corinthians:
For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. *- 1 Corinthians 1:18*

- ***Christ's payment for sin at the Cross is the only payment God accepts.***

Why is the Cross the only way? Why is Jesus the only way to Heaven?

First a preliminary thought:
Because God is God, and Heaven is His Heaven, He deserves the right to determine the means by which anyone enters His Heaven! If He requires Faith in His Son, He has the right to do so.
(Illustration: Disney Land reserves the right to determine the means by which anyone enters their theme park)

In order for Salvation to be made possible, the following had to be accomplished:

1. Sin had to be paid for
2. Forgiveness had to be granted
3. Righteousness had to be imputed

1. God's <u>nature</u> demands a salvation plan which would be <u>consistent</u> with <u>His character</u>.

Whatever plan of salvation God designed would have to be in line with His character and nature. In other words, since He is holy, His plan of salvation would have to be holy; Because He is just, His means of salvation would also have to be just As Paul writes in Romans 3:26, God is both "just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus"

Since God is loving, His plan must be loving; Since God is wise His plan must be in agreement with His wisdom.

We have every right to expect that God would work in conjunction with His truthfulness and faithfulness. Anything otherwise would be out of His character. He must function in harmony with His divine attributes.

God's righteousness required our salvation
God's sovereignty planned our salvation
God's love was the motivation for Him to save mankind
God's grace provided our salvation
God's truthfulness provided our salvation
God in faithfulness applied and secures our salvation

2. God's <u>justice</u> demands that <u>sin be paid for</u>.

You see, God is righteous. Being righteous, He cannot ignore, deny or excuse our sin. He can't "sweep sin under the carpet" and pretend that it never happened. No, sin must be paid for.
Ezekiel 18:20 - The soul that sinneth, it shall die.

If a judge was to acquit a proven guilty man, that judge should go to jail. He would be guilty of a crime himself, if he was to let a murderer go free, a rapist to go unpunished, a robber to go without paying for the crime. So it is with a just God. He must deal with sin. It would go against his justice to simply say, "Oh it's OK, my love forgives you" No, my friend. God forgives you because He Himself bore the penalty of your sin.

The concept of substitution is taught from Genesis to Revelation.
1 Peter 3:18
For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

Someone said to D. L. Moody, "I don't understand how a God of love could send anyone to hell." Moody replied: "I don't understand how a God of justice could allow anyone into heaven."

3. Sin's infinite <u>price</u> demands an <u>infinite payment</u>.

Sin must be infinitely more wicked than we can imagine, if God will really condemn people forever for having committed it.

A big price, demands a big payment. Christ being God can pay that infinite price.

2 Corinthians 1:9-10
But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

"That we should not trust in ourselves" –

"But in God" – self-trust is abandoned for divine trust. Depend on Him; rely upon Him!

> Which God do we trust? The only God. The God who has power over <u>death</u>. Nothing is more seemingly impossible than raising the dead back to life. God…**"which raiseth the dead."**

4. God's <u>holiness</u> demands a <u>perfect sacrifice for sin</u>. (Hebrews 9-10)

The Fundamental attribute of God is His Holiness.

God is called the "Holy One" (Hos.11:9) and the "Holy One of Israel" (Is.41:14,16,20)

Holiness is an attribute that God has to an infinite degree above and beyond anything or anyone in creation.
"*There is none holy as the LORD*" (I Sam.2:2)
"Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy" (Rev.15:4)

God's holiness is manifest in two ways:

1) Majestic <u>Transcendence</u> - God is set apart from all that is created (Is. 57:15)

2) Moral <u>Purity</u> - God is set apart from all that is unclean (Hab.1:13; I Peter 1:13-16)

Christ's perfect sacrifice is illustrated in the animal sacrificial system of the innocent dying for the guilty.

Hebrews 10:10,14 - **By the which will we are sanctified (made holy) through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all…For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (made holy).**

5. God's <u>Son</u> is the only one who could <u>qualify to pay</u> sin's penalty.

Jesus qualifies because of both who He is and what He had done (including the prophesies He alone fulfilled).

He is qualified to be Savior because He is in nature both Holy God and perfect man;

He is the only one to be virgin born and thereby avoid the sin nature passed on from Adam;

He is the only one to live a perfect life without sin.

Christ had to die on the Cross.
To fulfill God's predictive prophecies
- In types and foreshadowings:
  (The sacrificial system; the offering up of Isaac)
- In prophetic utterances: (Ps. 22; Is. 53)

Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.
Hebrews 2:14 ¶ Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

Christ had to die on the Cross.

To fulfill God's requirements:

- The killing of an innocent lamb
- The shedding of pure blood

To reconcile man to God, Jesus must be a <u>mediator</u>, who <u>bears the nature of both</u> of the parties that He is reconciling. He is the God-man. The Theanthropic person. He had the nature of both God and man, and therefore is the only one who qualifies to form the bridge between God and man.

6. God's <u>glory</u> demands a salvation plan which would give Him the <u>highest credit, honor, and praise</u>.

Isaiah 42:8
I *am* the LORD: that *is* my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

Isaiah 43:10-11
Ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, *even* I, *am* the LORD; and beside me *there is* no saviour.

God's plan of salvation will end up giving Him all of the glory. Man will have nothing to boast of. By Grace for God's glory.

Ephesians 2:9 **Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

So could there have been another way? Not if the above conditions had to be met! Jesus Christ is the only one who could qualify to be Savior. He is. Trust Him alone today!

It is not stunning that Jesus is the only way but rather that any way to God exists.
(**Boyet Olave)**

In light of man's sinfulness and rebellion against God, the greatest wonder is that God would condescend to save us in any way.

> *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 believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

Why the Cross?

It's message is simple enough for all to understand.
2 Corinthians 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the <u>simplicity</u> that is in Christ.

Trust Christ alone!
Acts 4:12
Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

II. It was hard to imagine that
the LORD would have to <u>pay TAXES</u> --- But He did! (v. 24-27)
(He paid taxes <u>to not offend others</u>)

V. 24
"Doth not your master pay tribute?" = This question seems to be aimed at discrediting Christ. To have something to accuse Him of.

People are always quick to discredit Christ and Christians. We must, therefore, live above reproach.

"Tribute" = *didrachmas*, meaning "double drachma"

Two drachmas were collected each year to support the Temple (This "amounted to about two days' wages for the average worker" (MacArthur p. 86).

To maintain the upkeep, beauty, and practical function of the Tabernacle, then the Temple, a tax was levied.

This tax had its origin in the days of Moses (Exod. 30:13-14) and was carried out throughout the Old Testament (II Ki. 12:4; II Chron. 24:6; Neh. 10:32).

"Capernaum" - This temple tax was to be collected before Passover, so the Jerusalem Temple "IRS" sent tax collectors throughout Palestine to seek the 1/2 shekel tax.

It is interesting that this miracle is only recorded in <u>Matthew's</u> gospel and it is the only miracle involving <u>money</u>.

"Since Matthew had been a tax collector, we would expect him to be interested in this miracle" (Wiersbe, p. 63).

V. 25

Peter, quick to defend the Lord he loved, ***"saith, <u>Yes</u>" -*** Peter knew it was right for all citizens to submit to the governing authorities (Rom. 13:1ff).

"***Jesus prevented him" -*** Before Peter could even ask the question, the all-knowing Lord Jesus (knowing what was on Peter's mind) anticipates his perplexion and gives him an answer.

Jesus in effect asks this: Who do the Romans collect tolls (***"custom")*** or taxes (***"tribute"***) from? Do they take these tolls and taxes from their own children (their own offspring) or from strangers (common citizens)?

(ILLUS: How in some states in America, state troopers are more quick to pull over and ticket out-of-state speeders than speeders from their own state)

"It would not make sense for a father to collect money from his sons (*"children")* who were dependent on him. To assess them would be to assess himself. In this context, *"strangers"* is a general term referring to those outside the king's family, specifically his subjects. . . (but) in the human governments of that day, the rulers' families (represented by *"the sons"*) were exempt from taxation" (MacArthur, p. 88).

<u>Roman tolls and taxes Jewish temple tax</u>
V. 25-26 V. 24, 27

Must be paid by everyone Must be paid by all Jews
(all *"strangers"*) except members of the royal the king's children family

V. 26

"Then are the children free" - Children of the kingdom in power would be free from such tolls and taxes. Whereas those outside of the royal family would have to "foot the bill" and shell out to the reigning Empire.

One implied point is this: Jesus is saying, "Do you know why we should pay taxes? Because we are foreigners in this strange land, pilgrims, sojourners, aliens. We are not children of this world (Jn. 15:19; 17:14, 16).

Jesus, being the God of the Temple, actually did not have to pay the tax.

V. 27

Jesus, being the Son of God, was not personally obligated to pay for the support of

His own temple, yet to avoid offense, He did pay (Ryrie footnote).

"Offend" - anything that is a roadblock or a hindrance to others (coming to Christ).

If Jesus had refused to pay the temple tax, the tax gatherers may have thought He was rebellious or lawless, living in violation of the Law of Moses. Reason: They didn't realize who He was. He was Lord of the Temple.

"Regardless of how unjust a tax is assessed or how blasphemously or irresponsibly it is spend, it is to be paid. If the Son of God claimed no exemption for Himself in paying taxes to the *"den of thieves"* run by the wicked false teachers and leaders of Israel, how much less can His followers claim exemption for themselves" (MacArthur, p. 88).

"Lest we should offend them" - Jesus did not want those temple tax gatherers to have a reason to not listen to and believe in Him, so He did that which He was not obligated to do so as to avoid turning them off.

May we, too, never use our Christian liberty in such a way that it would cause a weaker Christian or a non-believer to stumble. (Jesus is serious, about not offending those who belong to Him - Mt. 18:5-7; cp. Rom. 14:13-16).

"The sea" - the Sea of Galilee

Cast a hook" - the most common form of fishing in Jesus day was to cast a "*net*" Jesus, however, is zeroing in on one particular fish. His omniscient mind and all-seeing eye knows of a fish swimming around with a coin in its mouth.

Jesus, being the Lord of earth, not only exercised dominion over the fish, "but also over the animals (Mt. 21:1-7) and the birds (Mt. 26:34, 74-75). (Wiersbe, p. 63).

"When we consider the complexity of this miracle, it amazes us.

1. First, someone had to lose a coin in the water.
2. Then, a fish had to take that coin in its mouth and retain it.
3. That same fish then had to bite on Peter's hook--with an impediment in its mouth--and be caught" (Wiersbe, p. 63)
4. Then the exact amount needed to pay the tax would be discovered (not a penny less or more)

"A piece of money" - a *stater* (another word for a sheckel). What is amazing is that Jesus and Peter needed a combined total of 4 *drachmas*. The silver coin found in the fish equals exactly 4 drachmas.

I have found a lot of things inside fishes' stomachs, but I have never found something to pay my taxes. What a miracle!

You can't explain away this miracle as an accident, or as a "freak of nature." It was too coincidental to be accidental!

In our lives the Lord Jesus still is able to glorify Himself by coming through (in response to prayer) to give His children exactly what they need, precisely when they need it, in just the right manner!

Trust Him!

"And thee" - This is one of many miracles that Jesus performed for Peter. He healed Peter's mother-in-law (Mk. 1:29-34), helped Peter to catch fish (Lk. 5:1-11), enabled him to walk on water (Mt. 14:22-23), healed Malchus' ear after Peter chopped it off (Mt. 26:47-56), and delivered Peter from prison (Acts 12:1ff). (Wiersbe, p. 64).

No wonder Peter wrote: *"Casting all your care up on Him, for He cares for you."* (I Pet. 5:7).

This is "the only miracle which does not have the results recorded. We would expect another verse that would read: 'And Peter went to the sea, cast in a hood, and drew up a fish; and when he had opened its mouth, he found there a coin, and used it to pay the temple tax for himself and for Jesus.' But Matthew 17:28 is not there. Then, how do we know that the miracle took place? Because Jesus said it would! *'There hath not one word failed of all His good promise'."* (I Kings 8:56). (Wiersbe, p. 64)

CONCLUSION:

The fact that the LORD of the universe was willing to die and pay taxes shows two key features about Jesus. What are those attributes?

1. HUMILITY !

What a humble Savior!
Hymn: “There’s not a friend like the lowly Jesus, no not one, no not one!”

2. GRACE !

He paid taxes so as to not drive anyone away from Himself unnecessarily
He died to rescue us from perishing in Hell

"THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM"

Matthew 18:1-4

7-22-2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1-2

***The key to greatness in God's Kingdom is to have certain qualities of a child.**

I. <u>ENTRANCE</u> into the Kingdom Requires a <u>CHILD-LIKE FAITH</u> (v. 3)

A. A child is <u>teachable</u>
(Children have an openness to be taught)

B. A child is <u>dependent</u>
(Children have a deep sense of dependency)

C. A child is <u>trusting</u>
(Children have an eagerness to trust)

II. <u>GREATNESS</u> in the Kingdom Requires <u>CHILD-LIKE HUMILITY</u> (v. 4)

"THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM"

Matthew 18:1-4

7-22-2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1-2

***The key to greatness in God's Kingdom is to have certain qualities of a child.**

I. _____ into the Kingdom Requires a CHILD-LIKE (v. 3)

A. A child is _____
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B. A child is _____
(Children have a deep sense of dependency)

C. A child is _____
(Children have an eagerness to trust)

II. _____ in the Kingdom Requires CHILD-LIKE (v. 4)

"THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM"

Matthew 18:1-4

7-22-2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1-2

V. 1

This question came about after the disciples had a private dispute among themselves as to who was the greatest among them (Mk. 9:33-34; Lk. 9:46).

"The kingdom of Heaven" - a synonymous phrase as *"the kingdom of God."*

The question they are asking is: "When God sets up His Kingdom, who will be the greatest?" "When the kingdom of Heaven comes to earth (*"Thy kingdom come"*) who will rank highest? Who will be most noble? Who will be endowed with the most authority and privilege?"

To illustrate His points, Jesus takes a little child and places him right in the middle of the disciples.

V. 2

"Little child" - *paidion* - a young toddler; a child old enough to walk and respond to simple instructions (like this child did to Jesus).

Jesus often used object lessons to teach spiritual truth.

Christ's placing a child in their midst and teaching that they must be like children must have shocked the proud, self-confident disciples. Such a lesson no doubt shook them to the foundation of their being.

***The key to greatness in God's Kingdom is to have certain qualities of a child.**

I. ENTRANCE into the Kingdom Requires a CHILD-LIKE FAITH (v. 3)

"Verily" **-** truly; assuredly

Jesus uses this word to show the guaranteed trustworthiness, fidelity and importance of the truth He is about to give.

"Converted" **-** to be turned around; to be changed over from one state to another.

The need for conversion should tell us something is desperately wrong with the situation we are in prior to conversion.

The ***"conversion"*** to which Jesus speaks (in this context) is a conversion into a humble child-like faith.

"Except ye be converted" **-** This statement addressed to the disciples implies that they were not yet converted; they were not yet citizens of the kingdom; they were not yet saved.

Personally, I do not believe they were true believers until after Christ's resurrection.

Just prior to His betrayal and death, Jesus said to Peter, *"When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren"* (Lk. 22:32).

"Become as" **-** Jesus is not calling on us to become children (to somehow revert back to childish ways); but He is saying we need to be as children in a certain respect.

There are certain qualities children have that we desperately need in order to enter God's kingdom.

The disciples wanted to know who was the greatest in the Kingdom. But Jesus warned them that apart from child-like faith and humility, they would not even enter the Kingdom.

Prior to this account, Jesus had said that no one could enter the Kingdom who was not *"born again"* (by the Spirit) (John 3:1ff). Now He says that no one can enter the Kingdom who is not like a little child.

"The fact that a person must *"enter the kingdom"* assumes he is born outside of it under the rule of Satan and that he is not naturally a heavenly citizen" (MacArthur, p. 96).

Jesus said in Mark 10:15: *"Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive (welcome, to take to oneself) the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein"* (cp. Luke 18:17).

A. A child is teachable
(Children have an openness to be taught)

Small children have an inquisitive mind that naturally seeks to learn everything about the world around him. They constantly ask questions. Like sponges, they absorb information without effort.

Children can readily accept new concepts and make corrections to previously held erroneous ideas.

Since small children have the greatest capacity for learning new things, they also are most vulnerable to being led astray. Hence, Jesus gives severe warning about stumbling one of these *"little ones."*

There are many who are so convinced that they have the truth; that they have "arrived," and they are so complacently comfortable with where they are that they are not open to seeing defects in their lives and religion. They are so convinced that they *"see"* that no one could challenge them about the blindness in their lives.

The Pharisees condemned themselves with such delusion: *"Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."*

Are you open to learn God's plan of salvation; are you will to have your ideas (about salvation) corrected?

Small children are not "set in their ways" like many older folks are.
The most dangerous position to be in is to “think you know it all” To be content with your wisdom and thinking. To NOT be open to learn and grow in your understanding.

A person is in a sad predicament who is not open to God's instruction.

God calls such a person a "fool." *"Fools despise wisdom and instruction"* (Prov. 1:7).

Our prayer should always be: "God, make me teachable." "May I never be so proud (arrogant) that I cannot be rebuked and corrected."

B. A child is <u>dependent</u>
(Children have a deep sense of dependency)

A small child depends upon his parents (or guardian) for everything.

Without even giving much thought to it, our children depend on us to protect, feed them, cloth them, shelter them, teach them, guide them, etc.

Children are "Dependent." As you fill out your taxes, you will not that they are listed on the form as "dependents."

Children know that they are in a position of <u>need</u>. They readily recognize that they cannot make it on their own. That spirit of "independence" may be in teenagers, but it is not in little children.

A little child simply submit to the care of his parents, relying on them for all that he needs. He knows he cannot meet his own needs and has no resources to stay alive (MacArthur, p. 99).

Whether you realize it or not, you need God for everything (both for this life and the life to come).

Jesus taught a lesson on dependency in His teaching about the "vine and the branches." (John 15).

What are you depending on for your salvation?

Are you depending on your righteousness? (Is. 64:6; Titus 3:5) (Ro. 10:3 - *"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about toe stablish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God."*)

Or on Christ's righteousness? (II Cor. 5:21).

Sometimes God allows afflictions, trials and tribulations to keep us <u>dependent</u> (Psalm 119:67 - *"Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word."*) (II Cor. 12)

C. A child is <u>trusting</u>
(Children have an eagerness to trust)

What does a child have that we need to have? A willingness to <u>trust</u> (willing to trust the security and safety provided for by another)

When a parent says something to a child, the little child does not suspect a lie, he takes what you say literally and believes you are being truthful.

A child trust his parents to take care of him.

They entrust their lives into our care (EX: How as a child I trusted my father to drive safely and to bring us to our desired destination).

A child's readiness to trust is evident by the response of his little child Jesus summoned to Himself. The child responded to Christ's call (v. 2).

The back of our dollar bill says: "In God we trust." But it would be safe to say that more people put their trust in that green piece of paper than in the living God.

Because children are more trusting also makes them vulnerable to evil people who would like to take advantage of their trusting spirit. This is why Jesus severely warns against causing a little one to stumble (v.5)

However, we are to be open and trusting when it comes to God and what He reveals to us through His Word about Himself and His Gospel.

Paul wrote to Timothy, saying: *"We trust in the living God."* (I Tim. 4:10).

I Tim. 6:17 - *"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."*

What a release! What a joy! What peace comes when one has confidence in the faithfulness of God's promise. What solace comes to the heart of one who learns to totally *"commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful creator."*

Paul had such assurance, as evident by his words: *"For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."*

II. GREATNESS in the Kingdom Requires CHILD-LIKE HUMILITY (v. 4)

Someone who is proud has an over-estimation of one's self (thinks more of themselves than is right).

We are often so confident in our: --intelligence
--strength
--achievements

Many will be in Hell because of pride.

They were too proud to admit:
1) their sinfulness
2) their need for forgiveness
3) their utter helpless
4) their need for Jesus Christ

"When pride cometh, then cometh shame" (Prov. 11:2)

"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18).

"A man's pride shall bring him low" (Prov. 29:23)

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble" (James 4:6; I Pet. 5:5).

Jesus does not deny or refute that there are degrees of greatness in God's kingdom. Rather, He confirms that there are degrees of greatness and informs us as to the secret to being the greatest in the Kingdom.

The greatest people in God's kingdom were the humblest people while on earth:

How did their humility make them great?

1) Their humility kept them from trusting themselves and made them rely on God to work in a through their lives (their humility kept them on their knees)

2) Their humility allowed them to unashamedly preach Christ

3) Their humility allowed them to perform lowly service for God's glory (SEE: John 13:4-5, 12-17) (Mt. 23:11-12 - *"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased: and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.")*

Conclusion:

Are you like a little child when it comes to faith and humility?

- Are you like a little child when it comes to faith?

  Who are you trusting for your salvation? Is it Christ alone? If not, then you have never been saved.

- Are you like a little child when it comes to Humility?

  God cannot "get through" to proud people. He humbles them first.

  The secret to greatness is humility! Someone who is humble enough to serve others;

  When the disciples were bickering over who would be the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven, Jesus gave this lesson:

  Mark 10:42-45
  But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

"THE LORD CARES FOR HIS LITTLE ONES"

Matthew 18:5-14

7-29-2018

INTRODUCTION:

***The Lord cares deeply about the *"little ones"* who believe in Him.**

Four evidences of His care:

I. The Lord wants His *"little ones"* to be <u>WELCOMED</u> as He would be welcomed (v. 5)

II. The Lord is vehemently <u>CONCERNED</u> that no one <u>STUMBLES</u> His *"little ones"* (v. 6-9)

III. The Lord has <u>ASSIGNED</u> special <u>ANGELS</u> to watch over His *"little ones"* (v. 10)

IV. The Lord <u>SEEKS</u> and <u>SAVES</u> each *"little one"* who goes <u>ASTRAY</u> and allows none to perish (v. 11-14).

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IV. The Lord _____ and _____ each *"little one"* who goes _____ and allows none to perish (v. 11-14).

"THE LORD CARES FOR HIS LITTLE ONES"

Matthew 18:5-14
7-29-2018

INTRODUCTION:

ILLUS: of the commitment, concern, care, protectiveness and zealousness I have for my four children. I'm deeply concerned about any harm, danger or bad influence that would come into their lives. "As any normal parent, I have great appreciation for those who help my children and great indignation for those who harm them" (SEE: MacArthur, p. 102).

If I, being a sinner, have such care for my children, how much more care does God have for His?!

EX: God loved Abraham so much that He said to him: *"I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you"* (Gen. 12:3).

The phrase *"little ones"* (*mikron* - cp. 10:42) appears 3 times (v. 6, 11, 14) in verses 6-14, tying this context together and giving us the theme of this text --

-- The Lord cares for young believers!

***The Lord cares deeply about the *"little ones"* who believe in Him.**

Four evidences of His care:

I. The Lord wants His *"little ones"* to be <u>WELCOMED</u> as He would be welcomed (v. 5)

"Receive" = to welcome, to accept

"Little child" - (*paidion)* a very young child

"In My name" - ie. for My sake. This phrase qualifies and defines what Jesus means by *"receiving little children"*

To welcome a young person in Christ's name means to welcome them (help them; teach them; care for them) for the sake of Jesus who loves them!
"Receiveth me" - No speaking of receiving Christ for "salvation," but for fellowship.

What He means is this: Whatever you do to or for a young believer in Christ, you actually do to or for Christ (because of His oneness and identity with that believer)

Examples:

> --Giving a cup of cold water to anyone who belongs to Christ will merit reward (Mk. 9:41 - *"For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.")*
>
> --To do or not do something for the Lord's people is to do it or not do it for the Lord Himself (SEE: Mt. 25:34-46)
>
> --Whatever is done against Christ's people is done directly against Him (Acts 9:1, 4-5)

Luke 10:16 - *"He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."* (cp. Jn. 13:20)

Jesus' point: "The way you treat one of my children is the way you treat me." Whatever affects them, affects Him.

To welcome a young believer (for any purpose that would glorify God) is to welcome Jesus Christ Himself. Why? Because Jesus is <u>One</u> with His children no matter how old or young they are.

Who are we to reject someone whom Christ has not rejected?

If He accepted that person, who are we not to?

Since He is willing to identify with him, so should we!

The Lord must have a special place in His heart for Sunday school, Junior church, and AWANA workers!

Any one who pours His heart into young people is pouring their life out for Christ! This is what living for Christ is all about!

You cannot be living for Jesus if you are not in some real, tangible way doing something for those people who belong to Him! (the two go hand in hand)

Something is desperately wrong with a church that has no active children's ministry, no outreach to kids, no youth work.

A "young church" is a healthy church!

Jesus is saying: Don't reject children and teens; receive them into your life and ministry.

Sure, they test your patience; sure, they dirty your carpets; sure, they require work.

But they are the future of the church! They are future leaders, pastors, missionaries, and lay-servants.

II. The Lord is vehemently <u>CONCERNED</u> that no one <u>STUMBLES</u> His *"little ones"* (v. 6-9)

V. 6

"Offend" - to cause to stumble and fall; to trip up (i.e. to hurt the faith of and lead astray or lead into sin).

It is interesting that Jesus changes the word from ***"child"*** (*paidion* - v. 2-5) to ***"little one"*** (*mikron* - v. 6, 10, 14).

Such a shift indicates that Jesus is referring to any young Christian.

Although Jesus would not want any little one to be led into sin, He is especially jealous over those ***"little ones which <u>believe in</u> [Him] Me"***

"Believe in <u>Me</u>" - Jesus is the <u>object</u> of our faith (trust, confidence, reliance) (cp. John 14:1).

Anyone who would intentionally be a stumbling block to a new believer in Christ would be better off chocked with a several hundred pound millstone and dumped into the depths of the ocean; rather than to face the severity of hell fire that awaits them.

"Millstone" - the large, heavy upper millstone that was turned in a grinding process by a donkey (MacArthur, p. 104).

They say that drowning is one of the most terrifying ways of dying; yet such is nothing compared to the horror of facing the wrath of God.

Such a drowning is nothing compared to the intensely hot and eternal torment and wrath of God to fall upon those who are stumbling blocks to God's people.

Zechariah warned that whoever harms God's people Israel *"touches the apple of His eye"* (Zech. 2:8) (i.e. *"the apple of the eye"* was an ancient figure for the cornea, the most delicate and sensitive exposed part of the body (MacArthur, p. 105).

You are a serious irritation to God -- you who lead any of His children into sin!

God is severely upset with churches which tolerate members who stumble His children (Rev. 2:14 - *"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."* Rev. 2:20 - *"Notwithstanding i have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.")*.

Anyone who influences, entices, or leads a believer into sin, or makes it easier for him to sin, is in serious trouble with the Lord!

One of the main reasons for avoiding:

--pornography
--alcohol
--rock and rap music
--immodesty
etc.

is so that (out of love for others) we don't stumble anyone by what we allow into our lives.

Even in the area of *"Christian liberty"* we should *"use not [our] liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another"* (Gal. 5:13).

We should be so concerned that we do not cause another believer to stumble that we would even avoid practices that are lawful if by such a practice we would violate a weaker, more immature, believer's conscience (EX: Paul's not eating meat offered to idols - Rom. 14; I Cor. 8).

William Barclay tells the story of an old man on his deathbed who was terribly distraught. When asked what was bothering him, he replied, "When we were boys at play, one day at a crossroads we reversed a sign post, and I've never ceased to wonder how many people were sent in the wrong direction by what we did." (cited by MacArthur, p. 109).

Instead of tempting others to sin, we should provoke them to righteousness (Heb. 10:24).

One of the most common ways a "believer" will cause another believer to sin is by failing to lead them into righteousness (MacArthur, p. 108).

Parents (moms and dads), what kind of example are you setting for your children?

Is there a sin in your life that may cause your children to stumble?

Any parent who belittles, slanders, or verbally attacks spiritual authority or leadership (such as a S.S. teacher, deacon, or pastor) in front of their children is doing lethal harm to them. Don't be surprised when your kids turn teenagers and have no spiritual interest, desire for church, etc.

V. 7

"Woe" - a word expressing deep sorrow and pain for someone.

The lost, unregenerate, godless worked "is in a woeful state because of the stones of stumbling they throw out for God's people to trip on!

Because man is sinful, depraved, and lost, it is impossible for societies to avoid the planting of stones of stumbling.

But woe to the master minds behind such diabolical immorality and wickedness.

Woe to the TV producers whose seductive programs warp the minds of children!

Woe to the music bands, groups, and sponsors whose devilish, twisted, rebellious, lustful lyrics and sounds imbed themselves into the minds of young people!

Woe to the inventors of the RU486 French abortion pill, and to any president who would allow such a child-murderer into the USA!

Woe to the writers and publishers of the Rainbow curriculum!

Woe to those who use children for child pornography, books, and films!

Woe to those who teach evolution as if it were fact and boldly deny God's existence!

V. 8-9

It is interesting that Jesus shifts from speaking about not offending *"little ones"* to give a warning about not offending yourself!

Why? Because before you will ever stumble anyone else, you will stumble yourself.

The way to safeguard against causing others to fall into sin is to safeguard yourself against falling into sin.

Hence, the stern warning in vv. 8-9.

If what you do (*"hand"*), where you go (*"foot"*), or what you see (*"eye"*) will detract you from Christ (if it will turn your attention away from Christ and His salvation), you would be better off losing that body part than to be cause into the lake of fire with all your body parts and a dirty, sinful soul.

(Note: All who are cast into the "Lake of Fire" will be cast in - body and soul [resurrected body] - Rev. 20:11-15).

Jesus sternly warns to remove from your life anything that causes you to stumble cp. Mt. 5:29,30.

"Offend" - to cause to stumble and fall. The greek word referred to a stick in a trap that would spring and close the trap when an animal would touch it (Reinecker, p. 15).

v.9 **"Hell fire"** = gehenna (meaning "the land of Hinnom" - II Kings 23:10). A reference to the continual place of burning ("where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched")

Jesus is saying that if your eyes should look upon something that would trap you and detract your sight from ever seeing God's plan of salvation, it would be better off if you had no eyes than to forever end up in hell fire.

The "eyes" are that body part which triggers the lustful thought, and the "hands" are that which grasp that which is forbidden resulting in a sinful act, and the "feet" are that body part which carries one into dens of sin.

Jesus is not really encouraging bodily dismemberment. But he is saying that you would be better off losing anything in this life that would keep you from Heaven in the next life.

Victory does not come by amputating certain parts of your body, but by purifying

the desires of the heart.
Is there real "fire" in the Lake of fire? If not, then Jesus is a liar!

You had better believe that the Lake of fire has literal fire!

It is everlasting (never-ending; a place of no rest day nor night [Rev. 14], no relief; no way out)

III. The Lord has <u>ASSIGNED</u> special <u>ANGELS</u> to watch over His *"little ones"* (v. 10)

V. 10

Jesus now gets back to His point.

Beware that you do not "think down upon," look down at; even <u>one</u> of the little ones who believe in Him.

Why not? Because God thinks so much of them that He has at least one angel stationed on duty to minister to them (Heb. 1:14 - *"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?")*

The phrase ***"their angels"*** shows a special relationship angels have with particular children of God (cp. Acts 12:12-15).

What is significant about angels continually looking at the face of God is that they can see as it were the expression on God's face when something which grieves Him is happening to one of His children on earth.

They get their orders from God; looking at Him, anticipating His command to go and defend His *"little ones."*

The angels wait attentively, never taking their eyes off of the Father "lest they miss some direction from Him regarding a task they are to perform on behalf of a believer" (MacArthur, p. 118).

The fact that God has "hosts of angels in His presence ready to be dispatched to their aid demonstrates clearly how <u>valuable</u> believers are and how unthinkably wicked it is to look with disdain on someone whom God so highly prizes." (MacArthur, p. 119)

IV. The Lord <u>SEEKS</u> and <u>SAVES</u> each *"little one"* who goes <u>ASTRAY</u> and allows none to perish (v. 11-14)

V. 11

"Save" = to deliver

"Lost" = all men and women (boys and girls) are born lost in need of salvation.

From the moment Christ (because of His payment on Calvary) saves someone, they become a special object of His love! They can never escape His presence (Ps. 139), will never be forsaken, and when they are led astray -- He is faithful to bring them back into fellowship.

V. 12-13

A good shepherd cares so much for each of His sheep (which are so prone to go astray and wander off -- Isaiah 53:6) that if even one gets off the path and errs from the fold, the Shepherd will personally (leave His sheep in the care of a hireling) and will go out and find the sheep and rejoice exuberantly that is found, safe, and back in the fold.

V. 14

"Even so" - in like manner.

It is not God's will that even one of His *"little ones"* perish (be destroyed - cp. I Cor. 8:11).

It is never God's will (desire) for one of His adopted children to have a ruined life (a destroyed testimony).

Certainly this verse may also imply the "eternal <u>security</u>" of the believer (cp. John 6:39 - *"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."*).

CONCLUSION:

"THE COURAGE TO CONFRONT"

Matthew 18:15
8-5-2018

INTRODUCTION:

***You need courage to lovingly confront a believer who sins against you.**

I. <u>WHY</u> should you confront a believer? (v. 15a)

If he or she has sinned against you and has not acknowledged it nor asked for your forgiveness.

II. <u>HOW</u> should you confront a believer? (v. 15b)

A. Take the <u>initiative</u> (*"go")*

B. Speak the <u>truth</u> (*"tell him his fault"*)

C. Deal with the matter <u>privately</u> (*"between thee and him alone")*

III. <u>WHAT</u> is the result of confronting a believer?

A brother won back from sin.

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C. Deal with the matter _____ (*"between thee and him alone")*

III. <u>WHAT</u> is the result of confronting a believer?

A brother _____.

"THE COURAGE TO CONFRONT"

Matthew 18:15

8-5-2018

INTRODUCTION:

"Moreover if" - A transition in thought.

Jesus had previously warned against *"you offending <u>others</u>"* (v. 6-14); now He tells us what to do when *"others offend <u>you</u>"*.

Do you know the feeling you have when someone sins against you? Most of the world goes through these stages:

1. Shock - How could he/she do that?

2. Anger - when your temperature increases; your ears turn red; you get hot

3. Resentment - You "replay" what was done in your mind over and over

4. Bitterness - Whenever that person comes to your mind, negative emotions grip your heart

5. Scheming - I'll think of some way to get back at him/her

6. Mean or violent actions or words

Verses 15 - 17 give us the Lord's way of preventing bitterness from growing in between His people.

If Matthew 18:15 were carried out by all Christians, there would rarely be gossip, grudges, hurt feelings, anger, resentment, church schisms (splits), etc.

In verses 15-17, Jesus describes 3 steps to take in seeking restoration with a sinning brother:

1)Personal confrontation (*go. . . alone)*
2)Private confrontation (*one or two more)*
3)Public confrontation (*tell it to the Church)*

And the hardest step is the <u>first</u> one! (Today, we will focus on this one)

***You need courage to lovingly confront a believer who sins against you.**

I. <u>WHY</u> should you confront a believer? (v. 15a)

If he or she has sinned against you and has not acknowledged it nor asked for your forgiveness.

"Thy brother" - Your brother in Christ (a fellow-believer)

When Christ saved you, you were "born again"; He adopted you into His family. This meant you became united with Him and everything related to Him. God became your Father, and each other believer in Christ became your brother and sister (cp. I John 5:1). We are fellow adoptees.

--We share the same name (*"Christian"* - Acts 11:21)

--Have the same nature (the *"new man"* - I Pet. 1:4)

--We eat the same food (the Bible - Mt. 4:4; I Pet. 2:2)

--We live in the same *"spiritual house"* (we are each building blocks, *"living stones"* of God's temple - I Pet. 2:5)

--We share the same Spirit (I Cor. 6:19-20)

--Fight the same enemy - Satan (I Pet. 5:8)

--Have the same goal - to glorify God (I Cor. 10:31)

--Look forward to the same future (the Rapture and eternal life with Christ - I Thes. 4; Rom. 6:23)

. . . Therefore, we should care for all men, but *"especially those of the household of faith"* (Gal. 6:10).

"Trespass" = to sin by missing the mark of God's standard of behavior. To come short of the Bible's expectations of proper Christian conduct.

One reason many are tolerant of sin in the lives of others (even when it is directed at them) is because they are tolerant of sin in their own lives.

Before Mt. 18:15 will ever be carried out, you must have a love for God and His truth. You must have a personal quest for righteousness, both in your life and in the lives of your brethren.

II. <u>HOW</u> should you confront a believer? (v. 15b)

A. Take the <u>initiative</u> (*"go")*

"Go" - This is the hardest step. It is easier to ignore the problem. It is easier to hold a grudge or to counter his trespass with one of your own.

It takes conviction, courage, love, and a desire to please God to confront someone who sinned against you.

ILLUS: I heard of a man who flew from California to Pennsylvania to meet with a Christian who had slandered his character and hurt his reputation.

No one (in their right mind) enjoys confrontation. It is easier to simply walk away from conflict than to lovingly settle it.

"Go" - This is a mandate, not a suggestion. (an obligation, not an option)

In Matthew 5:23-24, our Lord commands the offender to go to the offended. Now, Jesus calls upon the offended to *"go"* and confront the offender.

Because <u>he</u> (not "I") is at fault, we can rationalize and say: "I don't need to go to him/her, he/she needs to come to me!"

"I'm not going to talk to him/her until he/she comes up to me and apologizes, kisses my feet, and sheds tears of genuine sorrow."

We should not "stew," "steam," "boil," "plot," "scheme," . . . God says to *"GO"*!

B. Speak the truth (*"tell him his fault"*)

"Tell him his fault" -

For many, it is easier to admit your own fault than to confront someone about theirs.

"Tell him his fault" - (*elen cho*) - to bring to light; to expose (Rienecker, p. 54).

To bring under conviction by humbly and clearly (no "beating around the bush") bringing to light the sin committed against you.

Why does God command us to lovingly "bring to light" the sin some brother commits against us?

1) That person may not be aware of what he did (perhaps what he did had no malicious intent. It may have been simply foolishness not intended to hurt, but ended up being offensive).

   The Bible speaks of sins of ignorance (the Old Testament even had a sacrifice to be offered for sins of ignorance - Num. 15:22).

   Many misunderstandings are quickly and immediately resolved by obedience to our Lord's command.

   "In some situations the sin is apparent and there is little or no doubt that the brother or sister has sinned. But it is wise in most initial confrontations to allow for the possibility that the sin is not actual. The person initiating the confrontation should explain his concern and then ask, "Am I understanding this situation correctly? Is there a matter of sin that needs to be dealt with or is there some clarification that can be made?"." (Carl Laney, The Biblical Practice of Church Discipline [Bibliotheca Sacra - Oct-Dec. 1986, p. 359])

2) That person if not confronted may continue down that road and continue to hurt others (and by so doing destroy himself).

In his sermon, "Reproof, a Christian Duty," Charles Finney remarked, "If you see your neighbor sin,a nd you pass by and neglect to reprove him, it is just as cruel as if you should see his house on fire, and pass by and not warn him of it" (Laney, p. 358)

Just as the Good Shepherd seeks out the lost sheep that went astray (v. 12-13), so a good Christian will seek to contact the erring brother (realizing the damaging and deadly effects of sin), and seek to help him come back to a Godly walk.

3) That person if confronted will be more convicted by your sincere, humble, loving rebuke than by his own unagitated conscience

Attitude is everything in confronting a brother. How should you deal with someone who sins against you?

You need -

--The motive of <u>love</u>

Prov. 10:12 - *"Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins"*

I Pet. 4:8 - *"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins"*

--The kinship of a <u>brother</u>

II Thes. 3:15 - *"Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother"*

--The spirit of <u>meekness</u> (gentleness)

Gal. 6:1 - *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."*

"Restore" - (*katartizo*) meant to adjust, to put in order, to restore to its former condition - like a medical doctor would "set a bone." Such only can be done with gentleness. The word also was used of "mending" torn or tangled fishing nets (Mt. 4:21; Mk. 1:19). No one can effectively mend or pull out tangles without gentleness.

"Pointing out someone's fault is (in a sense) risky, for there is no way of knowing how he will respond. But if done gently and graciously, the offender will be more likely to recognize the error than become stubborn and bitter" (Laney, p. 358-59).

"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. 15:1).

Seek to restore your brother the same way you would want him to restore you if the situation were reversed (Wiersbe, p. 65)

C. Deal with the matter <u>privately</u> (*"between thee and him alone")*

"Between thee and him alone" **-** Because the trespass was against you privately and personally, you should not broadcast his sin to others; you owe it to him to deal with it privately and personally.

RULE: Personal sin demands personal confession
Private sin demands private confession
Public sin demands public confession

"Any discussion of the sin must be with the offender, not behind his or her back. Many 'pious' gossips express concern for sin, often in the form of 'prayer requests'." (Laney, p. 358)

It's supposed to be a private meeting or phone call.

"But how different is our action many times! We say, 'Oh, have you heard about so and so?' Tongues begin to wag, and before long the brother that could have been corrected and restored is (more) deeply alienated from the fellowship of believers" (Paul R. VanGorder, <u>The Call for Church Discipline</u>, RBC, p. 19)

III. <u>WHAT</u> is the result of confronting a believer? *A brother won back from sin.*

"If he shall hear thee" = if he humbly listens to you, agrees with you, and asks your forgiveness -- then forgive him (18:21-22, 35).

(A willingness to *"hear"* shows humility - pride is the biggest reasons people don't seek restoration with each other)

"Listens" - The word often takes a stronger nuance, "to agree, follow, heed or obey" (John 5:25, 9:27; Acts 28:28) (Laney, p. 359)

"Thou hast gained thy brother" -

--To "gain" a brother is to win him from the clutches of Satan

--To "gain" a brother is to perhaps gain a better, closer, more meaningful relationship than you have ever had with him/her. Some of the closest, sweetest friends are those who did not allow a conflict, grievance, hurt to do permanent, irreparable damage to their relationship.

As long as we are in the flesh (given enough time and given the right circumstances) we are sure to offend each other. What we do at times like that will determine the future life of the relationship.

Why are there so many divorces? They don't know how to handle differences and offenses Biblically (reconciliation is not sought because a <u>commitment</u> to the relationship is not there)

There is something more important (valuable) than:

--Our hurt feelings

--Our stubborn pride

--The time and effort it will take to get in the "trenches" and battle with Satan and win back the brother or sister

The goal (purpose, reason) for confronting is:

1) Not to vent your anger and frustration

2) Not to "get even" (revenge, vengeful vindictiveness)
--Rom. 12:17 - *"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men."*
--I Thes. 5:15 - *"See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."*

3) Not to give reasons for why you want your relationship to end

--Rather, the goal is to get the sin confessed and *"covered"* so that it does not come in between you anymore.

The goal is RESTORATION.

Going up to a brother who sinned against you says "I care about my relationship (friendship) with you" (one who ignores the problem is saying, "I don't care; I don't want to be bothered - Get out of my life").

"Love will confront and rebuke, but love will never ignore."

"Open rebuke is better than secret love" (Prov. 27:5).

"He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue" (Prov. 28:23).

"Above all else, go to him with the idea of winning your brother, not winning an argument. It is possible tow in the argument and lose your brother" (Wiersbe, p. 65).

CONCLUSION:

Luke 17:3 - *"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him."*

James 5:19 - 20 - *"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."*

1) Make a list of people you believe have sinned against you (and that sin has affected your relationship with them)

2) Set a date to go visit their home (or call them by phone) and seek to have the hurt mended and the relationship restored.

"CHURCH DISCIPLINE"

(Restoring an Erring Brother)

Matthew 18:16-20

8-12-2018

INTRODUCTION: The local church is to be a holy family.

***In our church family, we must uphold its purity by exercising loving discipline when needed.**

I. The <u>PROCEDURE</u> for Church Discipline (v. 15-17)

A. <u>PERSONAL</u> Confrontation (v. 15)

If Step #1 is unsuccessful:

B. <u>SEMI-PRIVATE</u> Confrontation (v. 16)

If Step #2 is unsuccessful:

C. <u>PUBLIC</u> Confrontation (v. 17)

If Step #3 is unsuccessful:

D. <u>DISMISSAL</u> from Church Fellowship (v. 17b)

II. The <u>AUTHORITY</u> for Church Discipline (v. 18-20)

The authority for an assembly to exercise loving discipline over its members is based on:

A. The Lord's <u>DECISION</u> (v. 18)

B. The Lord's <u>DIRECTION</u> (v. 19)

C. The Lord's <u>PRESENCE</u> (v. 20)

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"CHURCH DISCIPLINE"

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8-12-2018

INTRODUCTION: The local church is to be a holy family.

Like a family, a local church requires three things to have God's blessings:
Love, Truth, and Discipline

Church discipline should be as normal as disciplining children.

Discipline is a family matter, and the church is a family.

God serves as the pattern for loving discipline (Heb. 12:4-13; Prov. 3:11-12; cp. Rev. 3:19).

Today, many churches are reluctant to take disciplinary action to deal with sin among their members.

Why? It takes courage, time, effort, and love (just as family discipline). Another reason is this: It's easy to tolerate sin in the lives of others, when you tolerate it in your own life.

Discipline is really an act of discipleship.

"Is church discipline necessary? Few would dispute the necessity of pulling a drowning man from a flooding torrent or recovering a fallen climber from a mountain crevasse. Most decent people would skip the verbal exercise and give themselves to the rescue! Should less concern be demonstrated for the believer who has fallen morally and whose spiritual life is in danger? With some justification the church has been accused of being the only army that shoots its wounded." ("The Biblical Practice of Church Discipline," Bibliotheca Sacra, Oct.-Dec., 1986, by J. Carl Laney).

***In our church family, we must uphold its purity by exercising loving discipline when needed.**

I. The PROCEDURE for Church Discipline (v. 15-17)

A. PERSONAL Confrontation (v. 15)

"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." (Lev. 19:17).

The word ***"gained"*** (won) "is used in I Cor. 9:19-22 to refer to winning the lost, but it is also important to win the saved" (Wiersbe, p. 66)

If Step #1 is unsuccessful:

B. SEMI-PRIVATE Confrontation (v. 16)

"If he will not hear thee" -

A person who will not even listen to personal rebuke obviously has a problem he is trying to hide or harbor.

Such stubbornness requires the support of other believers to step in and loving provoke him to do right.

Many times the moral support that comes from a small group is just what a person needs to encourage him to do right (this positive peer pressure and accountability is what makes small group therapy so effective - EX: Alcoholics Anonymous, etc.)

"One or two" - These should of course be:

1) Fellow believers

2) Godly brothers who will be objective about the situation, will deal with it in love, and will keep confidentiality if needed

3) Preferably ones who know the individual at fault

"In the mouth" = i.e. upon (*epi*) their verbal testimony. The case would have more substantial evidence (than simply believing the words of the offended brother).

Even in our modern-day court proceedings, the testimony of other witnesses carries much weight.

Jesus does not permit believers to skip Step #2 and to move from personal confrontation to public (church) confrontation.

The testimony of <u>one</u> witness was never valid proof or evidence for public action to be taken (EX: Num. 35:30; Dt. 17:6).

Deut. 19:15 - *"One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established."*

I Tim. 5:19 - *"Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses."*

NOTE: II Cor. 12:20 - 3:2

"Every word may be established" - Every word <u>spoken</u> by the offender and to the offender will stand as true if two or three witnesses validate it.

NASV - *"so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed."*

The purpose of taking one or two more is "not to threaten or intimidate the sinner into repentance. The intent is to help the offender realize the seriousness of the situation" and to ensure that the testimony of the offended person was "truthful and unprejudiced" (before taking the issue to the church) (Laney, p. 359-60).

"If he shall neglect to hear them" - (v. 17) This clause implies that the two or three had also together agreed that the brother was in the wrong, and they together advised him to repent (turn from it), make restitution, ask forgiveness, etc.

If Step #2 is unsuccessful:

C. PUBLIC Confrontation (v. 17)

"Neglect to hear" = to refuse to listen

"Tell it" - one person (preferably the pastor) should act as a moderator and let the church hear the sad case.

"The church" - (*ekklesia)* this is the second and last time the word "church" is used in the Gospels.

Jesus used the term in 16:18 to speak of the whole church at large (the greater body of believers) which was to be built by Christ beginning at Pentecost and ending at the Rapture.

Now He uses the term to describe the local church (a congregation or assembly of believers meeting at a specific locality).

The clause ***"If he shall neglect to hear the church" -*** means that he must be given a chance to hear the verdict and appeal of the church. The church's decision in the matter must be conveyed to the sinner brother, and he must be given ample opportunity to respond to the church's decision.

Too often, churches move from:

1. Personal confrontation

To 2. Semi-private confrontation

Then 3. Ex-communication
(voted out of the church without giving the brother the opportunity to hear from the church at large)

"When a matter is taken to the church, the congregation should pray for the sinner, avoid a critical spirit, and beware of proudly thinking, 'That would never happen to me!'." (Laney, p. 361)

The congregation's responsibility is to "pursue the person aggressively and plead with him to repent before the fourth step becomes necessary" (MacArthur, p. 133).

If one refuses to listen to the verdict and appeal of the local church, there remains no other court of appeal (I Cor. 6:1-8). There is no higher authority (Ex: bishop, cardinal, pope, synod, convention, fellowship, board, etc.) than the local church.

Baptists believe in the autonomy of the local church. It governs itself; makes decisions under Christ's oversight (v. 17-20) and no other. Congregational church government is supported by this text. The power to handle church matters is given to the local church.

If Step #3 is unsuccessful:

D. DISMISSAL from Church Fellowship (v. 17b)

The word ***"as"*** is important, because it shows that he should not be considered a heathen, but treated as if he were a heathen (because he is acting as such).

II Thes. 3:15 - "*Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."*

Only someone as obstinate, stubborn, and rebellious as a heathen would refuse to submit to his church's decision.

Jesus was saying that an unrepentant sinner should be regarded as heathen (Gentiles) and tax-gatherers -- outside of the circle of God's people. . . No longer is the unrepentant sinning saint to share in the activities and privileges of being a part of the church fellowship (Laney, p. 362).

II Thes. 3:6 - *"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which he received of us."*

II Thes. 3:14 - *"And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed."*

"Heathen" - (pagan) ***and a publican*** (tax collector) - In other words, such an individual should be treated as if he/she was not saved.

How should we treat someone who is not saved?

1. They can't be members of the church

(Hence, the sinning brother is to be dismissed from the fellowship; SEE: I Cor. 5:1-13)

Why should a sinning (one practicing a known, sinful, unrepentant lifestyle) brother be disciplined out of the church?

a. So that God may get his attention, as he is outside of the umbrella of the protection of the church and will feel the loneliness; the onslaught of Satanic oppression, etc. (cp. I Tim. 1:20).

I Cor. 5:5 - *"The destruction of the flesh"* would happen from sickness due to the sin (cp. James 5) and this may be effective in God getting the attention of the person, perhaps showing him his need of Christ for salvation.

b. To maintain the purity of the Body (Cor. 5:6-8)

c. To obey the clear command of Christ (I Cor. 5:9-13)

2. They should be prayed for and restored to fellowship after repentance is evident

The goal of church discipline is not a permanent shunning or lifelong excommunication, but restoration. (SEE: II Cor. 2:5-11)

When genuine repentance is evident by the offender's public acknowledgment and pursuit of Godliness, we cannot keep the offender at a distance. We must joyfully restore the person back into the fellowship (NOTE: This does not necessarily mean a restoration to public office - Ex: pastor or deacon. Total forgiveness does not necessarily mean restoration to leadership privilege if one becomes disqualified).

We must always *"forgive"..."comfort"...*and "*reaffirm"* our *"love"*

Unlike the "Scarlet Letter" in Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic novel, Biblical church discipline is designed to restore not to punish" (Laney, p. 354).

We must never give up on people!

In reality the church discipline process should not end until the "brother has either repented or died. . . the purpose of the ostracism is not to punish (or rid ourselves of the sinner), but to awaken" (and restore) (MacArthur, p. 136-137).

II. The AUTHORITY for Church Discipline (v. 18-20)

The authority for an assembly to exercise loving discipline over its members is based on:

A. The Lord's DECISION (v. 18)

The context of church discipline does not end with verse 17 but moves into verse 18.

"Ye" - the plural indicates the members of the local church.

"Bind" - to come to a binding decision about something.

"Shall be bound" - (perfect, passive, participle) lit. shall have been bound in Heaven.

In other words, the vote of the church body reveals the decision of God. God has spoken through the decision of the church body.

God is not saying that the church dictates His decision, but that the church carries out a decision that has already been made in Heaven. The church does not have authority over God's decisions; rather, the church is given the authority to confirm and declare what has already been decided by God (cp. Mt. 16:19; Jn. 20:23).

"Bind" - to forbid to be done

"Loose" - to permit to be done

How does a local church know what to allow and what not to allow? The Word of God - the Bible (the Bible is our only authority for faith and practice).

B. The Lord's DIRECTION (v. 19)

"Again" - In verse 19, Jesus adds an expanded application of the principle of the power of corporate decisions made by His children.

Just as an assembly (group) of believers has power (under God) to make Godly decisions, a group of believers also has power on earth to be assured of answers to prayer.

Two conditions must be met:

1) Agreement (that what you request is God's will - I Jn. 5:14-15)

2) Unity in Christ's name (what you request is what Christ would want and would glorify Him)

The particular request that is being "asked" for (v. 19) in context most likely refers to asking god about any ***"matter"*** (*pragma)* related to restoring the wayward sinner back to a life of holiness. Such a request definitely conforms to God's will and therefore gives us the assurance of answered intercessory prayer in God's time.

The word ***"agree"*** in the Greek gives us our English word "symphony." The church must agree in prayer as it seeks God's wisdom and direction in disciplining the erring member (Wiersbe, p. 66)

C. The Lord's PRESENCE (v. 20)

"There am I in the midst of them" - "I stand with them in what they agree on; I am in agreement with their requests and their decisions."

CONCLUSION:

Church discipline is not fleshly revenge, nor cruel punishment, not an act of hatred but to the contrary it is a humble, gentle, truthful, loving response to seek to save a *"soul from death"* and to *"hide a multitude of sins"* (Ja. 5:20).

"There is a vast difference between putting your nose in other people's business and putting your heart in other people's problems" (unknown)

"FORGIVE AS GOD FORGAVE YOU"

Matthew 18:21-35
8-19-2018

INTRODUCTION:

***Shouldn't you be willing to forgive others, the same way God has forgiven you? (v. 33)**

How can I forgive what he/she did to me?

I. Compare the <u>QUANTITY</u> of sins you are asked to forgive with the great legion of sins God forgave you (v. 21-22)
"Seventy times seven"

II. Compare the <u>MAGNITUDE</u> of sin God forgave you with the trivial sins you are asked to forgive others (v. 23-28)
"Ten thousand talents (v. 24) *. . . a hundred pence"* (v. 28)

III. Compare the <u>COST</u> of God's forgiveness with the cost of your own forgiveness (v. 27)
"God gave up His Son for your forgiveness (John 3:16); all you give up is your sin of anger and resentment"

IV. Compare the <u>CONSEQUENCES</u> of unforgiveness with the blessings of forgiveness (v. 34-35)

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8-19-2018

INTRODUCTION:

King Louis XII of France articulated man's fleshly abhorrence toward forgiving others when he said: "Nothing smells so sweet as the dead body of your enemy." (MacArthur, p. 142)

"I don't get mad, I get even" (Clint Eastwood in a film)

The greatest problem in most troubled marriages is unforgiveness.

The underlying problem most counsellors deal with is unforgiveness (old, hardened, fossilized "bones of contention").

What is the cause for most divorces? Unforgiveness (It is interesting that in the next context [Matt. 19:1ff], Jesus speaks to this issue)

The power of a home, the power of a church, etc., is short-circuited if there is unforgiveness.

Most often, how people treat others is a reflection of how they perceive they have been treated in life.

When one truly believes how much God has forgiven them, they will respond in like manner to others.

Eph. 4:32 - *"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving (charizomai) one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*

Col. 3:13 - *"Forbearing one another, and forgiving (charizomai) one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."*

After teaching "how" to deal with a brother who sins against you (v. 15-20), Jesus now teaches how often and how much to forgive a brother who sins against you.

V. 21

"My brother" - Peter picks up where Jesus left off - The discipline of brethren in the church family (v. 15-20).

It's interesting that Peter speaks of someone sinning against him, rather than him sinning against someone else. Why didn't Peter ask: *"How often shall I sin against my brother and he forgive me?"* "He was sure his brother would sin against him, but not he against his brother" (Wiersbe, p. 67).

"Seven times" - The rabbis said to forgive three times ("3 strikes and you're out") so Peter thought seven would certainly be a generous number. Perhaps he figured that "seven" being the "perfect number" (the number of completion) would be a good limit to one's forgiveness.

Peter asked: "Is seven a good number to put a limit or a ceiling on my forgiveness? Isn't seven a good cut-off point?"

V. 22

"Seventy times seven" - 490. By this phrase Jesus is not really putting a cap on forgiveness, but He is making the point that we should always be willing to forgive.

As a matter of fact, on this same occasion Luke records that Jesus also said this: *"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive (aphiemi – to send away) him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn against to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."* (Lk. 17:3-4)

V. 23

"Take account" - settle accounts (i.e. straighten out all debts and get the books in order; to deal with unpaid debt; to see who owed what).

V. 24

"Ten thousand talents" – A "Talent" was a measurement of weight.
1 Talent weighed about 75 pounds. 10,000 Talents amounts to 750,000 lbs. of precious metals. In terms of cash, this is a mammoth debt! A multi-million dollar debt!

The practice of selling a servant, his family, and every possession he owned to pay off a debt was a common in the ancient world (Lev. 25:39; II Ki. 4:1). Today, if you own a house and you don't pay your mortgage the banks will take it away from you (same goes for a car, etc.).

V. 26

"I will pay thee all" - What pride and insincerity! By today's (2018) average American Median family income (of $59,000) it would take this man a minimum of over 2,000 years to pay the debt off! His case was hopeless.

The debt was unpayable.

The servant, realizing the predicament he was in and the utter despair of his situation, falls down and begs the king for patience and time. He promises in time to pay the debt (all of it), yet the king--knowing that the debt was unpayable--was moved in his heart by the pitiful plight of this man and released him from the chains that bound him and totally forgave him the debt, saying: "You don't owe me anything."

V. 27

When we forgive someone, we release or free that person from their debt to us.

"We had a debt we could not pay, Christ paid a debt He did not owe."

V. 28

"But" - The king's forgiveness was undeserved, unlimited, and unappreciated.

V. 29

The same exact words which that servant had said to the king (v. 26).

The repeated statement "should have shocked the forgiven slave's memory into a right response, but those familiar words evoked no sympathetic reaction in him" (MacArthur, p. 153).

V. 30

*The unmerciful have higher demands for others than they have for themselves (Mt. 23:3-4)

They are very concerned that others are stringently dealt with according to the Law. They are rigid, unbending, bitter, "prune-faced." People who are anxious to see judgment executed on others, but fail to see their own need (ILLUS: the woman caught in adultery - Jn. 8:3-11)

V. 31

It grieves others to see unforgiveness.

How we treat others will always get back to God (Deut. 15:9, 24:15).

V. 34

This verse is used to prove:

1) "Purgatory
- a place of payment (there is no such teaching in Scripture)
(Note: This servant pays while he is alive, not dead)

It's either eternal life or eternal damnation; Heaven or hell (Mt. 25:46; cp. Dan. 12:2; Jn. 5:29).

This verse is also used by some (who don't hold to eternal security) to prove:

2) A believer can lose his salvation.

--Beware of pressing every detail of a parable into your theological scheme.

--The payment mentioned in v. 34 refers to payment in <u>this</u> life for how you did not forgive others. Proof: The word ***"till"*** marks a point in time when the penalty would be fully paid. The payment of those who go to hell will never be paid off.

Rev. 14:11 -*"And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."*

II Pet. 2:17 -*"These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever."*

Jude 1:13 -*"Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."*

V. 35

"From your hearts" - God expects our forgiveness to be real, genuine, sincere.

Not a "surface" forgiveness (EX: the plastic smile, the cold handshake, the distant hug, the shallow words "It's okay," the quick "I forgive you", etc.) Rather, when we forgive, it must come from within, from our innermost being.

"Forgive" – In the Bible "forgiveness" is a transaction, not a mere feeling of emotion. It is a transaction of releasing someone from their obligation to repay you and removing their indebtedness to you. You end up bearing the consequences of their sin, not requiring repayment but instead you shower gracious blessings upon them.

There are 3 major Greek words in the New Testament translated "forgive":

1. "Apoluo" – To release one from their debt or obligation to repay you. (v. 27 – he "loosed him"); to remove a debt and its consequences.

2. "Aphiemi" – To send away (the word is used of someone sending someone away ("send her away" - Matthew 15:23) When used of "forgiveness" it has the idea of "to acquit one accused of a crime and set him at liberty" To "send away" a debt. (v.27 – "forgave him the debt")

3. "Charizomai" – To shower with grace. Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another (showering one another with grace), even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you (showered you with grace). Charizomai is the popular modern day Greek term used in forgiveness.

"Everyone" - Every child of God must be willing to forgive (no matter how high and mighty you are; no matter what your brother did against you); if he requests forgiveness, all of us must grant it.

"His brother" - This ties in with the word ***"fellow-servant"*** (v. 28), showing that Jesus' primary point of emphasis is toward His children (saved people).

(Note: The parable was about the ***"kingdom of Heaven"*** [v. 23] which refers to God's program among His children.)

The **"King"** in the parable is illustrative of God.

God is our pattern for forgiving others. He requires repentance in order for reconciliation to take place.

God's forgiveness is offered to all, however, God requires the unsaved to repent before His forgiveness to establish relationship is granted:

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (Matthew 4:17)
"There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:1-5)

"But Peter said unto him (Simon the Sorcerer), Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." (Acts 8:20-23)

Paul was "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:21)

Even for the believer, God requires the saved to repent before His forgiveness to restore fellowship is granted:

"If we confess (to honestly admit) our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

However, whether or not someone ever requests our forgiveness, we should have a willingness to forgive; a desire to forgive.

In the parable (Matthew 18:21-f), it must be observed that the King forgives because the servant recognized his indebtedness and desired to have his debt removed. He desired to be forgiven ("thou desiredst me" v. 32). The servant should have forgiven his fellow-servant because he also recognized his indebtedness to him.

"Trespasses" – (paraptoma) to sin by overstepping a moral boundary. To cross the line into an egregious error or flagrant sin. Many times we will irritate each other. We will annoy each other. Such sin does not necessarily require an admission of guilt in order to be "forgiven" and relationship to be restored (reconciliation). We need to simply overlook trivial slights. For "love covers a multitude of sins"
However, when someone egregiously sins against us, we owe it to them to confront them in love to seek reconciliation and restoration of relationship (note previous context – v.15).

Luke 17:3-4 – "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and <u>if he repent, forgive</u> him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I <u>repent</u>; thou shalt <u>forgive</u> him."

If forgiveness means to release, you must always have a willingness to release. However, the full transaction of release cannot take place in the life of someone who sees no need for release. You can't fully release someone who does not see their need to be released.

> *For example, if someone is handcuffed and you say: "I release you from your handcuffs" The person may respond with an attitude of "denial" ("I have no handcuffs; What are you talking about")*
> *The person may also respond with an attitude of "defiance" ("get away from me; I like my handcuffs! I will spit in your face, now get away from me")*

Question: Can you release someone who does not want to be released?
Yes and No. Yes, you can have a heart desire or willingness to release them; but the real transaction of release occurs when it is requested and granted. Where there is real forgiveness there should be reconciliation. Reconciliation is impossible when the offender does not acknowledge his/her transgression.

We should be like God, in our heart's desire and willingness to forgive!

***Shouldn't you be willing to forgive others, the same way God has forgiven you? (v. 33)**

How can I forgive what he/she did to me?

I. Compare the <u>QUANTITY</u> of sins you are asked to forgive with the great legion of sins God forgave you (v. 21-22)
"Seventy times seven"

You have been forgiven far more than you will ever forgive!

Do you realize how many times the average person sins in a day? How many selfish or lustful thoughts he entertains? How many covetous, envious, jealous or angry desires he has?

If you sinned just seven times a day (either in thought, word, or action), you have committed 2,555 sins in one year; 76,650 sins if you are 30 years old; 178,850 sins if you are 70.

If one sin separated Adam from God, and one sin violates God's whole law (Ja. 2:10), how great is our sin in God's eyes!

The psalmist recognized that if God held our iniquities against us no one would stand a chance (Ps. 130:3-4 - *"If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared")*

God, however, is of great mercy and ready to forgive.

David said: Ps. 86:5 - *"For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee."*

Daniel said: Dan. 9:9 - *"To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him"*

Record keeping is not the occupation of a loving Christian. *"Love keeps no records of wrongs"* (I Cor. 13:5)

II. Compare the <u>MAGNITUDE</u> of sin God forgave you with the trivial sins you are asked to forgive others (v. 23-28)

"Ten thousand talents (v. 24) *. . . a hundred pence"* (v. 28)

V. 24

"Ten thousand talents" – a talent was a measurement of weight equaling roughly 75 pounds in precious metals.

1 Talent = 75 lbs.
10,000 Talents = 750,000 lbs.

If these 10,000 talents of precious metals are valued in <u>gold</u>:
As of August, 2018,
1 ounce of Gold = $ 1,200.00
1 pound of Gold = $ 19,200.00
1 Talent (75 lbs.) of Gold = $ 1,440,000
10,000 Talents of Gold = $ 14,400,000,000 (14.4 Billion Dollars)

The median household income in the USA in 2018 = $ 59,000.00
It would take 244,000 years to pay off the debt (or over 3,000 lifetimes of 80 years).

If these 10,000 talents of precious metals are valued in <u>silver</u>:
As of August, 2018,
1 ounce of Silver = $ 14.69
1 pound of Silver = $ 176.28
1 Talent (75 lbs.) of Silver = $ 13,221
10,000 Talents of Silver = $ 132,120,000 (132 Million Dollars)

The median household income in the USA in 2018 = $ 59,000.00
It would take 2,240 years to pay off the debt (or roughly 30 lifetimes of 80 years).

V. 28

A ***"pence"*** (denarius) was equal in metal value to 1 day's minimum wage.

Value of a denarius (a "pence") in the Bible
A denarius (or "penny") was what an agricultural worker typically was paid for one day's labor (Mt. 20:2)

Minimum wage in most states of the USA as of 2018 is $7.25 per hour
An 8 hour day's minimum wage would amount to: $58.00
100 Day's Wages = $ 5,800
(23,000 times less than 10,000 talents of silver)

"An hundred pence" - Amounts to pocket change compared with what he owed the King.

It's a ratio of approximately 23,000 to 1.

It's easy to understand how someone could refuse to forgive others who has never experienced God's forgiveness, but such unforgiveness held onto by a blood-washed saint is unjustifiable and unfair.

One reason why some find it extremely irritating and difficult to forgive the sin of others is because they themselves do not see the enormity of their sin against a holy God.

When we see God and His perfect standard, we see how far short we fall (Rom. 7:13; Job 42:6; Ezra 9:6). The more mature you become, the more you see the sinfulness of your own heart. The closer you get to God, the more aware you are of your own depravity. When men like Isaiah, Job, Peter, John saw the holiness of God they were shockingly struck with a keen awareness of their own wickedness.

Every time we sin against people, we sin against God (Ps. 51:4).

V. 30

Unforgiveness accomplishes nothing at all. What good would this imprisonment be to the servant he owed money to? How did he benefit by throwing him into jail? All he got was revenge; all he got was a "pound of flesh."

It is so sinful to demand that someone "pays" for what they did to you, when you yourself were let off the hook by God. He released you of the *"wages"* you owed for your sin.

"How absurd for one forgiven <u>so much</u> to refuse to forgive <u>so little</u>" (Blomberg, p. 242).

III. Compare the <u>COST</u> of God's forgiveness with the cost of your own forgiveness (v. 27)

"God gave up His Son for your forgiveness (John 3:16); all you give up is your sin of anger and resentment" (Dr. Jim Binney)

It <u>costs</u> to forgive (when you forgive, you have taken upon yourself the effects of that person's sin and freed him/her from their obligation of personally paying you for it)

Illustration: John Taylor and his 7 year old son, Greg. The Train.

What do Stephen (Acts 7:60) and Jesus (Lk. 23:34) have in common?
Answer: The desire to forgive at great cost.

It is <u>not</u> difficult to forgive children, and most people, especially their parents, do it almost instinctively. We understand that children are uninformed, inexperienced, and immature. We expect them to do some things that are inconsiderate, but we tend to tolerate those things and forgive them, even when they hurt us deeply" (MacArthur, p. 142).

When we realize that adults, too, being depraved, often *"know not what they do."* and are propelled by the same selfish nature children have, then we will be more forgiving.

IV. Compare the <u>CONSEQUENCES</u> of unforgiveness with the blessings of forgiveness (v. 34-35)

"Perhaps he had the <u>legal</u> right to thrown the man in prison, but he (having been forgiven) did not have the <u>moral</u> right. . . The servant exercised justice and cast his friend into prison. 'So you want to live by justice?' asked the king. 'Then you shall have justice! Throw the wicked servant in prison and torment him! I will do to him as he has done to others'." (Wiersbe, p. 67).

Justice is now executed. This man now <u>reaps</u> (v. 34) exactly what he <u>sowed</u> (v. 34) (Gal. 6:7).

The punishment he exacted on his fellow-servant now comes back (like a boomerang).

He gets hit with the same penalty which he required of the other man.

The Bible teaches that God shall have judgment without mercy on those who showed no mercy (James 2:13).

Lord Herbert once said, "He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass" (MacArthur, p. 155).

"The world's worst prison is the prison of an unforgiving heart. . . Some of the most miserable people I have met in my ministry have been people who would not forgive others. They lived only to imagine ways to punish these people who had wronged them. But they were really only punishing themselves" (Wiersbe, p. 67).

Compare the consequences of unforgiveness with the blessings of forgiveness: (by Jim Binney)

1. Unanswered prayer (Mt. 6:4)
   vs. answered prayer (I Pet. 3:7)

2. Give place to the devil (Eph. 4:26; cp. II Cor. 2:10-11)
   vs. freedom from Satan (Ja. 4:7)

3. Grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30)
   vs. receiving the comfort of the Holy Spirit

4. Hurting others (Heb. 12:15)
   vs. being a blessing (Eph. 4:29)

5. Broken fellowship with God (I Jn. 1:5)
vs. intimate fellowship

6. Physical ailments
vs. health and good days (I Pet. 3:10)

(they say that 90% of physical ailments are psychosomatic - the mind effected by guilt and anger affects you physically)

Unforgiveness is like a cancer in the bones; it cripples and destroys relationships and you.

Forgiveness is not "forgetting" (although when you truly forgive, the memory of the evil committed against you will fade away).

A man's *"glory is to overlook a transgression"* (Prov. 19:11).

Joseph forgave his brothers (Gen. 50:19-21); David forgave King Saul (I Sam. 24:6, 12; 26:11). They were both blessed because of it.

CONCLUSION:

Six "Don'ts" regarding forgiveness:

1) Don't expect the problem to "heal itself" (God expects loving confrontation. Mt. 18:15)

2) Don't have the attitude of "Why try?" ("It's not worth it")

3) Don't play the "waiting game" (i.e. "When you give in and apologize, I will")

4) Don't "fight fire with fire" (I Pet. 3:9; I Th. 5:15; Rom. 12:17-21)

5) Don't practice "character assassination" (don't attack the person rather than the problem)

6) Don't dig up "old bones" (don't bring up the past)

Test of Forgiveness
By Dr. Jim Binney

1) Can I thank God for the lesson(s) I learned through the painful experience?

2) Can I talk about it (the conflict) without angry resentment or feelings of revenge?

   Faith in God's sovereignty and love is a key to overcoming anger and bitterness. When anger and resentment are resolved by faith, the desire to show forgiveness will happen automatically! People need to mourn to God and trust Him. Mourning = grief + faith (Scott Berry)

3) Have I accepted my part of the blame? (Prov. 13:10)

4) Can I reward them who hurt me and pray for them?

5) Can I grant forgiveness from the heart and verbalize it?

Who do you need to forgive?

Someone who…
- Stole from you
- Took advantage of you
- Gossiped about you

Your spouse – unfaithful
Your parents (Mom or Dad) unresolved conflicts with parents
Your neighbor
A Relative (sibling brother or sister)
A Fellow-believer
Etc.

"No Grounds for Divorce"

Matthew 19:1-12

8/26/2018

INTRODUCTION:

Are there grounds to justify a divorce?

Answer: NO

Evidence:

I. THE SERMON OF JESUS

Reveals no grounds for divorce (vv. 3-9)

Jesus taught:

A. Marriage is unchangeable (v. 4, 8b)

B. Marriage is binding (v. 5)

In God's Word, the Bible, -

The permanence of marriage is evidenced by:

1. **The Bonding of "WEDLOCK" (Gen. 2:24)**
   (Marriage is an inseparable union)
2. **The Meaning of a "COVENANT" (Malachi 2:14)**
   (Marriage is a Covenant)
3. **Christ's Relationship to His BRIDE (Eph. 5:22-32)**
   (Jesus will never forsake His wife, the Church)

C. Marriage is God's work; Divorce is man's work (v. 6)

D. Divorce was tolerated, never commanded or justified (v. 7-8)

II. THE MEANING OF "FORNICATION"

Reveals no grounds for divorce (v. 9)

What is meant by "fornication"? *Two popular, plausible views:*

A. View #1 - Adultery

B. View #2 - Unfaithfulness during the "betrothal" period

III. THE REACTION OF THE DISCIPLES

Reveals no grounds for divorce (v. 10)

Jesus allowed no grounds for divorce after marriage!

--How did Paul interpret Christ's teaching about divorce? (SEE: I Cor. 7:10-11)

--How did Paul interpret the Law's teaching about divorce? (SEE: Rom. 7:1-3)

How to Avoid a Tragic Divorce

1. Don't rush into a marriage to begin with. Make sure before you marry that your spouse is saved and loves the Lord.

2. Be convicted that God says: *Marriage is for life.* (Rom. 7:1ff)

3. Do not allow conflicts to go unresolved.

4. Meet your mate's needs.
   --physically --emotionally --sexually (I Cor.7)

5. Guard yourself against anything you might read, hear, or see that causes discontentment

6. Be faithful to your spouse

7. Fulfill your God-given roles in the marriage.

8. Cultivate a close walk with Christ as a couple.

9. Realize that love is not a "feeling" or a "romantic emotion" but it is action based on a commitment!

10. Consider the word "divorce" the dirtiest word in the English language. It should never be considered as even a remote possibility!

"No Grounds for Divorce"

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I. THE OF JESUS

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Jesus taught:

A. Marriage is _____ (v. 4, 8b)

B. Marriage is _____ (v. 5)

In God's Word, the Bible, -

The permanence of marriage is evidenced by:

1. **The Bonding of " _____" (Gen. 2:24)**
   (Marriage is an inseparable union)
2. **The Meaning of a "_____" (Malachi 2:14)**
   (Marriage is a Covenant)
3. **Christ's Relationship to His _____ (Eph. 5:22-32)**
   (Jesus will never forsake His wife, the Church)

C. Marriage is _____ work; Divorce is _____ work (v. 6)

D. Divorce was _____, never commanded or justified (v. 7-8)

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How to Avoid a Tragic Divorce

1. _____ to begin with. Make sure before you marry that your spouse is saved and loves the Lord.

2. Be convicted that God says: *Marriage is for* _____. (Rom. 7:1ff)

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   --physically --emotionally --sexually (I Cor.7)

5. Guard yourself against anything you might read, hear, or see that causes _____

6. Be _____ to your spouse

7. Fulfill your God-given _____ in the marriage.

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9. Realize that love is not a "feeling" or a "romantic emotion" but it is action based on a _____!

10. Consider the word "divorce" the dirtiest word in the English language. It should never be considered as even a remote possibility!

"No Grounds for Divorce”

Matthew 19:1-12
8/26/2018

INTRODUCTION:

God's plan and purpose for marriage.

"Marriage is a unique union of one man and one woman. It is so intimate that on the earth nothing is its equal." God saw that it was not good for man to be alone, and that man needed a "Help meet" or a helper suitable to himself, his counterpart. Man needed someone to fellowship with him, someone to rejoice with him, someone to plan, share and experience with him the wonders of God and His creation. In Genesis 2:23-24 is presented the ideal which God intended in the marriage relationship. Eve was "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," said Adam. I Corinthians 11:8-9 states that "Man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man--neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." A principle that started in the Garden of Eden has gone down through the ages: Man was to leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and the two became one flesh (Gen. 2:24). This "leave and cleave" principle illustrates that God instituted marriage and that it was to be a monogamous, heterosexual and complete union of two persons.

God instituted marriage for four basic reasons:

1) To complete the man which He had created ("help meet" - Gen. 2)
2) To promote sexual purity (I Cor. 7:2)
3) To begin a new family unit (Gen. 2:18-24)
4) To propagate truth and godly principles from one generation to the next (Deut. 6:67)

What makes a marriage?

1. A covenant (a vow before witnesses - Mal. 2:14). This is the premiere essence of a marriage
2. A consummation (sexual union - Gen. 2:24; I Cor. 6:16)

*In the "vow" the two become one by verbal commitment, whereas in the consummation the two become one by a holy physical act.

One of the most plaguing menaces of all time is divorce.

Today many men change wives like changing socks.

Divorce is commonplace without the couple even considering the tragic effects of it.

What are the tragic effects of divorce upon the COUPLE?

1. The divorce usually ends up causing unresolved bitterness, loneliness, and insecurities.
2. If the couple has any conscience at all, the divorce results in guilt, emotional torment, and sorrow.
3. The remarriages that occur after divorce usually adopt the "baggage," unresolved conflicts, and problems of the previous marriage(s).
4. Most who fail in their first marriage fail in their second (the divorce rate for second marriages is higher than first marriages).

What are the tragic effects of divorce upon the CHILDREN?

1. Children become the major victims of the emotional scars divorce brings.

   --Innocently caught in the cross-fire of family feuds, the children often blame themselves.

   --They are often forced to side with one of the parents (usually the one who has major custody).

   --They will never have an example (model) of God's ideal for the family ("Preliminary data indicate that children of divorce, particularly women, have a higher chance of getting divorced themselves than children of intact families) (Newsweek, Jan. 13, 1992, p. 49).

   --Family closeness is hurt (in-laws and grandparent relationships are affected).
2. Divorce teaches children that one's vows, promises, or covenants are not binding.
3. Divorce teaches children that running from a problem is the answer to solving it.
4. Divorce teaches children that Mommy or Daddy are more concerned about themselves (what they want; what makes them happy) than they are concerned for the children and the effect the divorce will have on them. [What a selfish society we live in!]

Contemporary "grounds" for divorce:

1. "I don't love him/her anymore"
2. Physical/Emotional Abuse(Separation is allowed - I Cor. 7:11; not divorce)
3. "Incompatibility"

4. Adultery (unfaithfulness)

Are there grounds to justify a divorce?

Answer: NO

Evidence:

I. THE SERMON OF JESUS
Reveals no grounds for divorce (vv. 3-9)

v.3 ***"The Pharisees"*** - A Jewish Religious sect that believed they were "self-righteous"

"Every cause" - Pharisees wanted to tempt Jesus to contradict his previous statement in Matthew 5:32.

"For every cause" = the phrase alluded to the contemporary ideas about justifiable divorce in Bible days -

Two major views (schools of thought) toward divorce
(two interpretations of Deut. 24:1 - "some uncleanness"):

--Shammai (conservative) -only grounds for divorce was adultery

--Hillel (liberal) - anything that could be interpreted as uncleanness
(if the wife spoiled his dinner, or went out with unbound hair, or was caught speaking to men in the streets, or if she became overweight or unattractive and he found someone more beautiful)

[Because of man's sin nature, this opinion became the prevailing view in Christ's Day]

Jesus taught:

A. Marriage is unchangeable (v. 4, 8b)

v. 4 - "Have you not read" - a statement proving their ignorance; note this statement put the authority on the Scriptures, not tradition, custom, or religious interpretation of the Law.

Jesus purposely skips over the dispensations, Mosaic Law (Dt. 24), etc.
(Jesus appeals to the beginning of God's institution of marriage and implies

that nothing has changed since then)

"He which made them" – Since Jesus made all things, He is the ultimate authority on marriage! Jesus is God (v.6)

"male and female" - incidently, in today's society its important to note that the names of the first couple were Adam & Eve and <u>not</u> "Adam and Steve"!!!

B. Marriage is <u>binding</u> (v. 5)

"cleave" - to glue, cement, or permanently bond together

In God's Word, the Bible, -
The <u>permanence</u> of marriage is evidenced by:

1. The Bonding of "<u>WEDLOCK</u>" (Gen. 2:24)
(Marriage is an inseparable union)

a. The <u>Cleaving</u> of Marriage (v. 24a)
b. The <u>Oneness</u> of Marriage (v. 24b)
c. "Till death do we part" (Romans 7:2-3)

2. The Meaning of a "<u>COVENANT</u>" (Malachi 2:14)
(Marriage is a Covenant)

--Definition of a "Covenant"

--Examples of "Covenants" in the Bible
a). Gen. 15:6-18 - Abrahamic Covenant (cp. Jer. 34:18-19)
b). Matt. 26:28 - The New Covenant

a. The marriage covenant is an <u>irrevocable</u> <u>Vow</u>
Observe the nature of vows:
1). Numbers 30:2 - Your words are extremely important
2). Deuteronomy 23:21 - God holds you accountable
3). Example: Jephthah's vow - Judges 11:30-39

b. The marriage covenant is an <u>unconditional</u> <u>Vow</u>
"For better or for worse, for richer or for poorer"

3. Christ's Relationship to His <u>BRIDE</u> (Eph. 5:22-32)
(Jesus will never forsake His wife, the Church)

a. The Church is <u>one</u> with Christ (Eph. 5:30; I Cor. 6:17)
b. The Church is the "Bride of Christ" (Rev. 19:7-9)

c. The Church has the promise of <u>eternal security</u> (Mt. 16:18; Jn. 10:28-29; Titus 1:2; Heb. 13:5)

4. God's Attitude about <u>DIVORCE</u> (Malachi 2:16)
(God hates divorce)

a. "He may not put her away all his days"
(Deut. 22:19, 29)

Suppose you were to pursue a divorce and you received a letter in the mail. It read: "I hate divorce. Signed, Jehovah God"

C. Marriage is <u>God's</u> work; Divorce is <u>man's</u> work (v. 6)

"no more" No longer. Once married, they will never again be two separate, independent singles (in God's eyes)

"What...<u>God</u> hath joined" God ordained the principle of the 2 becoming 1 and this principle applies to all people (saved & unsaved).

*Some might say: *"Well, I don't think God ever meant us to be married."* (Perhaps you did marry outside of His desired will, but now that you are married, you are "one" and God intends for your to not break that unit.

*Perhaps others would say: *"God did not put us together because we were not married in a church"* (Where in the Bible does it say you must be married in a Church? A marriage is a covenant or vow in the presence of witness: A justice of the peace marriage is just as legitimate as a Church wedding)

"What God does man is not to undo"

No one can ever say: "<u>God</u> is leading me into divorce"

The state may give a marriage license, and offer grounds to break that marriage, but is God to whom you will give account for the choices you make.

D. Divorce was <u>tolerated</u>, never commanded or justified (v. 7-8)

v. 8 - "In this verse, Jesus takes the word "commanded" used by the Pharisees (v. 7) and changes it to "suffered" (Meaning: tolerated, put up with.

Just because God "tolerated" it, doesn't mean He approved of it or that it was His intention [cp. Israel was permitted to have a "King" prematurely (I Sam. 8), and was given Quail to eat against God's will for them (Num. 11).

See: Deut. 24:1ff - The reason a <u>written</u> bill of divorcement was required was not to make divorce easier but to put a "legal check upon reckless and tyrannical separation. Divorce was getting out of hand so Moses was regulating an existing practice. Moses was not laying down grounds for divorce as evident by the hypothetical, vague language in vv.1-3.

The implied regulation did not offer grounds for divorce but, in the Hebrew text, God was giving a hypothetical example to make His point in verse 4.

[Note: The Hebrew is not an imperative as the KJV implies but is hypothetical as the NASV translates: *"When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he write her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house...." (NASV)*

[Note: v. 9 - "And I say unto <u>you</u>" (Jesus' disciples -v. 10) When this verse is compared with Mark 10:10, you discover that Jesus' discussion with the Pharisees ended with verse 8. They never heard verse 9, which was given privately to Jesus disciples "in the house" (Mk. 10:10). So Jesus left the Pharisees with the conclusion that there was no allowance whatsoever for divorce.]

II. THE MEANING OF "FORNICATION"
Reveals no grounds for divorce (v. 9)

"Whosoever" - the most general, inclusive, unconditional term that Christ could have used. This verse applies to everyone who is married. No one is excluded.

"Put away" = divorce
"he may not *put her away* all her days" (Dt.22:28-29)
Joseph was "mindful to *put her away* privily"
Paul wrote: "let not the husband *put away* his wife" (I Cor. 7:11)

"His wife" - under Jewish law, only a husband was allowed to do the divorcing.

"Saving for the cause of fornication" - those exempt from the verdict of "adultery" are those whose spouse has committed "fornication."

What is meant by "fornication"? Two popular, plausible views:

A. View #1 - Adultery

This professor does <u>not</u> believe that Jesus meant "<u>adultery</u>". Why not?

1. He did not say "adultery"; he said "fornication."

2. Those words are two totally different words with totally different meanings.

   "Adultery" = moicheia (extra-marital sex)
   "Fornication" = porneia (pre-marital sex) - I Cor. 7:2; Jn. 8:41)

3. The two words are distinguished - Gal. 5:19; I Cor. 6:9

   The word "adultery" is distinguished from the word "fornication" in these verses -
   Mt. 19:9 - "fornication . . . adultery"
   I Cor. 6:9 - "fornicators . . . adulterers"
   Gal. 5:19 - "adultery . . . fornication"

4. If Jesus meant adultery, it would have been most natural for Him to say it, since he uses the word adultery 2 other times in this verse!

5. The penalty for adultery was death not divorce

   Under the Mosaic Law, one would not need to divorce his wife if she had committed adultery, because the penalty for this was death (Deut. 22:22) (he could not be going to a divorce court, but to a grave yard)

6. Such a view says that "one wrong justifies another" ("sin justifies sin") Where is forgiveness in this view?

B. View #2 - Unfaithfulness during the "betrothal" period

This professor believes Jesus is referring to unfaithfulness during the betrothal period.

Marriage was never to be entered into carelessly or lightly by a Jew who wanted to honor God. They did not rush into a marriage, but did formulate a binding agreement known as the "betrothal"

What was the betrothal period? SEE: paper on Divorce, p. 16, Pentecost

Jewish marriage custom in Bible times:

1. Legal contract between the fathers of bride and groom) (contract called a "Betrothal")

2. Betrothal was considered as equally binding as marriage (Deut. 22:23-27).

3. Couple were called husband and wife during "Betrothal" period (EX: Mary and Joseph - Mt. 1:19-20)

4. The marriage itself was not completed and consummated until at least 12 months later. Reasons for such a waiting period:

   a. The period gave sufficient time to reveal whether or not the woman had been immoral previously
   b. Preparations made for new home (EX: Jn. 14:3)

5. Betrothal could only end by a legal divorce

   Matthew is the only Gospel that records Joseph, the "husband" (1:19)

"espoused to Mary" (1:18) as being minded "to put her away privily" (1:19)

Proof of Betrothal view:

1. Grammatical Proof - the word "fornication" refers to pre-marital sex

John 8:41 - "We be not born of fornication" (they were mocking the virgin birth of Christ, insinuating that because His mother was pregnant before marriage, He was illegitimate).

I Cor. 7:2 - In context Paul is speaking to unmarried persons.

I Cor. 6:18 - "He who committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." This illustrates that fornication in this text had to be involving an unmarried person, because a married person would be charged with adultery (sin) against his spouse and not merely against his own body.

2. Historical context - The phrase "except it be for fornication" is only found in Matthew (5:32; 19:9). Ironically not in Mark 10:11-12 and Luke 16:18. Why?

Matthew was written to the Jews.

Proof:

1. The theme of Matthew present Jesus as the promised Jewish Messiah (the king of Israel)

2. Matthew uses more references to the O.T. than any other Gospel writer (esp. O.T. fulfillments of Messianic prophecy).

3. Matthew uses Jewish words and customs which are not explained as they are in other Gospels (cp. Matt. 15:2-5, Mk. 7:2-4).

The exception clause is only found in Matthew's gospel, written to Jews (mt. 5:32; 19:9) and not in Mark 10:11-12 and Luke 16:18, written to Gentiles who didn't understand the Jewish concept of the betrothal (Mt. 5:32; 19:19; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18)

3. **An example**: Joseph was called a "husband" (Mt. 1:19) "espoused [betrothed] to Mary (1:18), who found out that she was pregnant before their marriage, so he decided to "put her away [divorce] privily" (1:19)

"Adultery" - This professor believes that the "adultery" committed is an "adultery" in the eyes of God (who views marriage as permanent).

The adultery would have to be a "spirit of adultery" and not the "letter of adultery". In other words, if the adultery was literal, then the second marriage would have to be dissolved, since they would be "living in adultery."

The real sin was in the divorce itself, more to than the remarriage. The remarriage prevents reconciliation.

NOTE: Those who are guilty of "adultery":

--The original husband (Mt. 19:9)
--The man who marries her (her new spouse)(Mt. 19:9; 5:32)
--The wife (divorcee) - "causeth her" (Mt.5:32)

III. THE REACTION OF THE DISCIPLES
Reveals no grounds for divorce (v. 10)

The shock of the disciples reveals that Christ's view of divorce was radically different than anything they had ever heard before.

v.10 The Disciples in effect say: "If there is absolutely no way out, it is good to remain single!)

v.11 ***"To whom it is given"*** - Celibacy is a gift given by God to some. Some people have no desire to marry (Paul commended singleness - I Cor. 7).

v.12 For those who cannot *"receive"* (accept) not having a matte, should be prayerful, careful, and Biblical in selecting a marriage partner.

CONCLUSION:

Jesus allowed no grounds for divorce after marriage!

--How did Paul interpret Christ's teaching about divorce? (SEE: I Cor. 7:10-11)

[Note: The word *"bondage" (v.15) is "doulos"* (to be in bondage as a slave to serve and meet needs) whereas, *"bound"* (v.27) is *"deo"* (which means to fasten with chains or to be tied together.]

--How did Paul interpret the Law's teaching about divorce? (SEE: Rom. 7:1-3)

A believer is never justified to pursue a divorce. If the unbeliever departs, that's one thing (I Cor. 7:15), but a believer is never to leave his/her unbelieving spouse.

Romans 7:1-3 - The only legitimate way out of the marriage bond is death (No exceptions).

How to Avoid a Tragic Divorce

1. Don't rush into a marriage to begin with. Make sure before you marry that your spouse is saved and loves the Lord.

2. Be convicted that God says: *Marriage is for life.* (Rom. 7:1ff)
   [Even though you think you married the wrong person at the wrong time for the wrong reasons,
   you are married and it is right to remain true to your commitment. One wrong does not justify
   another wrong.]

3. Do not allow conflicts to go unresolved.
   --Practice forgiveness
   --Don't go to bed angry
   --Talk! Learn to communicate. *"Speak the truth in love."*
   --Seek Godly advice.
   --Learn to say the words: "I love you." "I was wrong." "Please forgive me

4. Meet your mate's needs.
   --physically
   --emotionally
   --sexually (I Cor. 7:1ff)
   [Note: Beware of an over-demanding, time-consuming vocation.
   You need to spend time together.]

5. Guard yourself against anything you might read, hear, or see that causes discontentment (Beware of Satan's attempts to breed covetousness). Don't compare your wife or husband to any other wife or husband to make a point (Example: "Mary's husband faithfully mows the grass every Saturday. Why can't you?"). God didn't give you to _____; He gave you your husband or wife, so you should be grateful, and quit looking at the greener grass at someone else's home!

6. Be faithful to your spouse (Illicit sex [adulterous affairs] pulls down and destroys a couple's trust and respect for each other).

7. Fulfill your God-given roles in the marriage.

8. Cultivate a close walk with Christ as a couple. *"A family that prays together, stays together."* Sincere prayer is the surest way to release Satan's strangle-hold on your marriage.

9. Realize that love is not a "feeling" or a "romantic emotion" but it is action based on a commitment! In fact, "love" is a commitment (i.e. a decision to be loyal to your responsibility).

10. Consider the word "divorce" the dirtiest word in the English language. It should never be considered as even a remote possibility!

"HOW TO GAIN ETERNAL LIFE"

Matthew 19:16-26

9-2-2018

INTRODUCTION: Jesus loves little children (v.13-15)

- Jesus is not too busy so as to ignore children (v.13) *He has time for them!*
- Jesus invites little children to Himself (v.14a) *He welcomes them!*
- Little children can obtain God's kingdom (v.14b) *He saves them!*

***This rich young ruler, like all of us, needed to have eternal life!**

What did he have to "do" to be saved?

I. *This rich young man needed to*
SEE JESUS for who He was (v. 16-17a)
(He needed to recognize that Jesus is God)

II. *This rich young man needed to*
SEE HIMSELF at he really was (v. 17b-22)
(He needed to realize he was a sinner whose god was money, and needed to repent)

III. *This rich young man needed*
GOD TO DO what was HUMANLY IMPOSSIBLE (v. 23-26)
(He needed God to work a miracle of grace in his heart)

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_____ **what was** _____ (v. 23-26)
(He needed God to work a _____ of grace in his heart)

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V. 16

All three of the synoptic gospels contain this account (cp. Mk. 110:17-30; Lk. 18:18-30).

This question is obviously sincere. He really wanted to know how he might "gain" eternal life.

Mark's gospel tells us of the earnestness of this zealous young man. He *"ran up to Him and knelt before Him"* (10:17).

***This rich young ruler, like all of us, needed to have eternal life!**

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I. *This rich young man needed to*
SEE JESUS for who He was (v. 16-17a)
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V. 16

"What good thing shall I do?" - This man thought that eternal life was acquired by "good works," by his "doing" something "good."

However, the Bible teaches that this is not so (Ti. 3:5; Eph. 2:8-9; Is. 64:6).

"What good thing" (singular) - This man thought that by going up to the *"Good Master"* he would learn the "secret" one good thing that would gain him entrance into God's Kingdom.

"Jews of the time believed that performing some single act would guarantee salvation" (Ryrie note).

V. 17

"Why callest thou me good?" - By this answer, it's as if Jesus didn't hear the question; but indeed He did.

By making the statement ***"There is none good but one, that is God"*** Jesus is making at least two points:

1. Since none are good except God, all men are sinners (cp. Rom. 3); therefore sinners can't do good to go to heaven.

2. Since none are good except God, Jesus (if He is *"good")* must be God! Jesus does not make this statement to say that He is not God, but to cause this man to see that He is God, if He is good.

Just as God is the only One who can forgive sins (Mk. 2:7), and Jesus forgave sins (Mk. 2:10), proving He is God -- so God is the only One who is *"good,"* and Jesus is good, again proving He is God.

If Jesus ever committed one sin, He could not be considered *"good"* (according to God's perfect standard of goodness). Yet He was sinless.

I Pet. 2:22 - *"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth"*

Heb. 7:26 - *"For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens"*

Heb. 4:15 - *"...[He] was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin."*

He *"knew no sin"* (II Cor. 5:21). Jesus boldly said: *"Which of you convinceth me of sin?"*

Jesus is saying: "If I am 'good,' then I must be God, because God is the only one who is 'good'."

Verse 17, when thought about, is actually one of the greatest proof texts for Christ's deity in the Bible!

This man viewed Jesus as a ***"good teacher"*** (v. 16), but needed to see that He was a "good God."

II. *This rich young man needed to*
<u>SEE HIMSELF</u> at he really was (v. 17b-22)
(He needed to realize he was a <u>sinner</u> whose god was money, and needed to repent)

V. 17

"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" - The imperative verb "keep" (in the present tense) refers to a continual obedience, a non-stop holding on to and observing of God's commands.

Has anyone (outside of Jesus Christ) ever ***"kept"*** God's commands perfectly, every second, of every minute of every hour, of every day, of every week. . . month. . . year of his/her life? No!

Hypothetically, if one did obey perfectly all of his/her life they would be "perfect," showing that they had no sin, and would go to Heaven. However, no one has ever done so, including this rich man. And Jesus wanted Him to see this.

"Which?" The rich man, wondering if He had kept the commands, asked, "Which?" to see if He had met the requirements for eternal life.

Note: Of these six commands, four are negative (v. 18) and two are positive (v. 19), and all are man-centered. That is, they are man-to-man commands.

V. 18

Jesus selectively listed commands which referred to relationships with others.

V. 18-19

Jesus intentionally did not mention the first four of the ten commands which focus on man's attitude toward God; nor did He cite the greatest command (Deut. 6:5; Mt. 22:38), which is the most difficult to keep.

The one commandment that especially applied to him, Jesus did not quote: *"Thou shalt not covet"* (Ex. 20:17).

Outside of Christ, no one has ever kept the commands perfectly. God gave His perfect commands to an imperfect, depraved people, <u>not</u> so that the people would "<u>do</u>" and be saved, but so that they would see that they cannot "<u>do</u>" and need God's mercy and grace to be saved. Rom. 3:20 - *"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."*

Remember the commands not to murder or commit adultery have a deeper application. Unrighteous anger and lustful thoughts in one's heart actually make one a murderer and adulterer in heart (Mt. 5:21-22, 27-28).

"Jesus did not introduce the law to show the young man how to be saved, but to show him that he needed to be saved. The law is a mirror that reveals what we are" (Wiersbe, p. 72).

He thought he kept this commands from his ***"youth up***" but in fact he could not have, because he was not even willing to give what he had to the poor. v. 21

V. 20

Yet he asks, ***"What lack I yet" -*** This man, although he had a great deal of confidence in his self-righteousness, still saw that he was missing something. A gnawing emptiness bothered him. He knew he was empty on the inside. There was a void in his life that hadn't been filled, not even by money.

Luke tells us that this man was a *"ruler,"* most likely a ruler in the synagogue, revealing this man to be not only rich, but also spiritual in the eyes of the world.

V. 21

Jesus said this with love in his heart for this man (Mk. 10:21 - *"Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me."*)

"God. . . come" - This command involved repentance and faith.

Repentance = a turning from anything that is keeping you from turning to Jesus Christ.

"Thou shalt have treasure in Heaven" - It required faith for this man to believe this.

Jesus said earlier: Mt. 6:19-21 - *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*

Why did Jesus tell this man to ***"sell all"***? Answer: He wanted this man to see his own selfish, idolatrous, materialistic, covetous spirit.

Jesus actually had touched the root of this man's sin (by giving this request).

"Give to the poor" - If fulfilled, this would validate his claim to ***"love his neighbor as himself"*** (v. 19).

"Should all believers sell everything they own? No. We are responsible to care for our own needs and the needs of our families, so as not to be a burden on others. We should, however, be willing to give up anything if God asks us to do so. . . If you are comforted by the fact that Christ did not tell his followers to sell all their possessions, then you may be too attached to what you have" (Life Application Bible note).

"Perfect" - complete; to reach God's goal for one's life. This perfection is not attained is simply because the rich man gave up his wealth, but because his wealth would no longer be a hindrance to him coming to Christ. One must ***"come"*** to Christ to be ***"perfect"***.

It was Christ's finished work on Calvary that *"perfects"* us forever (Heb. 10:14 - *"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."*

V. 22

"He went away sorrowful" - He left the scene grieving (with deep sadness in his heart).

Why? Because he could not have his "cake and eat it, too"; i.e. He could not have *"eternal life"* (v. 16) and still have money as his God, his trust.

"He had great possessions" - the more you have, the harder it is to give it up.

This man's joy and security was all wrapped up in the bundle of wealth he had.

What was it that kept him from eternal life? According to Jesus, the man's problem was that he *"trusted in riches"* (mk. 10:24 KJV).

Having riches does not necessarily mean that you are materialistic and trust in them.

EX: Abraham and Job had vast wealth, yet were men of great faith (their complete trust was in God).

No man can serve 2 masters. You cannot serve God and mammon. You have to decide! Who or what are you going to live for? Anything that would prevent or

hinder you as a Christian from following Christ must be repented of!

III. *This rich young man needed*
GOD TO DO what was HUMANLY IMPOSSIBLE (v. 23-26)
(He needed God to work a miracle of grace in his heart)

V. 23

It is extremely difficult (but not impossible (v. 26) for a person of vast wealth to be saved, because materialism:

1) blinds one's eyes (from what matters most)

2) binds ones heart (is an obsession)

3) becomes one's trust (rather than "in God we trust," it's in money we trust. They never sense an utter dependency).

V. 24

"Camel. . . eye of a needle" - A hyperbole to emphasize Christ's point.

"Needle" - sewing needle.

You couldn't even get a camel's whisker through the eye of a needle!

V. 25

"Disciples. . . exceedingly amazed" - In Matthew's context, Jesus is constantly amazing the disciples with teachings that were radically different than what they had been taught before. (cp. Mt. 16:21-22; 17:23; 18:1, 22; 19:10, 14, 25; 20:26; 21:20-22)

"The disciples were astonished. They thought that if anyone could be saved, it would be the rich, whom their culture considered especially blessed by God" (Life Application Bible note).

"Who then can be saved?" - If it would require a miracle the size of a camel going through the eye of a needle for a rich man to be saved, what is it like for the rest of us? (maybe the size of a dog or cat going through the needle's eye? Still an impossibility!).

V. 26

"Beheld" - No doubt Jesus looked upon them with compassion and pity (in light of their desire to be saved).

"With men this is impossible" - This "salvation" is an absolute impossibility for man to accomplish on his own. Man cannot do anything to save himself. (*"Can a leopard change his spots, or an Ethiopian his skin. . .?"*

"With God all things are possible" - He is omnipotent!

The greatest miracle is the true and genuine salvation of one soul.

If God can save the chief of sinners, He can save you! (I Tim. 1:15-16 - *"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.")*

CONCLUSION:

"WHAT SHALL WE HAVE?"

Matthew 19:27 - 20:16

9-9-2018

INTRODUCTION:

***Observe Christ's promises to those who forsake all to follow Him:**

I. To the 12 Disciples Christ promised:
A POSITION AS JUDGE in the future regenerated Kingdom (19:28)

II. To Every one who forsakes all to follow Him, Christ promised:
A "HUNDRED-FOLD" in this present life (19:29)

III. To All (whether *"first"* or *"last"*) whom the Lord chooses, Christ promised:
EVERLASTING LIFE (19:29b - 20:16)

*The "everlasting life" Jesus spoke about in 19:29 will be equally shared by all who are saved (whether they were saved early or later in life)!

12 Principles Seen in the Parable of the Vineyard:

A. The Lord takes the initiative in seeking men to salvation (v. 1, 3, 5, 6)
B. The Lord assures in advance what He will give to His chosen laborers (v. 1-2)
C. The Lord expects all who come into the vineyard to work (v. 2)
D. The Lord always gives what is right (v. 4)
E. The Lord alone establishes the terms for salvation (v. 7)
F. The Lord patiently continues to call men into His Kingdom (v. 6-7)
G. The Lord will one day "*call*" His laborers *(at the Rapture)* and give each one eternal life (v. 8-9)
H. The Lord shows no partiality but gives eternal life equally to all who are chosen (v. 9-14)
I. The Lord gives more than is deserved (v. 9-12)
J. The Lord always keeps His promises (v. 13)
K. The Lord is right to do as He wishes with what belongs to Him (v. 15)
L. The Lord *"calls"* (invites) many to salvation, but only a few are chosen (v. 16)

"WHAT SHALL WE HAVE?"

Matthew 19:27 - 20:16

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"WHAT SHALL WE HAVE?"

Matthew 19:27 - 20:16

9-9-2018

INTRODUCTION:

V. 27

"Behold we have forsaken all..." - In contrast to the rich young ruler (19:16-26) who was unwilling to forsake his materialism and follow Christ (v. 21-22), Peter is quick to speak on behalf of the disciples and to inquire as to what he and they would get for their "great" sacrifice.

"What shall we have therefore?" - Because of our sacrifice, what's in it for us? What will we get? What fortune do we have to look forward to?

EX: The human nature of man causes him naturally to have a "What's in it for me?" attitude.

***Observe Christ's promises to those who forsake all to follow Him:**

I. To the 12 Disciples Christ promised:
A POSITION AS JUDGE in the future regenerated Kingdom (19:28)

"Verily" - truly; most assuredly; you can count (bank) on this

"Ye which have followed me" - speaking of the disciples (excluding Judas) who left their jobs, families, hometowns, etc., for 3 1/2 years to follow Christ.

"In the regeneration" - The time when God makes all things new again; the time when this present creation receives its new birth, its total renovation.

Paul referred to the renewal of the earth and heavens (sky) in this way: *"And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."* (Acts 3:20-21)

"When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory" - In Christ's Kingdom after the Rapture and Day of the Lord Judgments

See: **Psalm** 2:1-12; **Isaiah** 2:1-4, 4:2-6, 9:6-7, 11:1-12, 35:1,10, 40:1-5, 55:12-13, 65:17-25

Zech. 6:13 - *"Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne:…"*

"Ye" -the disciples were promised that they would sit on 12 thrones, each judging a tribe of Israel [Note: Matthias (Acts 1:26) would replace (Acts 1:20) Judas as one of the twelve.]

There will be eating and drinking in the kingdom (Luke 22:30 - *"That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.")*

"<u>Judging</u> the twelve tribes of Israel" - This judging indicates that there will be mortals and sinners present when the Son of Man sits in the throne (SEE: Dan. 7:8-9, 13-22; Rev. 20:4-6).

"The twelve tribes of Israel" - Will be Jews who are saved at the end of the Tribulation (SEE: Rom. 11:25-31).

Zech. 12:9-10 - *"And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."*

(cp. Rev. 7:7-8, 14:1-5)

II. To Every one who forsakes all to follow Him, Christ promised:
A "HUNDRED-FOLD" in this present life (19:29)

Jesus is not commanding us to forsake these situations and people, but if a choice between loyalties to Jesus conflicted with loyalties to such other things, the choice should be Jesus (Mt. 10:37).

For the disciples to physically follow Jesus while He was on earth did literally demand such a 3-1/2 year abandonment.

"Shall receive an hundred-fold" -

When? A hundred-fold in this life
Mk. 10:30 - *"But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."* Luke 18:29-30 - *"And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."*

What?
A hundred-fold of that which you forsook (spiritual brothers and sisters, etc., Cp. Mt. 12:48)

Jim Elliot, a young missionary martyred by the Auca Indians of Ecuador whom he was seeking to reach for Christ, wrote shortly before his death, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose" (cited by MacArthur, p. 206).

"Shall inherit everlasting life" - Everlasting life is a gift given, not a reward earned. Gaining eternal life is not because of forsaking worldly attachments, but gaining eternal life is the outcome of a saved soul whose salvation manifested itself by a willingness to forsake all and follow Christ.

III. To <u>All (whether *"first"* or *"last"*)</u> whom the Lord chooses, Christ promised: <u>EVERLASTING LIFE</u> (19:29b - 20:16)

*The "everlasting life" Jesus spoke about in <u>19:29</u> will be equally shared by all who are saved (whether they were saved early or later in life)!

V. 30

"Many" - Not all, but many

"That are first" - those who <u>selfishly seek</u> to be "<u>first</u>" shall be last.

ILLUS: Have five volunteers each receive an 8-1/2 by 11 card and stand in front displaying the card. On one side the card says:

6:00 a.m. (v. 1 - *"early")*
9:00 a.m. (v. 3 - *"third hour")*
12:00 p.m. (v. 5 - *"sixth hour")*
3:00 p.m. (v. 5 - *"ninth hour")*
5:00 p.m. (v. 6 - *"eleventh hour")*

On the back of each card it should read "1 Denarius"

Have each volunteer come up in order and begin a shoveling motion using the card as a shovel. Explain the parable of Mt. 20:1-16.

V. 2

"Agreed" - A contract was made (both parties knew the arrangement, knew what to expect).

"Penny" - lit. a denarius or a day's wage for a common worker

V. 8

"At "<u>even</u>" - (6:00 p.m.) The O.T. law commanded that the workers should be paid at the end of the day, before sundown (Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:15)

"Beginning from the last unto the first" - the Lord of the vineyard intentionally began with "the last" to arouse thought in the "first" and then to make a point.

V. 10

"They supposed that they should receive more" - the ones hired at 6:00 a.m. thought and calculated, "If he got 1 denarius for 1 hour work, I should get 12!" The man hired at 9:00

thought he'd get 9; the man hired at 12:00 thought he'd get 6; the man hired at 3:00 - 3)

V. 15

"Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" - i.e. Are you envious because I am generous?

The meaning of the parable:

V. 1

"The kingdom of Heaven" - (v. 1) - the Kingdom which comes from Heaven; speaking about God's eternal kingdom which the saved will inherit.

Householder = symbolizes God

Laborers = those God saves by grace

Vineyard = the world of lost humanity

The "everlasting life" which Jesus spoke about in 19:29 will be equally shared by all who are saved (whether they were saved early or later in life).

"There are no exceptions or variations. Whether a person comes to God as a small child and lives a long life of faithful, obedient service, or whether he comes to Him on his deathbed -- all come into the Kingdom on the same basis and receive the same glorious eternal blessings" (MacArthur, p. 213).

All of the redeemed of all ages will stand equally before the Lord in Heaven.

"Here the Lord is not teaching about the differences of rewards but the equality of salvation" (MacARthur, p. 214)

Those who are saved at the last hour of this age will have the same eternal life as those who had been saved back in Jesus' day!

Believing tax collectors, prostitutes, criminals, and social outcasts will have the same heavenly residence as Paul, Luther, Moody, and Spurgeon. There are no servant quarters or lower-class neighborhoods in heaven.

Every believer in this age is part of Christ's bride (Rev. 21:2, 9), a fellow heir (Rom. 8:16-17), blessed with all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3) (MacARthur, p. 215).

"All believers will receive 'the crown of life' (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10), the 'crown of

righteousness' (II Tim. 4:8), and the 'crown of glory' (I Peter 5:4)." (MacArthur, p. 214).

Those who are saved early in life will receive no more (in terms of salvation or entrance into the "kingdom") than those who are saved later in life (EX: the thief on the cross will gain the same Paradise as Peter, James and John).

This is not to say that there will not be various rewards given for faithful service. Indeed, the Scriptures teach gain or loss of rewards for faithful service done for Christ (I Cor. 4:5; Rev. 22:12; Mt. 16:27; I Cor. 3:13-15)

II Cor. 5:10 - *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."*

This is not to say that one should "wait" until the last moment of his/her life before trusting Christ as Savior (*"Behold, now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation"* - II Cor. 6:2).

NOTE: Be careful when interpreting parables to discern the main point being made and <u>not</u> to <u>press</u> every detail of the story.

*There will be no griping when Christ returns or at the death of a believer when his soul goes to Heaven.

12 Principles Seen in the Parable of the Vineyard:

A. The Lord takes the initiative in seeking men to salvation (v. 1, 3, 5, 6)

John 6:39 - *"And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."*

B. The Lord assures in advance what He will give to His chosen laborers (v. 1-2)

C. The Lord expects all who come into the vineyard to work (v. 2)

D. The Lord always gives what is right (v. 4)

E. The Lord alone establishes the terms for salvation (v. 7)

F. The Lord patiently continues to call men into His Kingdom (v. 6-7)

"He is longsuffering. . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9)

G. The Lord will one day "*call*" His laborers (at the Rapture) and give each one eternal life (v. 8-9)

H. The Lord shows no partiality but gives eternal life equally to all who are chosen (v. 9-14)

I. The Lord gives more than is deserved (v. 9-12)

J. The Lord always keeps His promises (v. 13)

K. The Lord is right to do as He wishes with what belongs to Him (v. 15)

L. The Lord *"calls"* (invites) many to salvation, but only a few are chosen (v. 16)

"Many be called but few chosen" - Many are invited to salvation (since the payment of Christ was sufficient for all), yet only a few will be chosen (only a few respond to the invitation).

This phrase proves that the "calling" is not efficacious.

"THE GREATNESS OF BEING A SERVANT"

Matthew 20:17-28
9-16-2018

INTRODUCTION: (verses 20-26a)

***Greatness is in serving, not in being served!**

Who is truly great?

I. *You are great in God's eyes when you give your life in*
HUMBLE Service for Others (v. 26b)
("let him be your minister" - *diakonos*)

II. *You are great in God's eyes when you give your life in*
DEVOTED Service for Others (v. 27)
("let him be your servant" - *doulos*)

III. *You are great in God's eyes when you give your life in*
SACRIFICIAL Service for Others (v. 17-19, 28)
("The Son of Man came. . . to minister and give His life")

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"THE GREATNESS OF BEING A SERVANT"

Matthew 20:17-28
9-16-2018

INTRODUCTION: (verses 20-26a)

Many are seeking a path that leads to "greatness" today!

Some take the path ofsports
popular music
financial power
military control
religious popularity

V. 21

Like most proud mothers, Zebedee's wife was deeply interested in the blessings and success of her two sons.

(A mother's self-worth and success is often linked to the success of her children)

Perhaps after hearing that her two sons would have the honored position of each sitting on thrones with Christ judging the 12 tribes of Israel (19:28) she became inquisitive as to who would have the two seats next to Jesus (EX: how children often desire to sit next to special guests at the dinner table or in the car).

Not only did she request this privileged position for her two sons, but they did as well (Mk. 10:35-37).

So Jesus response to them.

This was a self-serving request, a desire to exalt self, a quest for personal promotion.

V. 22

"Cup" - the bitter cup of suffering (Mt. 26:39).

"Baptism" - to be immersed in suffering and death

Jesus asks this question, implying that certain rewards and privileges will be given to those who face a martyr's death.

"Ye shall drink indeed" - James was the first martyr (Acts 12:2) for Christ. John would be boiled in oil, exiled to Patmos (Rev. 1), and eventually beheaded.

V. 24

The ten were deeply grieved, upset, and angry at James and John for desiring, along with their mother, seats of pre-eminence in Christ's Kingdom. With steam pouring from their ears, they began to debate as to who should be the greatest.

Perhaps Matthew appealed to his having given up a wealthy career of collecting taxes. John perhaps appealed to his great love and affection for Christ, Peter to his leadership, Judas Iscariot to his money management as the treasurer.

Even at the Last Supper Luke records their strife and bickering as to who would be the greatest (SEE: Luke 22:23-30).

V. 25

The world achieves "greatness" by raw power, military might, fame and fortune, by controlling and forcing subordinates into submission and total allegiance.

The best form of government is one that serves the people rather than exploits the people (like radical egomaniac dictators and self-serving Communists).

"William Barclay has succinctly commented, 'The world may assess a man's greatness by the number of people whom he controls and who are at his beck and call; or by his intellectual standing and his academic eminence; or by the number of committees of which he is a member; or by the size of his bank balance and the material possessions which he has amassed; but in the assessment of Jesus Christ these things are irrelevant." (MacArthur, p. 246).

V. 26

"It shall not be so among you" - God has different standards for His people. Different ways of achieving desired goals.

Today, a dangerous trend exists in the world, and it has afflicted many who name the name of Christ. It is a proud, self-centered, self-love philosophy which has a "me first" drive and an "I" agenda. If society were to write a Bible, its Golden Rule might read: "Thou shalt shove thy neighbor and love thyself."

Life itself depends on service! Every legitimate job is a service for someone else.
Teacher - instructs others
Bus driver - transports others
Farmer - provides food for others
Grocer - stocks and distributes food for others
Fireman - saves others
Police - protects others

The measure of your job is determined by the degree to which you really aid someone else.

We were saved to glorify God by serving (Eph. 2:10).

The least we can do is serve the One who saved us, bought us, and owns us!

Service is a duty. Luke 17:10 - *"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which is our duty to do."*

***Greatness is in serving, not in being served!**

Who is truly great?

I. *You are great in God's eyes when you give your life in*
HUMBLE Service for Others (v. 26b)
("let him be your minister" - *diakonos*)

"Whosoever will" - Anyone who wants to be or desires to be "great" in God's eyes.

"Minister" - (*diakonos)* to perform common tasks, mundane tasks (cp. the 7 deacons in Acts 6). It is believed that this noun comes from the verb *"diako"* which means to run (to run errands) -- to be someone's "gopher."

"The world's way of greatness is like a pyramid. The prestige and power of the great person is built on the many subordinate persons beneath him. But in the kingdom, the pyramid is inverted. As the great commentator R.C. H. Lenski has observed, God's 'great men are not sitting on top of lesser men, but bearing lesser men on their backs'." (MacArthur, p. 240).

Luke 14:11 - *"For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."*

There is no limit to what a person will do for others if he is not consumed about who gets the credit.

All service for Christ done with pure motives of love will merit rewards ("giving a cup of cold water" - Mt. 10:42).

The greatest rewards in Heaven are not reserved for those who necessarily had the limelight of Christianity. They served in the "shadows" of the Church. Many they were not so well known. Their names were not printed in the "Who's Who" of Christianity. Their tasks did not require great brains or awesome talent. But they were faithful, dependable, reliable. "The greatest ability is dependability." (Bob Jones Sr.)

II. *You are great in God's eyes when you give your life in*
DEVOTED Service for Others (v. 27)
("let him be your servant" - *doulos*)

"Chief" - (*protos)* first; first in rank, principle, top in honor and influence.

"Servant" (*doulos)* - a slave for life, a "bondslave," one who gives up his will to do the will of another, to advance the cause of another, to be devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests.

You will be successful if you live to make others successful!

Examples of people with servants hearts:

--Sarah - obeyed her husband (I Pet. 3:6)
--Rebekah - watered Eleazar's camels (Gen. 24)
--Moses - led Israel for 40 years
--Ruth - gleaned for Naomi
--Jesus - washed the disciples' feet (Jn. 13:14)
--Stephen (etc.) - dispersed money to Christian widows (Acts 6)
--Barnabus - encouraged new and weak Christians
--Aquilla & Priscilla - opened their home to disciple new converts and hold church meetings (Acts 18:26; I Cor. 16:19)
--Dorcas - sewed coats and garments for the needy (Acts 9:36, 39)

III. *You are great in God's eyes when you give your life in*
<u>SACRIFICIAL</u> Service for Others (v. 17-19, 28)
("The Son of Man came. . . to minister and <u>give His life</u>")

V. 28

The point of V. 28 is that a servant makes sacrifices for others - as Jesus did.

When God through Isaiah introduced the suffering Messiah in Is. 52:13-53, He said, *"Behold, <u>my Servant</u>..."* (52:13)

V. 17

"Took the 12 disciples apart" - By pulling them away from the crowds Jesus would often privately teach them many things (SEE: Mark 9:30-35).

V. 18

"They shall condemn Him" - They lied about Him, hired false witnesses whose testimonies did not agree.

Their condemnation fulfilled God's sovereign plan so you would be free from condemnation (Rom. 8:1).

"Betrayed" - by the kiss of Judas Iscariot

"Chief priests. . . scribes" - the Jewish religious leaders of Christ's day (men who were supposed to be expert in worship and Bible interpretation).

V. 19

"Gentiles" - Pilot, Herod, and the Roman soldiers who mistreated Him and nailed Him to a cross

"Mock" - *"Hail, King of the Jews"*
"He saved others, Himself He cannot save"
"Come down from the cross"

"Scourge" - He was whipped with a cat-o-nine-tails that would rip and dig a furrow into His body with every laceration.

"Crucify" - the lowest, most humiliating form of death.

Jesus also foretold of His being *"spitefully entreated and spit upon"* (Lk. 18:32)

V. 28

"Not to be ministered unto" - not to be served (*diakoneo*)

Jesus came not to be waited upon but to attend to the needs of others.

This entire verse has several indications of Christ's sacrificial servitude.

****"The Son of man"*** - Even this title shows Christ's humility in condescending to mankind by becoming a man. The "Son of God" became the "Son of man."

II Cor. 8:9 - *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."*

****"Came"*** - He who ruled Heaven *"came into the world to save sinners"* (II Tim. 1:15)

He left paradise for a sin-cursed earth. Implicit in the word *"came"* is Christ's purpose. He came with a purpose of sacrificing Himself for others.

****"Give" -*** the response of love (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8). His life was not taken, it was voluntarily given.

****"His life" -*** Christ's entire life was given for others, but the particular reference here is to His death.

"Some years ago, Joe Delaney, a star football player for the Kansas City Chiefs, saw three young boys out in a lake, crying out for help and struggling to stay above the water. Although he was himself a poor swimmer, Joe dived into the water and tried to save them. One of the boys was rescued, but Joe and the other two boys drowned. He willingly laid down his life in an effort to save those boys, making the ultimate sacrifice in their behalf." (MacArthur, p. 245).

****"Ransom" -*** (*lutron*) the price paid to free (liberate) a slave or captive. *"You are bought with a price"* (I Cor. 6:20).

His life and particularly His blood (I Pet. 1:19) was the price for your spiritual freedom, your release from sin and its penalty.

"For many" - (*anti)* in the place of - His sacrifice was substitutionary

"For many" - (*polus*) for a great host of people. The word "many" is not used in contrast to "all" (as the Limited Atonement view believes). Rather, the point is a contrast between His life (singular) and the multitudes (plural - *"many"*) for whom He died.

CONCLUSION:

There is a good feelings you receive when you serve someone else (Acts 20:35 - *"It is more blessed to give than to receive")*

Many truly great people in the corporate world of business became great because of their willingness to expand their service to others.

(Good service will always eventually lead to promotion)

Today, people measure ministry success by:1) Bodies2) Bucks & 3) Buildings
But God measures it by service!

"Concentrate on the depth of your ministry (service), and God will take care of the breadth of your ministry" (MacArthur)

Today, Christianity does not need more celebrities but more servants!

Gal. 6:10 - *"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."*

What service is being rendered to this church body by you?

President Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

Ask not what the people of FBC can do for you, but what you can do for the people of FBC!

What service should you render? It depends on what gifts God gave you to serve with. Discover your gifts and use them! (I Cor. 12; Rom. 12; Eph. 4:12-15).

Where do I begin? Find a need and meet it! (ask permission if needed; get instructions as to how to go about it if needed).

Many are good at finding needs, and then gripe and complain about them! . . . But few give thoughts as to how they might be an answer (solution) to the problem (need).

Are you willing to do the most humble of tasks?

Are you willing to sacrifice the time, energy, and resources necessary to serve someone else?

The measure of your greatness is the greatness of the time you spend serving other people.

The greatest service you can render is service in the greatest things! (in the Gospel

ministry)

"JESUS CHRIST IS THE MESSIAH"

Matthew 20:29 - 21:1-17

7/10/94

INTRODUCTION:

***Jesus Christ--*"the Son of David"*--is clearly the Messiah!**

Four indications that show Jesus Christ--*"the Son of David"*--to be the Messiah:

I. The COMPASSION He Showed (20:29-34)

II. The PROPHECY He Fulfilled (21:1-11)

III. The SPIRITUAL ZEAL He Possessed (21:12-14)

IV. The PRAISE He Received (21:15-17)

CONCLUSION:

"JESUS CHRIST IS THE MESSIAH"

Matthew 20:29 - 21:1-17

7/10/94

INTRODUCTION:

One characteristic of the Last Days is that false Christ's shall appear (pseudo Messiahs) (Mt. 24:24).

Even in our day, many follow someone they view as the Messiah.

***Jesus Christ--*"the Son of David"*--is clearly the Messiah!**

Four indications that show Jesus Christ--*"the Son of David"*--to be the Messiah:

I. The COMPASSION He Showed (20:29-34)

V. 29

"From Jericho" - They had left "old Jericho" and approached "new Jericho" (archaeologists discovered two Jerichos).

V. 30

"Two blind men" - Mark 10:46-52 and Luke 18:35-43 only specify one of the two. Although there were two blind men seeking their sight, Mark and Luke describe one of the men named Bartimaeus, who was apparently the more

aggressive, more outspoken of the two.

":When they heard that Jesus passed by" - Since they couldn't see, they depended on their acute sense of hearing. When they heard who it was, they in desperation and in deep faith cried out for Jesus to show mercy on them.

Although they were blind physically, they saw with great faith spiritually. They knew who Jesus was prior to His coming and perhaps sat there waiting along the road side hoping that one day He would pass that way.

These two blind men had faith that Jesus was the Messiah. Proof:

1) They addressed Him as ***"Lord"*** (Master, Ruler, God) -- A title of deity and authority. The expression "*O Lord"* shows the depth of their desperation and faith.

2) They called Him the ***"Son of David"*** which was a messianic title showing Jesus to be the fulfiller of the Davidic Covenant (II Sam. 7; cp. Is. 55:3).

> Is. 9:6-7 - *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."*
>
> Ps. 89:34-36 - *"My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me."*
>
> Ps. 72:12 - *"For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper."*

3) They knew that Jesus had the power and authority to have **mercy** on them (only the Lord could show them the kind of mercy they wanted) (Ps. 136)

4) They **refused** to be **silenced** in their cry of faith (v. 31 - the multitude who followed Christ did not have the faith in Him that these men had)

5) They knew that Jesus could do the **impossible** for them - to open their eyes which had been blind from birth).

V. 32

"Jesus stood still" - He stopped what He was doing to respond to these outcasts of society.

Every sincere petition gains the ear and attention of our sovereign Lord Jesus (never did Jesus ignore the petition of anyone, no matter how great their need).

"What will ye" - Jesus knew their need and what they wanted, but wanted them to verbalize it so the crowd would see this specific answer to a specific request (God is glorified by answering specific prayers).

V. 33

"Jesus had compassion on them" - He was filled with tenderness in His heart for the need of these men. His insides were moved at their plight.

The hymnwriter said it best - "His heart is touched with my grief". . . "He cares for me."

V. 34

A hallmark of Jesus' ministry was the compassion he had on others.

He had compassion toward the sick (Mt. 14:14); hungry (Mt. 15:32); demon-possessed (Mk. 5:19); shepherdless Israel (Mk. 6:34), etc.

"Touched their eyes" - Christ's compassion was frequently followed by a "touch."

[EX: His compassion moved Him to touch a leper (Mk. 1:41); His compassion moved Him to touch the casket of a dead teen whom he raised (Lk. 7:13-15)]

Jesus proved He was the Messiah by being the Compassionate Deliverer Isaiah prophesied about in Is. 61:1 (Lk. 4:18 - *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."*)

"Immediately their eyes received sight" - An evidence of Christ's power and an evidence of a bonafied miracle (no process or delay)

We, like our Lord, need to have compassion on people (Jude 22) (our hearts need to go out to people in need).

Ask God right now to remove the callousness and hardness from your heart.

Although Christ's crucifixion was just a little over a week away, Jesus was "never too preoccupied to be compassionate, never in too much of a hurry to heal the afflicted, never in too much agony Himself to be insensitive to the agony of others" (MacARthur, p. 248).

II. The PROPHECY He Fulfilled (21:1-11)

V. 2

"Straightway ye shall find" - Christ's omniscience is evidenced.

"If any man say ought" - If anyone says anything or has any objection, the words "The Lord has need of them" would carry such power and authority that the person would gladly and willingly comply. (EX: If someone came up to my car and said, "The Lord has need of it" - I'd say, "I'm calling the police!" However the Lord so moved on the hearts of the owners that they willingly relinquished the two animals to the will of God - Luke 19:33; Mark 11:4-6).

V. 4

Up to this point Jesus deliberately avoided public scenes. Now He purposely plans a public demonstration to fulfill Scripture (Wiersbe, p. 76).

[At Passover, some 2 million Jews would father at Jerusalem! Here was their chance to embrace their Messiah!]

"All this was done that it might be fulfilled" -

Zech. 9:9 - *"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of ion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, they King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."*

Is. 62:11 - *"Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him."*

The Lord Jesus fulfilled prophetic Scriptures which no other so-called Messiah could
Is Jesus Christ the Messiah? Does He fulfil the O.T. promises of the anticipated anointed deliverer of Israel?

Here are some of the O.T. prophecies and their fulfillment in the incarnate person of Jesus Christ:

Prophecy of the Messiah	Prophecy	Fulfillment
Messiah would come at an appointed time	Dan. 9:25-26	Mark 1:15
Messiah would be born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matt.2:1-6

Messiah would be born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matt.1:18-25
Messiah would die for the sins of the world	Is.52:13-53:12	Luke 22:37 Acts 8:28-35
Messiah would be hated	Ps.69:4 Is.49:7	Jn.15:24,25
Messiah would be rejected	Psalm 118:22	Mt.21:42
Messiah would be betrayed	Psalm 41:9	Jn.13:18-21
Messiah would be forsaken	Zech.13:7	Mk.14:27
Messiah would be sold	Zech.11:12	Mt.26:15
Messiah would be smitten	Micah 5:1	Mt.27:30
Messiah would be spit upon	Is.50:6	Mk.14:65
Messiah would be nailed	Psalm 22:16	Jn.20:25
Messiah would be forsaken	Psalm 22:1	Mt.27:46
Messiah would be mocked	Psalm 22:7,8	Mt.27:39-44
Messiah would be pierced	Zech.12:10	Jn.19:34,37
Messiah would be raised from the dead	Psalm 16:10	Acts 2:22-27
Messiah would come (again) in judgement	Zech.12-14	Rev.19

V. 5

"We usually do not associate the lowly donkey with kingship, but this was the royal animal of Jewish monarchs (I Ki. 2:32ff)" (Wiersbe, p. 76).

NOTE: Jesus made His first triumphal entry from the Mount of Olives on a donkey; He will make His next triumphal entry on a white horse! (Rev. 19).

V. 8

Note the honorable approach the people made for Christ. They literally made Him a road using their clothes and palm branches as the pavement.

V. 9

"Hosanna" - Save now!

Now is the time for you to deliver us!

Christ did do something to deliver them that very week! He died on a cross! But this was not the type of deliverance they wanted. "The crowd wanted salvation from the oppression of Rome" (Ryrie note).

V. 10

Christ's presence was so moving, so stirring that it got the attention of the whole city!

V. 11

The multitude never really did comprehend who Jesus was. They thought Him to be a mere "prophet." On this occasion they hailed him *"the Son of David,"* but when He did not fulfill their expectations, this fickle mob later cried out, *"Crucify Him, crucify Him!"* (Lk. 23:21).

Their Messiah had come! But they never realized it. (SEE: Mt. 23:37-39).

III. The <u>SPIRITUAL ZEAL</u> He Possessed (21:12-14)

V. 12

This is the second time Jesus cleansed the temple -- When He started His public ministry (Jn. 2:13-16), and now as He finishes His public ministry.

The temple which was to be a place of blessing had become a cursed place.

"Before the thousands of worshippers, the bewildered merchants, and the priests who happened to be present, Jesus made a shambles of the bazaar and declared the shame of those who profited from it. The whole arena was in confusion and disarray, with animals running loose, doves flying around, and money of all kinds rolling across the courtyard (leaving the merchants powerless

and speechless)" (MacArthur, p. 269).

"Cast out. . . overthrew" - such actions paint our Lord as a revolutionary; as extremely serious and upset about the wickedness that went on in His house, the Temple.

Jesus was meek, but He was not weak! He was not a passive Messiah w ho overlooked the wickedness of His chosen nation.

Many would erroneously interpret Christ's actions as unloving. However, no one can love God without hating sin! *"Ye that love the LORD, hate evil"* (Ps. 97:10)

After the first cleansing of the Temple by Jesus (merely 3-1/2 years prior), the disciples knew why Jesus responded so vehemently (Jn. 2:17). They saw Psalm 69:9 vividly fulfilled, which says, *"For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me."*

V. 13

"My house shall be called the house of prayer" - (Is. 56:7; Jer. 7:11) the Temple was not for merchandising and ripping people off.

"You have made it a den of thieves" - Many would come to the money-changers to exchange their currency for Hebrew shekels so that they could give to God's house, only to be cheated by false balances and swindlers.

"What had begun as a service and convenience for visitors from other lands soon turned into a lucrative business" (Wierse, p. 77).

If the Lord responded this way over the defilement of a building, I"m sure he is deeply upset by alot which goes on in the name of Christianity today!

--the materialism of religions
--the exploitation of the cults
--the chaotic confusion of the Charismatics
--the liberalism that is invading mainline Evangelicalism
--Women preachers
--Schisms and divisions over doctrinal deviations
--the cultic tendencies of some who claim to be fundamentalists

V. 12

Is such harsh, strict, zealous behavior characteristic of the Messiah? Absolutely! Note: Psalm 2

V. 14

To show the perfect balance in Christ between His righteous indignation and His compassion, He, after wrecking the thieves den turns right to healing the blind and lame that came to Him.

IV. The PRAISE He Received (21:15-17)

V. 15

"The wonderful things" - not a positive response. The word "wonderful" means awesome, amazing, incredible, terrifying.

"The children" - very young children who were repeating perhaps what they had heard their parents shouting earlier.

"They were sore displeased" - they were indignant, incensed, hotly mad

(It's amazing how many unsaved people react when Jesus Christ is praised)

Earlier that day (perhaps just a few hours before), as Jesus descended from the Mount of Olives on a donkey, the people had said: *"...Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."* (Luke 19:38-40).

V. 16

Expecting Jesus to rebuke them and stone their chants of praise, the priests and scribes say, "Do you hear what they are saying? (implied, "Stop them!")

Christ's praise may not come from the lips of the wise, *"learned,"* the pseudo intellectuals, etc. But He receives His best praise from the lips of humble, sincere children and those of child-like faith.

It's amazing to see the truths that come out of the lips of children (truths many adults are too cowardly to utter). (EX: the time Katie (age 5 or 6) told Mohammed Yousry, an agnostic, that he was going to go to Hell, if he did not get saved).

V. 17

"And he left them" - Because of their rejection, the Messiah rejected them, and left them desolate of any hope for their eternal destiny (SEE: Mt. 23:37-39).

"Bethany" - was the residence of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus - people who recognized Jesus as Messiah and glorified Him as such.

NO one who has ever lived has had more hymns, songs, and choruses sung to Him and about Him than Jesus Christ!

He is the Messiah! And He is entitled to every bit of praise He is given and more! (SEE: Rev. 5:9-14).
Don't be ashamed to praise the Lord Jesus!

"A FRUITLESS PEOPLE"

Matthew 21:18 - 22:14
10/7/2018

INTRODUCTION: A fruitless fig tree represented the barrenness of unbelieving Israel (21:18-22).

***Why didn't Israel accept Jesus Christ as Messiah and Savior?**
(And why do people today refuse Him and the fruitful life He gives?)

I. **FEAR** (21:23-27)
(Many are too intimidated to acknowledge the truth)

II. **STUBBORNNESS** (21:28-32)
(Many are too stiff-necked to repent from unbelief)

III. **IRREVERENCE** (21:33-46)
(Many are too impious [disrespectful) to accept God's Son)

IV. **INDIFFERENCE** (22:1-10)
(Many are too preoccupied to be concerned about spiritual matters)

V. **SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS** (22:11-14)
(Many are too self-satisfied to see their need for Christ's righteousness)

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"A FRUITLESS PEOPLE"

Matthew 21:18 - 22:14
10/7/2018

INTRODUCTION: A fruitless fig tree represented the barrenness of unbelieving Israel (21:18-22).

Nothing is quite as good as sinking your teeth into fresh, juicy fruit!

Even our Lord had such a desire when He walked this earth.

V. 18

"He returned in the city" - The Jewish capital - Jerusalem

"He hungered" - In His incarnation, Jesus' physical body needed food. What humiliation for the Creator to become dependent and to experience the pangs of hunger.

V. 19

"Leaves only" - Normally figs and leaves appear at the same time (actually, the figs would sprout first).

--It was the time for fruit as evidenced by the leaves. The tree should have produced!

--The tree had an <u>outward</u> show, but when inspected closely it had no fruit (it was promising, but had no produce).

"The fig tree withered away" - Jesus is not in the ministry of cursing fig trees. Why then such a severe miracle?

Answer: The barren fig tree was symbolic of the barren nation to whom Jesus ministered.

Frequently God used the fig tree to symbolize the nation of Israel (Jer. 8:13; Hosea 9:10, 1b; Luke 13:6-9).

"Let no fruit grow on thee" - The curse on this tree was actually an illustration of the Lord's judgment on the nation of Israel. A nation to whom Christ came, expecting fruit but finding none (Jn 1:11 - *"He came unto his own, and his own received him not.")*.

In the context, this account of the fig tree was an object lesson of the fruitlessness of the nation of Israel (cp. 21:41,43).

The Lord came to the nation hungry for fruit, but found none from that generation as a whole.

Their fruitlessness was an outward indication of their faithlessness. *"By their fruits ye shall know them."*

They refused to be connected to the Vine (Jesus Christ) so as to be fruitful (Jn. 14).

V. 20-22

Although the main point of the cursed fig tree was to illustrate Israel and her rejection of Christ, Jesus incidently responds to the disciples' wonder by teaching them a lesson on faith (Note: v. 21-22). Here is a lesson within a lesson. A lesson on faith within a lesson on the absence of faith (by the Nation of Israel).

***Why didn't Israel accept Jesus Christ as Messiah and Savior?**
(And why do people today refuse Him and the fruitful life He gives?)

I. **FEAR** (21:23-27)
(Many are too intimidated to acknowledge the truth)

V. 23

***"By what authority doest these things"* -** They are no doubt referring to His cleansing of the temple (21:12-13), His healing in the Temple (21:14), and now His teaching in the temple (21:23).

***"By what authority"* -** What right do you have? What a question to ask the Creator of all things! (It's a bit like asking the president of a company what right he had to make decisions in that company).

***"Who gave you this authority"* -** It was God, the Father!

V. 24

Jesus offers a pre-requisite to giving His answer to them.

Christ's response was a quick and efficient way to trap these religionists in their hypocrisy and inconsistencies.

V. 25

Christ is asking: "Who gave John his authority to preach repentance and to baptize -- God or men?"

If John the Baptist received his authority from Heaven, then they should have believed him. And if they would have believed John, they would have believed in Christ, because John (as the forerunner) pointed men to Christ.

They were afraid of Christ's response if they answered one way, and they feared the people's response if they answered the other way. So they bailed out with a response of dumb ignorance.

Prov. 29:25 - *"The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putting his trust in the LORD shall be safe."*

John 7:13 - *"Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews."*

(cp. the cowardice of the parents of the man born blind - John 9:21 - 22 - *"But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue."*)

The first word God uses to describe those who will be in the Lake of Fire is *"fearful"* (Rev. 21:8).

To this very day, many Jews stay as far away from Christ as possible for fear of what their family, friends, peers, and religious associates might think and do!

The only One we should fear is God (Eccl. 12:13; I Pet. 2:17).

V. 27

Why wouldn't Jesus tell them that His authority was from Heaven? If they would not accept John's authority and message, neither would they accept Christ's.

Jesus doesn't give answers to those who really don't want answers.

II. **STUBBORNNESS** (21:28-32)
(Many are too stiff-necked to repent from unbelief)

V. 31

The dishonest publicans and the immoral harlots originally rejected God's prodding in their lives, but eventually they surrendered and obeyed; whereas the Israelite nation as a whole had lip service to God and His ways, but did not do His will (God's will was that they come to repentance and turn to Christ - II Pet. 3:9).

V. 32

"When ye had seen it?" - Although they saw the life-changing transformation that God did in the lives of the publicans and harlots (through John's witness and example), they did not repent.

They had seen a real, bonified man of God; they had witnessed the wicked becoming righteous (through the power of God), and yet their hearts were unyielding, unbending; they would not give in to the convicting work of the Spirit who empowered John's message and showed the authenticity of Christianity by the miraculous changes it produced.

Dt. 9:13, 10:16 - *"Furthermore the Lord spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people. . . Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked."*

Acts 7:51 - *"Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."*

To you who may have been too proud to humble yourselves before God, II Chronicles 30:8 says, *"Now be ye not stiff-necked as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord. . ."*

Beware of being mule-headed, obstinate, set in your ways, impliable (like hardened clay); don't allow a hard shell to cover your heart and prevent God from moving you and convicting you, etc.

When was the last time you wept over your sin?

How open are you to God's voice (Word)?

III. **<u>IRREVERENCE</u>** (21:33-46)
(Many are too <u>impious</u> [disrespectful) to accept God's Son)

The interpretation:

1. ***"Householder" =*** God the Father

2. ***"Husbandmen" =*** the nation of Israel

3. ***"Servants" =*** the Old Testament prophets, up to John the Baptist

4. ***"His Son" =*** Jesus Christ

5. ***"Other Husbandmen" =*** the Gentiles (v. 41; cp. <u>v. 31-32</u>)

V. 36

As Jesus said, they had killed all the prophets from A to Z (See: Mt. 23:33-35).

V. 37

"Last of all" - Note: There was <u>no</u> Messiah to follow after Jesus Christ. He is the only and final voice for God (not Muhammed, Joseph Smith, etc.)

V. 41

They put their foot in their own mouths with their answer.

V. 42

Jesus is the Cornerstone!

The builders evaluated Him and did not want Him to reign over them.

V. 43

"A nation" - (*ethei*) the same word as "Gentiles"

V. 44

Whoever stumbles over Jesus shall be broken; and if people do not repent, Jesus will crush them in judgment (cp. Dan. 2:44).

Is Jesus your Cornerstone, or your Judgment Meteor?

V. 46

They had no power to take Him until His mission was fully accomplished (Mk. 14:41).

Note verse 37 again.

Today such irreverence and dishonor is aimed at Christ.

--His name is cursed by many.

--He is profaned and viewed as a mere man or prophet.

V. 37

"They will <u>reverence</u> my Son" - Did they respect Jesus? He who was and is worthy of equal honor with the Father (Jn. 5:23) was dishonored.

IV. **<u>INDIFFERENCE</u>** (22:1-10)
(Many are too <u>preoccupied</u> to be concerned about spiritual matters)

V. 2
***"King"* -** God the Father

***"Son"* -** Jesus Christ

***"Servants"* -** prophets and apostles

***"Them that were bidden"* -** the Jewish people

V. 5

In some cultures it is much more of an insult and offence not to come to a wedding upon being invited.

***"But they made light of it"* -** They paid no <u>attention</u> to the invitation; they could "care less"; it was of <u>no interest</u> to them. It was no big deal. They no doubt yawned at the invitation. Other worldly things had captured their attention and interest. The affairs of this life had such a grip on them that spiritual things did not matter.

Just as Lot's family ignored him *"as one that mocked"* (Gen. 19:14) and were crushed by the destruction of Sodom and Gommorah, so will those who don't take seriously the Gospel of Christ face destruction.

Many times I've witnessed to people who clearly did not give two cents for what I was saying. They would stare at me glassy-eyed, their mind somewhere else. Many times they would even call the message "Nonsense" etc.

Many today are too pre-occupied with education, career, money, pleasure, houses, etc. The "Wall Street Journal" gets their attention, but not the Scriptures. Christ has no appeal to them.

But those of us who know Him, we would rather walk through the Arabian Desert with no water than not to have the water of life. Nothing matches the surpassing greatness of knowing christ and being part of His wedding bride.

V. 6

Not only were they indifferent, they were downright antagonistic toward Christ and His servants (*"He that is not with me is against me"* - Mt. 12:30).

One way of striking out at Christ is to strike out at His servants (this is their attempt to extinguish the message they hear).

V. 7

"Wroth" - God's wrath is on the unbelievers (Jn. 3:36).

***"His armies"* -** Even the pagan army of Rome was God's tool to accomplish His judgment

***"Burned up their city"* -** Jerusalem was burned in 70 A.D.

V. 9

***"Go ye therefore into the highways"* -** The first time the "Great Commission" is hinted at in the New Testament.

V. 10

***"Both bad and good"* -** Both moral and immoral; both ethical and the despicable; both kind-hearted and the evil-hearted. Technically none are *"good"* (Mt. 19:17); none righteous (Rom. 3:10); all have sinned (Rom. 3:23).

***"The wedding was furnished"* -** One day a wedding will occur in Heaven and believers will comprise the Bride (Rev. 19).

V. SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS (22:11-14)

(Many are too self-satisfied to see their need for Christ's righteousness)

V. 11

Don't press every detail of a parable; God is not teaching that people will make it to Heaven and then be kicked out. The point is that they will not inherit eternal life.

V. 12

"Friend" - This word shows the affection God has even for those who do not come to Him on His terms.

"A wedding garment" - The only suitable garment we can wear is the imputed righteousness of Christ (II Cor. 5:21; Rev. 3:5, 6:11, 19:8-9; Is. 61:10 - *"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.")*.

"He was speechless" - No alibies, excuses, or pleas are offered! This one knew better.

V. 13

This teaches the awful fate of those who don't have on a wedding garment.

Hell will be a place of:

1) Bondage (***"Bind him"***)

2) Separation (***"Take him away"***)

3) Darkness (***"outer darkness"***)

4) Regret (***"weeping"***)

5) Torment (***"gnashing of teeth"***)

V. 14

"Many are called" - Invited, summoned

Salvation is offered to all, but is only given to those who are dressed in Christ's righteousness.

"Few are chosen" - In the parable, this man was not chosen because he thought he could make it without meeting the qualifications (SEE: Rom. 10:1-4).

Many who think they are right with God and clean are dressed in ***"filthy rags"*** (Is. 64:6).

--the rags of religion
--the rags of baptism
--the rags of morality

CONCLUSION:

"JESUS HAS THE ANSWER"

Matthew 22:15-46
10/14/2018

INTRODUCTION:

***No question could snare the Son of God! Got any questions? - He has the answers!**

I. Jesus answers. . .
A <u>POLITICAL</u> QUESTION ABOUT <u>TAXES</u> (v. 15-22)

II. Jesus answers. . .
A <u>DOCTRINAL</u> QUESTION ABOUT THE <u>RESURRECTION</u> (v. 23-33)

III. Jesus answers. . .
AN <u>ETHICAL</u> QUESTION ABOUT THE <u>GREATEST COMMANDMENT</u> (v. 34-40)

CONCLUSION:
Jesus asks a question to provoke thought regarding Christ's true nature (v. 41-46).

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III. Jesus answers. . .
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_____ (v. 34-40)

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Jesus asks a question to provoke thought regarding Christ's true nature (v. 41-46).

"JESUS HAS THE ANSWER"

Matthew 22:15-46
10/14/2018

INTRODUCTION:

Still smarting from the treatment they received in Christ's series of parables He had aimed at them (Mt. 20-21), the religion leaders now seek to trap Him with a series of "loaded" questions (Wiersbe, p. 79).

In verses 15-40, Matthew purposely and systematically cites Christ's rejection by the Jewish religious leaders of His day.

Their rejection of Christ is seen in three attempts to interrogate Him and to trip Him up or entangle Him in His words.

They like a prosecuting attorney in a courtroom scene fire questions at Jesus seeking to find some contradiction, some inconsistency, any inaccuracy, a slight blunder, error, mistake, any doctrinal heresy, any disloyalty to God or government (any politically incorrect statement).

What is thrilling is how Christ:
--immediately answers their questions (with no time for thought as to what to say or the articulate way of saying it);
--concisely answers their questions (with no "fat" that could be maligned and used to discredit the pillars of His arguments);
--profoundly answers their questions with answers that leave the inquirers baffled, dumb-founded, and amazed
(Note: V. 22 *"they marveled";* v. 33 *"they were astonished";* SEE v. 46)

Christ's response to their questions, and the question He Himself asks shows that He was Who they thought He wasn't -- the Messiah! The King of Israel! God Almighty!

Note: The main points of this outline are adapted from Warren Wiersbe.

***No question could snare the Son of God! Got any questions? - He has the answers!**

I. Jesus answers. . .
A <u>POLITICAL</u> QUESTION ABOUT <u>TAXES</u> (v. 15-22)

V. 15

"The Pharisees" - <u>Self-righteous</u> religious "extremists" Everything about them looked and smelled "religious," but they stunk with hypocrisy (Mt. 23).

"Entangle" - They planned and plotted a way of ensnaring or trapping Jesus in His words. They wanted to say, "I caught you!" when they would find some inconsistency or contradiction in His teaching.

V. 16

In order to ***"trap Him"*** the Pharisees send to Him people with two totally different views of taxation. So if Jesus would swing either way in His answer, they could trap Him and accuse Him of an injustice.

They interrogate Jesus with ***"their disciples"*** and with the Herodians.

1) Their "disciples" - Jews who were made *"two-fold more the child of hell"* than their teachers (23:15), who supported <u>Judaism</u> (they believed in giving to <u>God</u> not government; they believed the land was God's not Caesars)

2) The "Herodians" - Jews who supported the Herodian dynasty (peace at any price) - they supported <u>Rome</u> and Caesar.

It's amazing how when it comes to opposing Christ, heathen of differing views, religions, philosophies (who can never get together on anything) can suddenly find common ground and unite in a common task to fight against Christ and Christianity.

"Neither carest thou for any man" - You don't "take sides," you are <u>not swayed</u> by men.

"Regardest not the person of men" - You don't show preferential, impartial or prejudiced treatment to people or parties.

V. 17

"Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar" - Is it in accordance with the Law (Torah) to pay taxes to government.

V. 18

The omniscient Lord Jesus saw right through their masks and ***"perceived their wickedness".*** He saw their well-covered trap!

If He said, "Yes, you should pay tribute to Caesar" - the Pharisees' disciples could accuse Him of being disloyal to Judaism (and send the religious inquisition after Him and hang Him as a heretic).

If he answered, "No, you should not pay taxes to Caesar," the Herodians could accuse Him of being disloyal to Caesar (and send the "IRS" after Him and hang Him as a tax evader).

V. 19

"Shew me the tribute money" - Jesus knew what it looked like, but wanted the coin as a convicting object lesson.

"A penny" - a denarius

V. 20

"Whose portrait (picture) ***and whose name is stamped on the coin?"*** Jesus asks.

V. 21

Jesus in His answer wisely and appropriately does not swing one way or the other, but teaches that we should give to government what is due them and should give to God what is due Him!

> ***"Render to Caesar" -*** Pay your taxes
>
> (Rom. 13:7 - *"Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."*
>
> Don't practice tax evasion, hire workers "under the table," cheat on your income tax returns, or slug the toll booths or ignore your traffic tickets.

"Render to God" - Give your tithes and offerings

"the things that are God's" - Certain things that we have already belong to God. These words show an obligatory responsibility that we have toward God. What is owed God when it comes to money?

--God commanded Israel to "pay" a tithe (10% to Him) (SEE: Mal. 3:8-12; cp. Lev. 27:30; Prov. 3:9-10, 11:24-26).

--The practice of the New Testament believer was to give to God through the local church when they gathered on Sunday (I Cor. 16:1-2; cp. II Cor. 9:6-12).

By showing a distinction between God and government, Christ's answer shows how He favored a separation between church and state (i.e. the state [Caesar] is distinct from the Church, and the state is not to control the church, nor is the church to be a state church like the R.C.C. of the Dark Ages).

II. Jesus answers. . .
A <u>DOCTRINAL</u> QUESTION ABOUT THE <u>RESURRECTION</u> (v. 23-33)

V. 23
"Sadducees" -

Whereas a "Pharisee" was self-righteous and thought that his good works would get him to Heaven [That is why "I'm so 'fair-you-see'!"], a "Sadducee" did not believe in life after death, he denied the resurrection ["That is why I'm so 'sad-you-see'!"]

--They did not have the faith of Joseph, who requested his bones be buried in the land of promise because of his faith in the resurrection (Gen. 50:24-25; Heb. 1:22).

--They did not believe the words of ancient <u>Job</u> who said, *"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."*

--Nor did they have faith like King <u>David</u>, who said: *"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."*

--They did not trust the words of the prophet <u>Daniel</u> who predicted
Daniel 12:2-3 - And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

--Perhaps they ignorant of the prophecy through <u>Ezekiel</u> who heard God say, *"Son of man, can these bones live?"* (v. 3). . . *"Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live; And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord."* (Ezek. 37:5-6).

V. 24

"Seed" = Children. SEE: Deut. 25:5-6; Gen. 38:8.

"The object of such a marriage law (a Levirate marriage) was to perpetuate the <u>line</u> of the dead brother and to keep his <u>property</u> within the family" (Ryrie note)

V. 25
"There were <u>with us</u> seven brethren" - Whether their story is true or fictitious is uncertain. They may have lied to make up a scenario that Jesus would have to

answer.

V. 28

They no doubt with self-confident smirks on their faces asked this question, thinking they had trapped Jesus.

V. 29

Everyone errs (is lead astray) who does not know the Scriptures (the surest way to prevent a life of error is to know God's Word!).

V. 30

Concerning their ignorance of the Scriptures, they thought that there was marriage in Heaven, whereas the Bible nowhere teaches this.

(Marriage is a bonding limited to this life - *"till death do we part"* Cp. Rom. 7:1ff)

*"*There will be no need for marriage in the next life because there will be <u>no death</u>. Therefore it will not be necessary to bear children to replace those who die" (Wiersbe, p. 81).

We do <u>not</u> become angels (EX: The man "earning his wings" in the old film "It's a Wonderful Life") - but are ***<u>"as"</u>*** angels.

"As the angels" - Angels are not male and female; do not cohabitate; do not marry; do not reproduce.

If you don't like your gender, wait a while. You will be "neuter" in eternity!

V. 32

Since the Sadducees only based their beliefs solely on the Pentateuch (the first five books of Moses), Jesus quotes it to again show them their ignorance of the Scriptures, and that their own Law proved there was life after death.

Jesus bases His whole point on the <u>tense</u> of the verb. *"I <u>am</u>"* (presently) not *"I was"* (which would imply that they were dead and gone.

Jesus was saying, "These patriarchs are still alive today!"

(cp. the presence of Moses and Elijah at the Transfiguration - Mt. 17:3).

Those who die as believers go straight into the presence of God as living spirits (Rev. 6:7) awaiting their future bodily resurrection (I Cor. 15:5ff; I Th. 4; Rev. 20).

III. Jesus answers. . .
AN ETHICAL QUESTION ABOUT THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT
(v. 34-40)

V. 35

"Tempting Him" - testing Him

After hearing Christ's good answer to the Sadducees, this lawyer (doctor of the Law of God; a master in the Scriptures) tested Him with an ethics exam.

The Jews of Christ's day had documented 613 commandments in the Law (248 positive and 365 negative) (Wiersbe, p. 81).

V. 36

"The great commandment" - Which command is paramount? reigns supreme? ranks as the top? is first and foremost?

Loving God is not merely a N.T. priority, but is an eternal priority that also applied to the Old Testament saint.
SEE - Deut. 6:4-7
Deut. 10:12

HOW should we love God?

"Heart . . . soul . . . mind. . . strength" = Love Him with your whole being; with everything you have.

When we love God totally (with our whole being), He is:

1. The center of my affections

   "Heart" - my inner being which thinks, feels, and chooses (what I feel deeply about reflects what I really love).

2. The center of my life

   "Soul" - the immaterial part of man as it relates to this life (what I live for reflects what I really love).

3. The center of my thoughts

"Mind" - my ideas, convictions, thoughts, philosophies of life should revolve around God. (what I spend my time thinking about [dwelling on, pondering] reflects what I really love).

4. The center of my activity

"Strength" - my physical ability (so translated in I Pet. 4:11), talents, etc., should be used for God (what I use my abilities on reflects what I really love)

WHY should we love God?

1. Loving God is the key to obedience
(the greatest stimulus [motivating factor] to obeying God is to love Him)

I Jn. 5:3 - *"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous."*

--Love makes obedience easy!

The reason "Love" is stated as the top priority attitude is because it is the motivating factor behind everything we do.

- If one loves God, he will seek to please God.
- If one loves God, he will be holy.
- If one loves God, he will do right.
- If one loves God, he will keep His commandments.--John 14:15, 21

2. Loving God is the key to close fellowship with Christ

Jn. 14:23 - "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."
I Cor. 8:3 - "But if any man love God, the same is known of Him."
Ja. 4:8 - "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you . . ."

3. Loving God is the key to blessedness.

Showers of benefits fall upon those who make it their priority to love God.

Rom. 8:28 - "...All things work together for good to them that love God..."

Ja. 1:12 - "He shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

Psalm 91:14-16
Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

If the greatest command is to love God, then the greatest sin is to not love Him!

If the greatest command is to love God, then the greatest sin is to not love Him!

"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema" (I Cor. 16:22).

God foretold that in the last days men would be "lovers of their own selves . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (II Tim. 3:2, 4).

As the End draws near, lovelessness will be a sign: "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Mt. 24:12).

V. 39

Note: Jesus does not command us to "love ourselves"; we automatically do already (Eph. 5:29 - *"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church")*

It is natural to love yourself; it is supernatural to love others in the same way as you love yourself.

How do you know when you are loving others the same way as you love yourself? Ask yourself: What do you do to help or benefit yourself? Do the same for others.

You are concerned about:

--Your relationship with God . . . then concern yourself with others'
--Your health, wealth, prosperity. . . then concern yourself with others'
--Your protection. . . then concern yourself with others'
--Your pleasure . . . then concern yourself with others'
--Your success . . . then concern yourself with others'

If you love God, totally, you will love others mutually.

A true love for God will manifest itself in a love for others who were made in God's image. No one can love God without loving our brother (I Jn. 4:20, 21).

Christ's combines Lev. 19:18 with Deut. 6:5 to summarize the whole Law.

V. 40

All of the Old Testament Law and prophets could be hung on these two commands. The pole that supports the hanger holding all of God's commands is love.

Rom. 13:9-10 - *"For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."*

Gal. 5:14 - *"For all the law if fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."*

CONCLUSION: Jesus asks a question to provoke thought regarding Christ's true nature (v. 41-46).

Now the Interrogated interrogates; now the Questioned asks questions.

V. 42

"Christ" - the Messiah; the Anointed One (who in their minds was not Jesus).

"*In Spirit" -* What David wrote in the Psalms, he wrote under the control of the Holy Spirit.

V. 44

"Lord" = Hebrew *Adonai* (a title for deity)

Every Jewish expert in the Law interpreted Psalm 110 as Messianic and v. 1 as specifically referring to the Messiah, since no one else had the right to sit at Yahweh's right hand.

V. 45

David's calling the *"Christ" "Lord"* proves three things:

1) Christ was <u>pre-existent</u> to David
2) Christ was <u>pre-dominant</u> over David (*my Lord")*
3) Christ was <u>pre-eminent</u> over everything (He is Deity)

SEE: Mark 12:32-37 for the connection between the lawyer acknowledging <u>monotheism</u> (one "God") with Christ's implicit teaching that He as the *"Lord"* of David is Deity.

Because they did not have the courage to admit that Jesus was the Christ, they did not have the courage to ask Him any more questions.

V. 46

Every question they asked just added more weight to Him being the Messiah by how He answered it. With every question, they were "digging their own graves." His responses muzzled them!

Jesus has the Answer!

John 7:46 The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

John 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

He not only had an answer to any question. He IS the answer! We need to hear what He says, but we most importantly need Him for who He is!

Who is Jesus? Those who questioned Him so as to trap Him didn't know who He was. They failed to realize that He was the Lord, whom they were to "*love with all their heart*" (I Cor. 16:22 - *"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema. Maranatha."*)

He was the One who is the *"resurrection and the life"* (Jn. 11:25). He is the God to whom we are to render our entire lives (like Paul, who considered himself a slave of Jesus Christ - Rom. 1:1).

How To Be Cured of. . .
"THE PHARISEE SYNDROME"

Matthew 23:1-12
10-28-2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 2

***Avoid "Pharisaical" Christianity!**

I. <u>PRACTICE</u> what you <u>PREACH</u> (v. 3-4)
(The Pharisees had good advice but were bad examples)

II. <u>EXAMINE</u> your <u>MOTIVES</u> (v. 5-10)
(The Pharisees impressed people but displeased God)

Don't pursue vain. . .

A. <u>Appearances</u> of <u>spirituality</u> (v. 5)

B. <u>Positions</u> of <u>pre-eminence</u> (v. 6)

C. <u>Titles</u> of <u>importance</u> (v. 7-10)

III. <u>HUMBLE</u> yourself and <u>SERVE</u> others (v. 11-12)
(The Pharisees exalted themselves but were abased by God)

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III. _____ **yourself and** _____ **others (v. 11-12)**
(The Pharisees exalted themselves but were abased by God)

How To Be Cured of. . .
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INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 2

It's difficult to be sick. What's even worse is to be sick and to go to a hospital only to be treated by inept doctors who themselves are sick, ignorant, and disorganized (EX: Katie's visit to a Queens Hospital for stitches).

Eccl. 10:1 - *"Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour."*

Nothing is quite as disgusting as people who have a reputation for spiritual wisdom and honor to be inconsistent, hypocritical, and arrogant.

There is a sickness in the Body of Christ today. It's not the AIDS virus (Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome). Today I will call it "SAPS" - "The Scribe and Pharisee Syndrome."

Such a sickness "saps" Christianity of its power; it "saps" your testimony of its credibility; it "saps" you of your usefulness to the cause of Christ.

V. 1
"The multitudes and tot His disciples" -This lesson applies to both laymen and "clergy" alike.

Every one who seeks to serve the Lord needs to sit up and take notice of how to serve and how not to serve.

V. 2
The verb ***"sit"*** is middle voice in the Greek, which means they *"seated themselves in Moses' seat."* (cp. NASV). They made themselves substitute replacements for Moses.

They assumed a position of authority God never gave them. Many are in positions of spiritual authority today who were never "called" to it by God. They are self-appointed, self-ordained ministers (who for the supposed fame/glory/or "fortune" seized a position God didn't have for them).

***Avoid "Pharisaical" Christianity!**

I. PRACTICE what you PREACH (v. 3-4)
(The Pharisees had good advice but were bad examples)

V. 3
Jesus told them to . . . Do what they say, don't do what they do.

"Observe and do" - Guard the truth and practice it.

It is wrong to discredit a principle or position just because of the inconsistencies (or hypocrisy) of the ones who preached it (EX: the 1994 Pensacola pro-life murderer, an anti-abortionist who killed an abortion doctor).

Scriptural precept should always be followed even when the proponents of it are riddled with inconsistencies and personal failures.

What God says is still true and trustworthy even when the channel of communication is shady and suspect.

--Children, you should do the right your parents tell you even though they themselves don't do it (pray for them to practice what they preach).

--Members and friends, you should do the right you are fed from this pulpit even if you were to detect what seem to be flaws in my own character and conduct.

V. 4

These religious hucksters exploited the people. They treated them like "beasts of burden," loading them with ministry, religious works, and moral responsibilities that they would not lift a pinky to relieve.

Any preacher who cannot "roll up his sleeves" and work with the people even in the most menial tasks should not be in the ministry.

Some think they are too important to dirty themselves with what it takes to lead sheep and to set a practical example for them to follow (Note: Balance and priorities must not be neglected. God's ministers are not above any mundane task, but must not get side-tracked by it - Acts 6:1ff).

Don't ever ask someone else to do something that you yourself are unwilling to do.

Doctrine is supposed to produce duty.

Right teaching should be followed with right living.

(What set God's religion apart from all others was its practical application to life. It wasn't supposed to be theory or philosophy, but a moral code of ethics)

The most effective medium to use to make a striking impact on people is a visual aid. I can't think of a better visual aid than a real-life example (a sincere model).

"Most people would rather see a sermon than hear one!"

Set an example (model) for your family, co-workers, neighbors, etc.

Nothing is as compelling as a real, flesh & blood, true, authentic example.

Nothing is as sickening as someone who gives everyone else the medicine they need, but does not take it themselves.

Don't be all "lip" if you don't have a "life" to back it up!

"Your walk talks and your talk talks,
but your walk talks louder than your talk talks!"

II. EXAMINE your MOTIVES (v. 5-10)

(The Pharisees impressed people but displeased God)

V. 5

"All their works they do for to be seen of men" - Their sole reason, their driving motive, their only incentive for the good things they did was to catch the eye of men, to gain the attention of their peers, to impress people.

They could have won an "Academy award" for their talented acting, their pretence, their facade.

"All their works" - Every one of their religious deeds - the classes they taught, the worship they led, the giving, praying, fasting, etc. It was all a show, an act.

Why should we do right? Why should you obey God's Word?

Our ultimate motive ought to be God-centered not self-centered or man-centered.

The reason we do what we do must be: 1) to please Him and 2) to glorify Him, that His heart be filled with joy and that His honor be expressed to others.

Don't pursue vain. . .

A. Appearances of spirituality (v. 5)

"Phylactery" - "was a square leather box which contained four strips of parchment on which were written Deut. 6:4-9, 11:13-21, and Exodus 13:1-10. During prayer one was worn on the forehead between the eyebrows and another on the left arm close to the elbow. They were held in place by leather bands" (Ryrie note).

So as to attract more attention to themselves, they would tie larger than normal phylacteries to their foreheads and arms.

Instead of wearing a size 3, they would use a size 13!

The borders" - the fringes or tassels that hung from the hem of their garments were widened and lengthened so as to capture more attention to their spirituality.

These fringes were to remind the wearers of God's commands (like "tying a string around the finger," these tassels and cords of blue were to serve as a reminder of obedience to God's Word (SEE: Numbers 15:37-40).

Today, many Christians judge other Christians by how "spiritual" they look. They critique:
--hair length
--dress length and style
--no shaving legs, no make-up (Pentacostalism)

> --Note: Others go to opposite extremes; they strive to look worldly so as to cram their Christian liberty down the throats of those they view as "legalists."

Other appearances of spirituality people put on:

1) Deep, monotone, KJV English prayers, but not from the heart

2) Religious lingo (when around Christians their vocabulary changes drastically)

3) Giving to be noticed by men

B. Positions of pre-eminence (v. 6)

"Uppermost rooms" **-** places where the guests of ho nor would sit at a banquet.

"Chief seats" **-** chairs of importance. The larger seats where the important rabbis sat.

There are practical reasons why you shouldn't seek seats of pre-eminence. One is that you may be humiliated and told to take a lesser seat, whereas if you had taken the less important place and were asked to move up, you should be honored (Prov. 25:6-7 - *"Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men: For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen."*) (SEE: Luke 14:7-11)

The Pharisees thought too much of their own importance. With inflated egos and a desire to be known and popular they would seek positions of pre-eminence.

Honor is not something you get by grabbing it; it is bestowed on you by someone who thinks you are worthy! God knows whether or not we are worthy of honor. Let Him put it on the hearts of others to honor you; don't seek it!

C. Titles of importance (v. 7-10)

"In the markets" - out where the crowds gathered to shop.

They would love it when a crowd was gathered around them and someone would yell out, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" Their chest would dwell in pride and an aura of importance would inflate their ego.

"Rabbi" - an authoritative teacher of God's Word.

The only one who has a right to teach with independent authority is Christ! (Mt. 7:29).

The rest of us are in the same boat, on the same level; we have no authority of our own; but we interpret the authority of another -- the Word of Christ!

"Father" - not speaking of a parent, but of a "spiritual father," a man whom you are utterly depend on for spiritual guidance.

The only "spiritual Father" we have is in Heaven. We are spiritual children of God, not children of some human pope.

It is an abomination to call a priest "father" or to address the pope as "pope." (which is from the Latin *papa* meaning Daddy or Father). The believers' only pontiff is in Heaven!

"Paul referred to himself as a 'spiritual father' because he had begotten people through the Gospel (I Cor. 4:15). But he did not ask them to use that term when addressing him" (Wiersbe, p. 84).

"Masters" - An expert in spiritual matters, who gives unquestioned, authoritative leadership to followers (Note: Do you know what an "expert" is according to a etymological definition? *"Ex"* is a has been; and a *"spert"* is a drip under pressure!).

The only ultimate perfect leader we are to follow is Christ (I Cor. 11:1 - *"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."*)

It is to Christ we pledge total allegiance. Every "cult" is a "cult" because it follows without question the absolute authority of a human leader(s).

Many pursue theological training to have M.Div., Th.M., D.D., Th.D. printed after their name. Others covet honorary doctor's degrees (EX: William Carey's being called "Dr. Carey" by Alexander Duff).

III. <u>HUMBLE</u> yourself and <u>SERVE</u> others (v. 11-12)
(The Pharisees exalted themselves but were abased by God)

V. 11

True greatness (as God measures it) is determined by what type of servant you are to others.

It is not the one who is served who is great, but the one who serves.

The more people you serve, the greater your honor (hence, the government leader of England is called "The Prime Minister").

Don't make it your goal in life to have people wait on you, drop grapes in your mouth, and fan you. . . Get busy serving Christ by serving His children!

Do you have a servant's heart?

Jesus washed the disciples' feet (SEE: John 13:4-5, 12-17).

V. 12

"Whosoever" - God can humble <u>anybody</u>! (no one is too big for God to squash!)

One of the seven things God <u>hates</u> is a *"proud look"* (Prov. 6:17).

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18).

"The Lord will destroy the house of the proud" (Prov. 15:2)

--Ask Nebuchadnezzar (who boasted over Babylon) if God can abase (humble) the proud (Dan. 4)

--Ask Hezekiah (who boasted of his vast wealth) if God abases the proud (II Ki. 20:12-18; cp. II Chron. 32:25)

--Ask Uzziah (who usurped the role of priest) if God abases the proud (II Chron. 26:16-20)

--Ask Herod Agrippa if God abases the proud (Acts f12:20-23).

"Shall be exalted" - (passive) It is God who does the lifting up! Promotion is from Him. He is the best elevator.

"God resisteth the proud, but gives grace to the humble...Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time" (I Peter 5:5-6).

If you "lift up yourself", such promotion is not real. Nothing is quite as cheap as someone who "toots his own horn."

Ps. 75:6-7 - *"For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south, But God is the judge: He putteth down one, nd setteth up another."*

Prov. 27:2 - *"Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips."*

We must die to self promotion; die to the pursuit of fame (popularity), success (prosperity), etc. Only then can God raise us up.

CONCLUSION:

"MASKS"

Matthew 23:13-39
11-4-2018

INTRODUCTION: *** Are you guilty of wearing a "Christian Mask"?**

Beware of the "7 Acts" of the religious hypocrite!



Act One: ***False*** ***PREACHING****(v.13)*
They teach of Heaven, but slam the Door in people's faces



Act Two: ***False*** ***PIETY*** ***&*** ***PRAYERS*** *(v.14)*
They serve the needy, but rob for their services



Act Three: ***False*** ***PROSELYTIZING****(v. 15)*
They diligently make converts, but mold them for hell



Act Four: ***False*** ***PROMISES*** *(v. 16-22)*
They make promises to God, but plan "loopholes" to get out of them



Act Five: ***False*** ***PRIORITIES*** *(v. 23-24)*
They give money, but omit ethical and moral values



Act Six: ***False*** ***PRETENSE****(v. 25-28)*
They are clean on the outside, but corrupt on the inside



Act Seven: ***False*** ***PRAISE*** ***(tribute)****(v. 29-36)*
They venerate dead saints, but persecute living ones

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They make promises to God, but plan "_____" to get out of them



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"MASKS"

Matthew 23:13-39
11-4-2018

INTRODUCTION:

How is it that one can profess salvation, serve the Lord, go to Bible school, teach Bible classes, witness to others of Christ, pray in public, etc., and then apostacize, leave church, abandon his Christian principles, and embrace the world?

Answer: He/she was a hypocrite (who played a part for a time, but wasn't really the person he/she portrayed).

Note the phrase repeated seven times: *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"* (v. 13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29)

The word ***"woe"*** occurs 8 times in this chapter, expressing the woeful, horrible, miserable fate that awaits the hypocrite.

". . . The hypocrite's hope shall perish" (Job 8:13).

When asked, "Why don't you get saved?" - many respond "Because there are too many hypocrites claiming to be saved." When asked "Where do hypocrites go when they die?" they answer, "Hell." The question now is, "Why do you want to go to hell and be with them forever??"

The word ***"hypocrites"*** *(hypokritai)* means one who answers or speaks out from underneath a covering; the word was used of actors who pretended to be someone they were not. These Greek and Roman stage actors would speak behind large masks and alter their voice to conceal their real identity and to match the person they pretended to be.

Matthew 23 is arguably the most scathing, denouncing, humiliating message in the Bible.

Christ's sermon is very pointed, very honest (true), and very hot!

The fervor with which this message is delivered shows how repulsive hypocrisy is to God.

Hypocrisy is totally the opposite of the nature of God. It is a lie, while God is truth; it is fake, while God is real and genuine; it is deceitful, while God is trustworthy.

One is never more like the devil [who can disguise himself as an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14)] than when one pretends to be something he/she is not.

*** Are you guilty of wearing a "Christian Mask"?**

Beware of the "7 Acts" of the religious hypocrite!



Act One: ***False*** ***<u>PREACHING</u>****(v.13)*
They teach of <u>Heaven</u>, but <u>slam the Door</u> in people's faces

"Shut up" - to close off; to slam a door shut.

These people who boasted of Heaven, taught of Heaven, actually thwarted others from entering Heaven!

Why? Because they denied that Jesus was the <u>way</u>. They did not teach that He was the <u>door</u>! They did all they could to steer people away from Christ, to "turn people off" from Him.

Does your life, testimony, and witness attract people to Christ or repel them from Him?

(EX: the Jewish false prophet Elymas Barjesus who sought to turn Sergius Paulus away from the Gospel of Christ - Acts 13:6-8)

"By teaching man-made traditions instead of God's truth, they *'took away the key of knowledge'* and closed the door to salvation (Lk. 11:52)" (Wiersbe, p. 84).

Any cult or religion that minimizes Christ's deity, humanity, and complete, finished, substitutionary work is a road block to salvation!

The J.W.'s, etc. ***"shut up"*** the Kingdom because they deny His deity.

The R.C.C. ***"shuts up"*** the Kingdom, because they minimize and detract from His complete, finished work on Calvary.

The Pharisee Saul of Tarsus was such a man, who sought to prevent people from coming to Jesus (Acts 8 - 9:1ff), but such a person can (by God's grace) be saved.



Act Two: ***False*** ***<u>PIETY</u>*** ***&*** ***<u>PRAYERS</u>*** *(v.14)*
They <u>serve</u> the needy, but <u>rob</u> for their services

"Ye devour widow's houses" (KJV) - (cp. Mark 12:40; Lk. 20:47) They would visit the widows and make long prayers for them, but would charge for their services. They would take advantage of these husbandless women. They would "eat up" the will money, the estate, and everything the husband left behind. They ministered for money. Filthy lucre was the motivating force behind their service.

Do you have a "what's in it for me?" attitude? (Do you minister for fame and fortune, recognition, honor of men, etc.?)

Do you pray to impress men or God?

"Ye shall receive the greater damnation" - Those who feign spirituality with selfish motives will be judged most severely.

The ones who exploit the gullible by sifting their funds in the name of Christianity will experience the hottest temperature in the Lake of fire.

To use God or His Word or His Christianity for selfish gain infuriates Him like nothing else!



Act Three: ***False*** ***<u>PROSELYTIZING</u>****(v. 15)*
They diligently make <u>converts</u>, but mold them for <u>hell</u>

The scribes and Pharisees would board ships and travel aboard; they would walk for miles to make <u>one</u> convert to "Scribianity" or "Phariseeism." They would go to great lengths to win converts. Not converts to God, but to their brand of religious distinctives.

Note: Just because a religious group is zealous for converts does not mean their motives and message are true.

Do you seek to make converts to Christ or to your "pet doctrines" or to your denomination or to your cult or clique?

Someone once said to D.L. Moody, "I saw one of <u>your</u> converts in a bar drunk on liquor!" Moody responded, "He must be one of 'mine'; he certainly is not one of Christ's converts."

The Scribes and Pharisees had such influence, persuasive ability, and respect that their converts would be so indoctrinated in their interpretations and man-made laws that they ended up more deeply entrenched in falsehood than their teachers were!

*Don't be a man follower!



Act Four: ***False*** ***<u>PROMISES</u>*** *(v. 16-22)*
They make <u>promises to God</u>, but plan "<u>loopholes</u>" to get out of them

A hypocrite makes promises with no intention of keeping them.

Oh, the hypocrisy of those who swear to tell the truth in court -- those who vow loyalty and chastity at the wedding altar -- those who make promises to God and God's people and do not intend to fulfill them!

Deut. 23:21 - *"When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee."*

Num. 30:2 - *"If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth."*

V. 16

"It is nothing" - it means nothing; i.e. the vow is invalid (not under obligation).

When the Scribes and Pharisees would make oaths (vows or promises), they would "get out of it" and go back on their promises by discrediting the binding nature of that upon which their vow was made.

They would swear (take an oath) by the ***"temple"*** and then say, "Well, the temple oath is not binding anyway; if I had sworn by the "<u>gold</u>" of the temple I would be debtor (obligated) to carry out my oath."

EX: Oath-taking with your hand on the Bible (some might get out of it [or justify their lie by saying, "Well, it was not an authorized 1611 KJV Bible.")

V. 21-22

Any oath or promise we make, we make in God's presence and are obligated to keep it!



Act Five: ***False*** ***<u>PRIORITIES</u>*** *(v. 23-24)*
They give <u>money</u>, but omit <u>ethical</u> and <u>moral</u> <u>values</u>

V. 23

"Tithe" - one tenth; 10% (Lev. 27:30; Num. 18:12; Dt. 14:22-23)

One-tenth of the herbs, grain, fruit, wine, and oil were to be given to God (via His Tabernacle), but the Scribes and Pharisees had "expanded the items required to be tithed to include even the smallest of herbs" (Ryrie note).

They would go to extremes and legalistically count out 10% of their smallest seeds.

All of this giving was to impress men (Mt. 6:1-4).

Many give religiously on Sunday, and live like the devil on Monday.

God can't be "bought off" or bribed.

Giving to God is NO substitute for Living for God!

They made a big deal about insignificant kitchen spices and neglected basic ethics and values (i.e. like the media making a big deal about the murderer of one abortion doctor but ignoring the issue of the millions of children murdered annually by abortionists).

"Weightier matters" - meatier, more important matters; higher priority matters.

"Judgment" - justice, righteousness (fairness to others and obedience to God)

"Mercy" - Showing pity and compassion on others, especially those who do not deserve it.

"Faith" - Trust in God, belief in His Word.

Many give great sums of money to charitable organizations, but are unethical at work, immoral at home, unmerciful to sinners and distrusting of god.

Note: <u>Attitudes</u> of righteousness, mercy, and faith matter more than the <u>actions</u> of religious benevolence (cp. I Cor. 13:1-3).

"Not to leave the other undone" - Tithing is commendable and should be done; but remember: right living, compassion toward others, and faith are indispensable virtues.

V. 24

"Blind guides" - blind spiritual leaders!

In an effort to "guide" others without them being affected by the smallest of doctrinal or religious errors, they would sift out a gnat (so as to not drink the bug), but would end up swallowing a camel!

A hypocrite is a "perfectionist" when it comes to non-essentials or lesser issue of importance, but blind about the truly important matters of life (namely, right relationships with God and others).

The "Pharisees would drink their wine through clenched teeth in order to filter out any small insects that might have gotten into the wine" (MacArthur, p. 385).

Many major on the minors and minor on the majors.

They are "sticklers for details, but blind to great principles." (Wiersbe, p. 85)



Act Six: ***False*** ***<u>PRETENSE</u>****(v. 25-28)*
They are clean on the <u>outside</u>, but corrupt on the <u>inside</u>

The religious leaders were careful to keep the outside of their lives clean, because this is what could be <u>seen</u> by others.

V. 25
For practical purposes, what matters more - the cleanliness of the <u>outside</u> of the cup or dish, or the <u>inside</u>?

"Extortion" - greed and robbery (stealing)

"Excess" - no self-control; self-indulgence; no power to control one's appetites and desires

When we allow God to clean our insides (our filthy hearts), the outside will take care of itself.

--People are transformed from the inside out.

--Our preaching at VBC is not a legalistic blasting of external failures and faulty dress and hair standards, but by God's grace we deal with the heart of the problem.

V. 26
D.L. Moody: "If I take care of my character, my reputation will take care of itself" (cited by Wiersbe, p. 85).

V. 27
"Whited sepulchres" - Graves or burial tombs that have been white-washed.

Many focus on sanitizing the extremities of our lives (that which people can see), but fail to deal with the rotten bones and impurities hidden deep in our lives.

We need to clean out the inner caverns of our lives; we need to do some house-cleaning (not dusting off the surface, but ridding ourselves of the garbage and clutter).

V. 28
Things are not always what they "seem" to be.

Don't major on appearance.

Spend more time being what you should be than hiding what you are!



Act Seven: False <u>PRAISE</u> (tribute)*(v. 29-36)*
They venerate <u>dead</u> saints, but persecute <u>living</u> ones

V. 29

"Garnish the sepulchres" - adorn or beautify their monuments

V. 32

"Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers" - Put the finishing touch on the diabolical work of your ancestors; complete their hideous crime.

V. 33

"Serpents" - snakes (Satan hypocritically disguised himself using a serpent - Gen. 3)

"Generation of vipers" - offspring of venomous snakes

One who dies a religious hypocrite has no chance of escaping the eternal ***"judgment of gehenna fire"***!

The day of escape is today!

V. 35

They killed the saints from A to Z (Abel to Zacharias).

It's amazing how the Roman Catholic Church venerates St. Peter, St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, St. John, St. Paul, etc., yet do not follow their epistles and gospels (and historically without apology persecuted and martyred those who did follow them).

They venerate (honor) great first-century Christians (build statues in their names and canonize them as Catholics), yet do not believe God's Word as they did.

You may praise D.L Moody, quote C.H. Spurgeon, adore John Calvin, and honor Martin Luther - but this does not matter if you mistreat your fellow church member, despise the brother/sister who rubs you the wrong way, or speak evil of the preacher or deacons of this church.

CONCLUSION: Verses 37-39

The perfect balance of Christ's character is seen in V. 37-39. He was righteously indignant at Jerusalem's hypocrisy, yet at the same time His heart was broken over them.

Jesus loves even the hypocrite. He wants to save the hypocrite.

V. 37

"O Jerusalem" - The word *"O"* is added to express the deep grief and anguish in Christ's heart over Jerusalem's people (cp. Luke 19:41-42).

"Jerusalem" - means "the city of peace" (it had become a city of bloodshed)

"I would have. . . ye would not" - divine sovereignty and human responsibility (John 5:40 - *"And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life."*)

Jesus desired to save and shelter Jerusalem's people under His protective wings, but they were unwilling; they did not desire to come to Him.

V. 38

"Their house" (the temple and their city) - Would be left desolate - devoid of Christ's presence and protection, as Rome would burn their temple and city in 70 A.D. and scatter its occupants all over the earth.

V. 39

Until one sees Christ as the ***"Blessed Lord"*** they will never see Him.

One day 1/3 of Israel will see Him and consider Him their Blessed One (Zech. 12:10 - *"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.")*.

If you are a religious hypocrite, one day your "mask" will be removed; you can't wear it forever.

The real You will eventually be known (when the situation and circumstances are right; when the temptation is overwhelming; when the pressure is turned on).

Take off your masks now yourself, so God does not have to do it for you later!

ILLUS: Aesop's fable of a wolf that disguised itself as a sheep
(MacArthur, Matthew, Volume I, p. 353)

God is interested in the heart, not mere external, insincere displays of piety.

Phony "spiritual" practices cannot fool the Lord.

"You are what you really are when you are all alone."

What you do when no one is watching you reveals your true character.

Too many today, like the ancient Pharisees love "*the praise of men more than the praise of God"*

Christianity is not theatrics, it is not an act, it's not a game of pretending; it's to be a real, genuine relationship with God that results in real, genuine works for God.

In a world of facades, fake appearances, false impressions, deceitful image, masks, artificiality, we can make our greatest impact by just simple being REAL (genuine)!

"THE BEGINNING OF THE END"

Matthew 24:1-14

12/2/2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 4

***The Beginning of the End may be near!**
Don't be fooled as to when it will come.

In verses 5 - 15 Jesus gives 7 clear signs showing the Beginning of the End of this Age:

I. **<u>DECEPTION</u> by false Messiahs** (v. 5)

II. **<u>DESTRUCTION</u> by furious Wars** (v. 6-7a)

III. **<u>DISASTER</u> by Famines and Earthquakes** (v. 7b-8)

IV. **<u>DELIVERANCE TO PERSECUTION</u> by Foes of Jesus Christ** (v. 9)

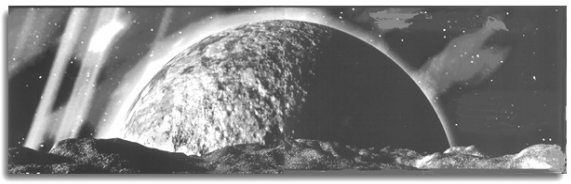
V. **<u>DEFECTION</u> by Fake Christians** (v. 10-13)

VI. **<u>DECLARATION</u> by Faithful Witnesses** (v. 14)

VII. **<u>DESECRATION</u> of a Future Holy Place** (v. 15)
[to be continued. . .]

"THE BEGINNING OF THE END"

Matthew 24:1-14
12/2/2018



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VII. _____ **of a Future Holy Place** (v. 15)
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"THE BEGINNING OF THE END"

Matthew 24:1-14
12/2/2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 4

V. 1

After delivering a hot, piercing, pointed sermon to the Scribes and Pharisees and rebuking their hypocrisy, Jesus leaves the Temple. He had just said that their *"House"* (Temple) was left desolate (empty of God and true worship) (23:38). Upon hearing this judgment to befall that magnificent work of architecture, His disciples draw His attention to the huge, beautiful stones (15-20 feet in length) and wonderful buildings (Mk. 13:1) that Herod the Great had built.

V. 2

Those earthly temporal things which man takes pride in will all perish in time.

"Not one stone" - "Absolutely no remains of that magnificent structure are visible today. The stones of the western or Wailing Wall, site of prayers today, were not part of the Temple itself but of the retaining wall around the mount. According to Josephus, the city was dug up tot such an extent that it was difficult to believe it had ever been inhabited" (Will Varner, Israel My Glory, April, 1994, p. 8)

"Thrown down" - to tear down

Rome, under General Titus, totally tore down and burned the Temple and city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

V. 3

"As He sat upon the Mount of Olives" - It is interesting that the very Mount of Olives from which Jesus gave this End-time message is the spot to which He will return when He comes to judge this earth (Zech. 14:4).

Christ's message in Matthew 24 & 25 is commonly referred to as the Olivet Discourse because He gave it while sitting on the Mount of Olives (overlooking the city of Jerusalem).

The intimidated disciples secretly ask Jesus two questions.

Matthew records Christ's answers to the latter question, the more important question: ***"What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world*** *(age)?"*

Jesus' answer to the disciples' question is the longest answer He ever gave to a question (2 chapters, totaling 97 verses), and therefore shows us the importance of the details of this eschatological message.

The Bible does not teach "imminency" but rather "expectancy."

It is evident that the apostles believed that the Rapture could occur during their lifetime or generation, but this does not mean that they did not expect signs to precede His coming.

*The Rapture could not be imminent for Peter because he was told that he would die before the Rapture (Jn. 21:18-19; II Peter 1:14-15).

*The Rapture could not be imminent for Paul because he was informed that he had a great ministry ahead in Corinth (Acts 18:9-11).

--Paul also affirmed that two events had to precede the Day of Christ's return:
(II Thes. 2:1ff)

1) The apostasy
2) The revealing of the Man of Sin

While God's Word admonishes believers to *"watch"* (Rom. 13:11-12; I Th. 5:6-8; Lk. 12:35-40) and *"look"* (Ti. 2:13) for Christ's return, the Bible does <u>not</u> teach an "any-moment," "imminent," sign-less Rapture!

The world will be caught "off guard" like a *"thief in the night"*; however, God's Word is clear that the Day of the Lord's return will <u>not</u> catch believers as a *"thief."* (I Th. 5:4 - *"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief")*

What Jesus gives in vv. 4-28 are events that must transpire <u>before</u> the sign of His coming. They are "signs" indicating that the time is approaching, but are not the "sign" that the time has arrived.

"The <u>sign</u> (singular) ***of Thy coming" -*** The sign of Christ's coming is given in vv. 29-30. This sign, which will occur when the sixth seal is loosed in Rev. 6:12, will fulfill Joel 2:31, which foretold that this "sign" of the sun being darkened and the moon turning blood-red will come immediately <u>before</u> the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.

"Your coming" - Your *"parousias"* (speaks of His personal presence at his second advent)

[This word is used to speak of the Rapture throughout the New Testament (v. 27, 37, 39; I Cor. 15:23; I Th. 2:19, 3:13, 4:15, 5:23; II Th. 2:1, 8; Ja. 5:7, 8; II Pet. 1:16, 3:4; I Jn. 2:28).]

Jesus is coming again!

"The end of the world" - lit. "the completion of the age" (*aionos)*

Not speaking of the obliteration of the earth (as some Bible teachers suggest), but of the end of this Age, before the Millennial Age.

The end of this Age will end the age of "man" and will commence the Day of the Lord.

How will we know when the end of this Age is to come? Jesus gives specific, detailed descriptions of life on earth prior to His coming.

V. 4

"Take heed that no man deceive you" - Be on the look out so that no one will mislead you or cause you to err regarding Christ's return (a favorite subject that many cults have used to trap and mislead people is the subject of the Last Days, particularly the issue of Christ's coming).

"The teaching of the Olivet discourse is much debated and frequently misunderstood, largely because it is viewed through the lens of a particular theological system or interpretive scheme that makes the message appear complex and enigmatic. . . the intricate interpretations that are sometimes proposed for this passage would have left the disciples utterly dumbfounded. It is preferable to take Jesus' words as simply and as straight-forwardly as possible." (MacArthur, p. 2).

Verses 5-8 deal with the first half of the last 7 years, and verses 9-ff deal with the second half.

***The Beginning of the End may be near!**
Don't be fooled as to when it will come.

In verses 5 - 15 Jesus gives 7 clear signs showing the Beginning of the End of this Age:

I. **DECEPTION** by false Messiahs (v. 5)

"Many will come" -

"Although many false Messiahs have appeared in the last 2,000 years (Simon BarCochba, Shabbettai Zvi, and today's [most recent] Menachem Mendel Schneerson, to name just a view), Scripture indicates that at the beginning of the [final 7 years] Tribulation period many more will claim to be the Messiah. Satanic deception will be rampant." (Mark Robinson, Israel My Glory, April, 1994, p. 10)

"In My name" - They will seize upon a title that only belongs to Jesus of Nazareth. Where there is the true, Satan will see to it that there are many imposters so as to deceive. (this is why there are so many religions today -- to deceive).

"I am the Christ" - I am the one whom the Prophets foretold! I am the Messiah!

"Follow me," they will say; "I am your deliverer, your savior, your way to God."

The ultimate deceiver will be the "Antichrist" (I Jn. 2:18; Ii Th. 2:3ff). As his title suggest (*"Anti"* = instead of), this diabolical counterfeit will pose as a Messiah instead of or in the place of the true Christ. Many Gentiles and particularly Jews will blindly follow Him. The whole world (God's children and the sealed elect excluded) will worship Him beginning at the mid-point of the final 7 years (Rev. 13).

God said of Israel: *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge"* (Hos. 4:6).

Those who lack a knowledge of Scripture will always be prime game for Satan's deceivers. Only the truth can set you free (Jn. 8:32).

II. **DESTRUCTION** by furious Wars (v. 6-7a)

V. 7

During the first 3 1/2 years of the final 7 years of this Age, nations and kingdoms will fight for global supremacy.

The world will eventually be divided up into 10 empires (10 sovereign nations). When Antichrist assumes global power, three of the ten will be overpowered by Him (Dan. 7:7, 20, 24; Rev. 12:3, 13:1; 17:3ff).

V. 6

"Wars and rumors of wars" - not small skirmishes, but major battles.

As Antichrist rises to world power, wars and rumors of wars will increase. At the mid-point of the 70th week, Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies (Lk. 21:20) and Antichrist will receive a fatal wound before being miraculously healed (Rev. 13:14).

"Be not troubled" - few of life's experiences are as frightening as wars (especially with today's weaponry and military artillery of mass destruction).

The atomic, nuclear and chemical warfare devices in our world today can wipe out millions with one push of a button! [But man will not destroy the world;; that judgment will be performed by Jesus Christ.]

"Be not troubled" - Believers can take solace in the fact that when they see these events transpire, it will prove that God's Word is true and trustworthy and that His plan is being fulfilled right on schedule.

"But the end is not yet" - At the end, people will feel secure with the New World Order fully in place and with the Antichrist in global authority. After the mid-point, the heathen world will have a false sense of *"peace and safety"* (I Th. 5:3).

III. DISASTER by Famines and Earthquakes (v. 7b-8)

V. 7

"Famines" - The result of three things:

1. Wars (as mentioned above)

2. Drought (for 3 1/2 years the earth will receive no rain, during the ministry of God's 2 witnesses - Rev. 11:3, 6)

3. Plagues (disease - Rev. 11:6)

[Note: such food shortage will incite nations to seek to conquer and spoil other nations' goods and natural resources]

"Earthquakes" - God will send earthquakes to shake up and wake up people from spiritual apathy and deadness. Earthquakes definitely get man's attention.

The plates upon which earth's land masses rest will shift and slide more and more as the end approaches. The fault lines will snap;; whole civilizations will affected.

A huge quake will hit Israel at the mid-point of the final 7 years (Rev. 1:13), which will kill 7,000 men.

But the grand quake of them all will come at the end of the final seven year period of history - which will wreck every city on earth! (Rev. 16:18 - *"And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.")*

V. 8

"The beginning of sorrows" - These are merely foreshadows, or previews of the disasters to follow in the Day of the Lord.

Jesus in Matthew 24:8 is describing the pre-labor pains to occur prior to Paul's reference to the actual labor (*"travail upon a woman with child"* - I Th. 5:3) (note: The word *"sorrows"* (*odinon* - Mt. 24:8) is plural; whereas the word *"travail"* is singular and has the definite article (*ha odin*), referring to the unescapable pain of delivery in childbirth.

IV. DELIVERANCE TO PERSECUTION by Foes of Jesus Christ (v. 9)

"Deliver you up" - The lost, godless, Antichrist-worshipping world will hand Christians over to the intense pressures of affliction and tribulation.

At that time, the lines will be clearly drawn between believer and non-believer. Following Jesus Christ will be a severe criminal offense. They will have "wanted" posters posted in search of those who reject the mark of the Beast.

"And shall kill you" - Multitudes of people who reject the mark of the Beast will be hunted down and killed (Rev. 13:7 - *"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations."*)

Whoever will refuse to worship the image of the Beast will also be putt to death (Rev. 13:15).

"You shall be hated of all nations" - No nation will be called a "Christian nation." God's people will be despised on every continent, because people from all walks of life will be followers of the Beast (Rev. 13). There will be no country in which to seek religious asylum.

"For My Name's sake" - Christians will be killed simply because they belong to Jesus. Note: When God's people are attacked, it is really Christ they are attacking.

Some of God's reasons for allowing His children to be persecuted are:

1) To purify their faith (Ja. 1; I Pet. 1)

2) To purge out the phonies

If they were arresting people for being Christians today, would there be enough evidence from your life to convict you?

V. DEFECTION by Fake Christians (v. 10-13)

V. 10

"Many (shall) be offended" - Professors, but not possessors, of salvation will "fall away"; they will *"depart from the faith"* (I Tim. 4:1).

This is the great *"Apostasy"* ("falling away") that Paul said will precede the Day 0of Christ (II Thes. 2:3).

The true colors of all will be revealed in the Great Tribulation. There will be no doubt as to which side people are on.

Pretenders eventually defect from Christianity (I Jn. 2:19 - *"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."*).

"Deliver up one another" - Because of the great pressures the Tribulation will bring, many people will turn each other in to governing authorities (no doubt for reward).

Even your family will turn against you in the Tribulation (Mk. 13:12 - *"Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death."*; cp. Lk. 21:16).

V. 11

Because spiritual deception will be the hallmark of the Tribulation, Jesus interjects that thought again.

The false prophets will no doubt prophesy against God's people and the lost will believe them.

V. 12

"Iniquity shall abound" - Lawlessness will flowing through the streets. Moral absolutes will be thrown out the window. "Down with Christian ethics," the world will chant. "Away with the 10 commandments!"

"The man of sin" will convince the world to throw off moral restraints. Such an anti-law, anti-moral absolute mentality will affect people's love.

"The love of many shall wax cold" - Note: True love resides where truth abides.

When people reject God's laws, they in turn become totally self-centered and inconsiderate of others.

"Love" which is "others' oriented" will become cold.

Where sin reigns, love wanes.

"Men will be lovers of self, lovers of money. . . lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." (II Tim. 3:1-5).

V. 13

"He that shall endure unto the end" - Those who remain under the pressures without giving up and giving in (the Antichrist world) until the completion of this Age will be saved.

Not speaking about soteriology (the new birth experience), but salvation in the same way Paul uses the term in I Th. 5:8-10 (*"But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.")*

"Shall be saved" - Saved from God's wrath, by means of the Rapture!

Jesus will also deliver His people from the world's wrath at His coming.

The days of the Tribulation are *"cut short for the elect's sake"* (v. 22).

A knowledge of what is coming to the lost Beast worshippers will be a great incentive for God's people to remain patient through it all (Rev. 14:9-12).

Who are the enduring saints? (SEE: Rev. 7:14-17).

VI. <u>DECLARATION</u> by Faithful Witnesses (v. 14)

Saved Jews will declare the Message (Mt.10:23)
An Angel will declare the Message(Rev.14:6)

VII. <u>DESECRATION</u> of a Future Holy Place (v. 15)
[to be continued. . .]

CONCLUSION:

Note: There is perfect harmony between Matthew 24:5-31 and the Seals of Revelation 6.

The Harmony of Matthew 24 & Revelation 6	
Matthew 24	**Revelation 6**
v.4-5 **Deception**	Seal # 1 **Deception**
v.6-7a **War**	Seal # 2 **War**
v.7b **Famine**	Seal # 3 **Famine**
v.7-8 **Death & Destruction**	Seal # 4 **Death & Destruction**
v.9-22 **Persecution** (Innocent Bloodshed)	Seal # 5 **Persecution** (Innocent Bloodshed)
v.29-31 **Cosmic Signs** **(Sun & Moon Altered)**	Seal # 6 **Cosmic Signs** **(Sun & Moon altered)**

THE FINAL 7 YEARS OF THIS AGE

The Disciples asked the Lord Jesus Christ:
"What shall be the sign of thy coming,
and of the end of the world (age)?" (Matthew 24:33)

Overview & Comparison of the SIGNS of the end of the age			
MATTHEW 24	**REVELATION 6**	**LUKE 17**	**LUKE 21**
False Messiahs (v.4-5)	Antichrist's rise to power (v.2)		False Messiahs (v.8)
Wars & Rumors of Wars (v.6-7a)	Wars & Bloodshed (v.3-4)		Wars & Commotions (v.9-10)
Famine, disease, scattered earthquakes (v.7b-8)	Famine, Death (v.5-8)		Earthquakes, famines, pestilences (v.11)
Persecution of God's people & Deception (v.9-28) God's people - hated (v.9) God's people - betrayed (even by family) (v.10) **Abomination of Desolation by Antichrist** (v.15) Sever persecution (v.16-22) False signs & wonders to deceive (v.24)	Martyrdom of God's people	Trouble that will cause God's people to long for Christ's Return & Deception (v.22-23)	Persecution of God's people (v.12-24) God's people betrayed by family & friends (v.16) God's people hated (v.17) **Abomination of Desolation by Antichrist** (v.20)
Cosmic Disturbances (v.29-30)	Cosmic Disturbances (v.12-14)		Cosmic Disturbances (v.25-26)
The Second Coming of Christ (v.31-44) -some taken - Rapture -some left - Wrath	The Wrath of the Lamb (v.15-17)	The Second Coming of Christ (v.24-37) -some taken - Rapture -some left - Immediate Wrath	The Second Coming of Christ (v.27-36)

THE DAY OF THE LORD

- Trumpet Judgements (Rev. 8-9, 11:15-19)
- Bowl Judgements (Rev. 15-16)

--The End is coming. Are you ready?

--The end of your life is coming. Are you ready to meet God?

“Be Prepared For What Is Ahead!”

Matthew 24:15-28

12-9-2018

INTRODUCTION: *In verses 5 - 15 Jesus gives 7 clear signs showing the Beginning of the End of this Age:*

1. **<u>DECEPTION</u> by false Messiahs** (v. 5)

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6. **<u>DECLARATION</u> by Faithful Witnesses** (v. 14)

7. **<u>DESECRATION</u> of a Future Holy Place** (v. 15)

Jesus said: *". . . Whoso readeth, let him understand"* (v. 15)

***Be ready! Be prepared for what is ahead!**

In verses 15-28 Jesus gives us two more signs which begin at the mid-point of the final 7 years of this age:

I. Be Ready for End-Time <u>TROUBLE</u> (v. 15-22)

(Great & powerful Satanic <u>Tribulation</u> is coming in the Last Days)

II. Be Ready for End-Time <u>TRICKS</u> (v. 23-28)

(Great & powerful Satanic <u>Deception</u> is coming in the Last Days)

"Be Prepared For What Is Ahead!" *(Part 2)*

Matthew 24:15-28

12-16-2018

INTRODUCTION: *In verses 5 - 15 Jesus gives 7 clear signs showing the Beginning of the End of this Age:*

1. **<u>DECEPTION</u> by false Messiahs** (v. 5)
2. **<u>DESTRUCTION</u> by furious Wars** (v. 6-7a)
3. **<u>DISASTER</u> by Famines and Earthquakes** (v. 7b-8)
4. **<u>DELIVERANCE TO PERSECUTION</u> by Foes of Jesus Christ** (v. 9)
5. **<u>DEFECTION</u> by Fake Christians** (v. 10-13)
6. **<u>DECLARATION</u> by Faithful Witnesses** (v. 14)
7. **<u>DESECRATION</u> of a Future Holy Place** (v. 15)

Jesus said: *". . . Whoso readeth, let him understand"* (v. 15)

***Be ready! Be prepared for what is ahead!**

In verses 15-28 Jesus gives us two more signs which begin at the mid-point of the final 7 years of this age:

I. Be Ready for End-Time _____ (v. 15-22)

(Great & powerful Satanic _____ is coming in the Last Days)

II. Be Ready for End-Time _____ (v. 23-28)

(Great & powerful Satanic _____ is coming in the Last Days)

“Be Prepared For What Is Ahead!”

Matthew 24:15-28

12-9-2018

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus in this chapter answers the question, *"What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?"* (v. 3).

The particular sign He gives is in vv. 29-30; however, the events that lead up to that specific sign are given in vv. 5-28.

*Review exposition of vv. 5-14.

***The Beginning of the End may be near!**
Don't be fooled as to when it will come.
In verses 5 - 15 Jesus gives 7 clear signs showing the Beginning of the End of this Age:

1. **DECEPTION by false Messiahs** (v. 5)
2. **DESTRUCTION by furious Wars** (v. 6-7a)
3. **DISASTER by Famines and Earthquakes** (v. 7b-8)
4. **DELIVERANCE TO PERSECUTION by Foes of Jesus Christ** (v. 9)
5. **DEFECTION by Fake Christians** (v. 10-13)
6. **DECLARATION by Faithful Witnesses** (v. 14)
7. **DESECRATION of a Future Holy Place** (v. 15)

The Bible speaks of a great abandonment of Christianity to occur in the Last Days (I Tim. 4:1 NKJV - *"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons."*)

Satan has many ways to ruin or destroy people; he employs many methods to turn them away from the truth. Two of the most basic methods he and his co-horts use are described by Jesus in Matthew 24:15-28.

Satan will either seek to trouble you (v. 15-22) or trick you (v. 23-28).

To test one's faith, Satan will use two weapons. The devil will either employ: tribulation or deception (either he will seek to pressure you with fear or fool you with falsehood).

The Bible uses 2 word pictures to describe Satan's character and tactics (Rev. 12:9 - *"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.")*

He is called:

1) A "Dragon" - who intimidates with fear
2) A "Serpent" (snake) - who deludes with lies

Many Christians today are told they will never have to face the Antichrist nor face the trials of the future Tribulation.

ILLUS: (preparation in boot camp and military training) One prepares differently for battle when told, "Men, we are preparing for battle, but I have good news for you: there will never be a war." than when told, "Men, we are preparing for battle, and there will be a war."

Jesus said: *". . . Whoso readeth, let him understand"* (v. 15)

***Be ready! Be prepared for what is ahead!**

In verses 15-28 Jesus gives us two more signs which begin at the mid-point of the final 7 years of this age:

I. Be Ready for End-Time TROUBLE (v. 15-22)

(Great & powerful Satanic Tribulation is coming in the Last Days)

V. 15

"Spoken of by Daniel" - SEE: Daniel 9:2, 24 - 27

Daniel 9:27

"He" - "the prince that shall come" (v. 26) - not Christ but the Antichrist.

"Confirm" = to make stand; to establish (same word as in v.12); AntiChrist may reaffirm a convenant already made; He will make it a strong covenant. Perhaps by force; with mighty global power, the Antichrist will ratify a peace treaty.

"Covenant" - a binding promise of peace; a pact; a treaty (the Antichrist will be the Diplomat of Diplomats. He will do what no leader, no nation, and no United Nations Peace plan has ever accomplished. He will "settle" the Arab-Israeli conflict.)

Such a peace proposal is right on the horizon. The rider on the white horse is coming! Rev. 6:2

"With many" - a peace treaty will be signed between Israel and the many Arab nations that have plagued them throughout history (Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, the PLO, Jordan, Saudi Arabia; Iraq, Iran, etc.)

"For one week" = one period of 7 years.

"A world leader signs a 7 year peace treaty" will one day be the headlines in the NY Times and Daily News. This period of 7 years refers to the 70th week of Daniel (v. 24). 69 are now history; one more period of seven is yet to be fulfilled.

**This signing of a 7-year covenant marks the beginning of the Tribulation period. From the day this covenant is signed, exactly 2,520 days will remain for Antichrist's reign.

"In the midst of the week" = at the mid-point of the 7 years; after 3 1/2 years, he (Antichrist_ will put an end to the Jewish sacrifices and offerings. He will stop the Jew's worship of Jehovah and will set Himself up in their Temple and demand worship, claiming to be God - SEE Mt. 24:15; II Thes. 2:4.

The mid-point of the Tribulation marks the time of Antichrist's recovery from a deadly wound (SEE Rev. 13:3-8), the issuing of the mark of the Beast (Rev. 13:16-18); and the hottest anti-Jewish, anti-Christian persecution to ever be experienced (Rev. 12:12-17).

"Abominations . . . make it desolate" - the Antichrist, who will stand (as "God") in the Holy Temple, will thereby make the temple an abominable (polluted) place and a desolate place (since the Jews will flee Jerusalem at this point - Mt. 24:15ff).

Jerusalem's desolation - cp. Zech. 14:1, 2

"Even until the consummation" - the Temple will be polluted and desolate - right until the end of the 70th week.

"That determined shall be poured upon the desolate" - what God has decreed will be poured upon the Jews at that time (SEE: Rev. 12).

"When" - speaks of a specific point in time in the future when this prophecy will be fulfilled.

"See" - To see with the eyes (not some vague experience; but a clear manifestation)

Luke gives an expansion of what Jesus said in v. 15 - Luke 21:20 - *"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."*

These armies will inflict a fatal wound on the Antichrist (Dan. 11:40 - 12:1), who will miraculously be healed and elevated to global authority and worship at Jerusalem (Rev. 13).

"The Abomination of Desolation" -

"Abomination" = an object of disgust; something detestable; an abhorrent thing.

"Desolation" - to be empty; deserted, barren, laid waste (cp. Mt. 23:38).

The phrase *"abomination of desolation"* refers to an "object of disgust" being set up in the "Holy Place" which causes that place to become "wasted, ruined, and deserted" of its worshippers.

The word "*abomination"* is a neuter, singular noun, pointing to a specific "thing" that will stand in the Jewish "Holy Place" (cp. Mk. 13:14 - *"it"*).

It refers not merely to the Antichrist himself, but to the "image" (idol, statue of the Antichrist) ("the image of the Beast" which will one day be erected in Jerusalem's Temple (Rev. 13:14-15).

"Stand (lit. standing) ***in the Holy Place" -*** SEE: II Thes. 2:1-12. V. 4 - *"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."*)

This "temple" is one that the Jews are ready to build (the only questions are where and when). The phrase ***"temple of God"*** does not mean that God is in favor of this temple; it simply means that from the Jews' standpoint, it will be a temple dedicated to God (but desecrated by the Antichrist) (Rev. 11:1-2 - *"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.")*

The future Abomination of the Jewish temple (Dan. 9:27; 12:11) can be previewed by comparing it with the past Abomination of Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan. 11:31), who slew an abominable pig on the Temple's altar, compelled the priests to eat its flesh, and then erected an idol of Zeus in the Temple.

"Whoso readeth, let him understand" - This urgent exhortation to comprehend this future sign shows its importance.

Verses 16-22 describe the most intense persecution of human life ever to be experienced.

V. 16

The land of Israel, particularly the land surrounding the city of Jerusalem.

"Flee into the mountains" - Run away toward the southeast to the mountains of the wilderness of Judea, or to the mountains of Petra.

Why escape to the mountains? To hide and seek refuge from Satan's fierce persecution (Rev. 12:6, 13-17).

V. 17

"Him. . . on the housetop not come down" - The housetops were places of leisure and relaxation.

Jesus is not saying, "Don't come down"; rather, "Don't come down with the intent of packing your suitcase." Don't worry about packing your bags. Just get down and RUN!

V. 18

If news hits the fields that Antichrist has abominated the Holy Place, don't go home to gather a change of clothing; just run with what you've got on!

V. 19

"Woe" - an expression of <u>sorrow</u> for someone

"With child" - pregnant women. It will be extremely difficult for pregnant women [particularly in the latter months] to run many many miles to flee from the bloodshed.

"Them that give suck" - to mothers with nursing babies. For a mother to run for miles carrying an infant will be intensely difficult. To stop for feedings will be impossible.

V. 20

"Flight" - does not refer to an air-lift on a "El Al" Airlines 747 jet, but refers to the fleeing (running) from the Antichrist's persecution.

"Not in the winter" - Cold weather would make travelling unbearable, especially going up to higher elevations.

"The Sabbath day" - Jews have a law that they can't walk more than a mile on the Sabbath. This running would cause them to violate their Sabbath law, if that time should fall on a Sabbath.

V. 21

"Then . . . great tribulation" - The Tribulation period is technically not the entire 70th week of Daniel; rather, the word *"tribulation"* is only used to refer to the last 3-1/2 years.

"Great tribulation" - enormous pressure, intense trial. Difficulty for Israel and the Church beyond compare.

God promises to protect a remnant of His faithful people through this time (Rev. 3:10).

NOTE: Jesus does not promise removal from the Tribulation, but protection (for a faithful remnant) through it (*"Keep thee from" =* guard you from - cp. Jn. 17:15).

This time of persecution will be unparalleled by anything that preceded it.

It will surpass (be worse than):

- Israel's slavery in Egypt
- Israel's conquest by Babylon
- Israel's horror inflicted by Antiochus Epiphanes in 171 - 165 B.C. (Dan. 8:14)
- Israel's slaughter by Rome in 70 A.D.
- Israel's holocaust by Germany in the 20th century

The *"Tribulation"* spoken of here is not:

--"The Day of the Lord's wrath" (this does not begin until v. 29; cp. Joel 2:31)

--God's wrath, but Satan's wrath being vented toward God's people (Luke 21:23; cp. with Rev. 12:12, 17).

Although God allows this Tribulation to fall, and He is sovereign over these events (Rev. 6 - the *"seals"*), He has not yet begun the *"Day of the Lord."*

The context surrounding v. 21 clearly identifies this tribulation as coming from Antichrist.

*SEE: Revelation 12:1-f

> (When the dragon [Satan] persecutes the woman (Israel) . . . God will provide refuge in the wilderness for this remnant of Jews for 1,260 days.)

Note: This wilderness refuge will be where God fulfills Ezekiel 20:35-36 - *"And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God."*

V. 22

"Shortened" - Jesus is not teaching that the Great Tribulation will be shortened (it will last a full 3 1/2 years). What He is teaching is that it will be shortened (lit. "cut short" or "limited") for the elect.

Why is this period limited only for the elect's sake? Could it be because they are raptured prior to the very end? Or could it be that God has limited it to only 3-1/2 years - Mark 13:20.

"There should no flesh be saved" - Not speaking of the flesh of the persecutors, but the persecuted.

No believer would live, if God had not shortened that time of Tribulation.

No believer would be left alive to be *"saved"* (raptured) in living bodies, unless those days of Tribulation were shortened. However, we who are *"alive and remain shall be caught up. . ."* (I Th. 4:17).

II. Be Ready for End-Time TRICKS (v. 23-28)
(Great & powerful Satanic Deception is coming in the Last Days)

V. 23

You should never "believe" what any man says, but only what the Scriptures teach.

False messiahs will abound. The Antichrist will be the ultimate deceiver, mascarading as the messiah (instead of Christ = AntiChrist) until his true identity is revealed to Israel at the mid-point of the 70th week (v. 15).

V. 24

The ***"false prophets"*** will be promoters of the false Christs (as the False Prophet will be for the Antichrist - Rev. 13:12).

"Great signs and wonders" - not just miracles, but great miracles (awesome, breath-taking, indisputable, supernatural [demonic] signs will be performed).

"Signs" - miracles to vindicate someone or something (to prove the authenticity of something).

"Wonders" - miracles to cause amazement (to marvel an audience).

If God is sovereignly in control of all things, why would He allow Satan's servants to perform such realistic miracles?

Answer: To prove your love for Him and your commitment to His Word.

"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut. 13:1-3).

No miracle proves any message or messenger to be true, if that message or messenger is contrary to the Word of God.

As believers, the basis of our authority is not . . .

--What we "experience" with our senses (it is not what we see, hear, feel, or sense).

Our senses are often deceiving. There is a realm of existence outside of your sense that will delude you if you function in this carnal realm and don't trust the Word of One who exists outside of our senses.

The Bible is our only authority for what we believe to be true in the spiritual realm.

God's people will only overcome the deception of Antichrist by the Blood and the Word (Rev. 12:11 - *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death")*

Do you know the Scriptures?

--Are you able to give a Biblical reason for your salvation?

--Are you able to refute a cult that denies Christ's deity?

--Are you able to examine a doctrine or practice and measure it be the Scriptures to see if it is right or wrong?

--Can you refute the "date setters" who say that Christ is coming back September '94?

--Do you know why you believe what you believe, or do you cling to "borrowed" convictions?

--Are you able to *"prove* (test) *all things"*? (I Th. 5:21-22).

"If it were possible" - Which it is not! (John 10:27-28). Those signs will be so real, so amazing, so believable that it will get some believers to ponder and question the validity of them. Only the Biblically literate elect will see through the lies and deception.

Knowing and believing the truth is the only way to avoid the greatest deception ever to come (SEE: II Thes. 2:9-12).

The reason why you are considered *"blessed"* for reading and hearing the book of Revelation is because *"the time is at hand"* (Rev. 1:3). A knowledge of prophecy will fortify you to withstand the Satanic assaults to come!

V. 25

"Behold, I have told you before" - Look, I am warning you in advance. I am forewarning you ahead of time. Without Scriptural forewarning, everyone would be deluded!

V. 26

So as to kill God's people, they will seek to draw their victims away to isolated

deserts, or hidden inner rooms.

V. 27

Christ's coming will be as ***"lightning"***. What is He teaching by this metaphor?

1. Christ's coming will be <u>sudden</u> (not a gradual event stretched over a long period of time that will require messengers to announce it).

2. Christ's coming will be <u>visible</u> (not a cryptic, unknown, undiscernible event - Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:17)

   This is the main point of V. 27. The "shining" of lightning can be seen (cp. Luke 17:23). Our Lord's coming will be visible - v. 30.

V. 28

"Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together" - How does this statement tie in with the context of Christ's return?

It appears that Christ is using a well-known Jewish proverb (Job 39:30; Hab. 1:8) to illustrate that just as eagles quickly gather around a carcass, so believers will immediately be gathered around our Savior who died for us.

(The disciples asked Jesus *"<u>Where</u>"* will the Raptured be "taken"? He responded with this same parable - Luke 17:36-37.)

CONCLUSION:

Is there any degree of trouble or tricks that could pull you away from Christ and His Word?

"THE DRAMATIC RETURN"

(The Drama of Christ's Second Coming)
Matthew 24:29-31
12/23/2018

INTRODUCTION:

***Three powerful events will be experienced when Jesus Christ comes back!**

I. **The Sky is <u>DARKENED</u>** (v. 29)
(The <u>lights</u> of outer space are turned out)

II. **The *"Son of Man"* is <u>REVEALED</u>** (v. 30)
(The <u>Shekinah glory</u> of Jesus Christ is seen)

III. **The Saints are <u>RAPTURED</u>** (v. 31)
(The <u>elect</u> believers are swept away to Heaven)

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"THE DRAMATIC RETURN"

(The Drama of Christ's Second Coming)
Matthew 24:29-31
12/23/2018

INTRODUCTION:

The Disciple's question regarding the TIMING of the Lord's return (v.3) assumes that they already had an awareness of the FACT of His return. Prior to Matthew 24, the Lord Jesus indeed informed them of His return in John 14:1-3 where He said "I will come again and receive you unto myself"

Isaiah (in one verse of prophetic Scripture) predicted two aspects and two timings of Messiah's entry onto the human scene.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (Isaiah 9:6-7)

The Messiah's 1st Coming - *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: (Isaiah 9:6)*
The Messiah's 2nd Coming - *"…and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end…" (Isaiah 9:6b-7)*

Comparisons and contrasts between the two appearances to planet earth:

- Messiah's first coming was MEEK & HUMBLE; His return will be MIGHTY & He will be HONORED.
- His true identity was veiled (hidden) vs His true identity will be fully manifested

- Jesus came the first time to provide redemption and He will return the second time to rapture and resurrect those He redeemed.
- Jesus came the first time to "seek and to save that which was lost" and He will return the second time to remove from judgment and death those He has saved.
- His first coming paid for sin; His second coming removes us from sin's very presence.
- His first coming provided our justification; His second coming will provide our glorification.

The Disciples asked the question: "…what shall be <u>the sign</u> of thy coming, and of the end of the world (age)?" (v.3)

In verses 5 – 28 Jesus gives 9 clear signs showing the Beginning of the End of this Age:

1. **<u>DECEPTION</u> by false Messiahs** (v. 5)
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7. **<u>DESECRATION</u> of a Future Holy Place by Antichrist** (v. 15)
8. **<u>GREAT TRIBULATION</u> aimed at Israel & Christians** (v. 15-22)
9. **<u>LYING SIGNS & WONDERS</u> by False Messiahs & False Prophets** (v. 23-28)

The Key sign of His Return is described in verses 29-30

10. **<u>COSMIC DISTURBANCES</u> as the Sun, Moon, & Stars are changed** (v.29-30)

The second coming of Christ is no small, insignificant event.

It will be the most dramatic event in human history!

<u>Three Important Facts</u>

1. I Thessalonians 4:16-5:2 teaches that the Rapture of the Church are the Day of the Lord are tied together (the Rapture and the Day of the Lord begin on the same day).

2. Joel 2:31 (cp. Acts 2:20) teaches that the alterations of the sun and moon will occur <u>before</u> the Day of the Lord begins.

3. Therefore, the darkening of the sun and moon, the Rapture of the Church, and the beginning of the Day of the Lord <u>all happen at the same time</u>.

   (This is precisely what Matthew teaches in verses 29 - 31.)

***Three powerful events will be experienced when Jesus Christ comes back!**

I. **The Sky is <u>DARKENED</u>** (v. 29)
(The <u>lights</u> of outer space are turned out)

"<u>Immediately</u> after the Tribulation" - the Lord is going to do something to "cut short" those days of Tribulation. What is it? Answer: the Rapture of His Church.

And then, immediately after the time of Tribulation ends for God's people, He is going to turn out the lights of Heaven to announce the commencement of the Day of the Lord's wrath.

Those days of Tribulation will be "cut short" or amputated for the sake of God's people.

The Tribulation will <u>not</u> last a full 3-1/2 years for the Elect (Mark 13:20 - *"And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days"*; cp. Mt. 24:22)

Christ will Christ will "cut short" the bloodshed of God's people. When the last one to be killed is fulfilled, He will step in (Rev. 6:11).

The Great Tribulation will not run the full 42 months allotted to Antichrist.

While the 70th week will run its course and the times of the Gentiles (Lk. 21:24) will come to a full completion, God's people will *"escape"* via the Rapture.

How much will the Tribulation be cut short for the elect's sake? (No one knows for sure)

It would be safe to say that it will be amputated at least 5 months prior to the end of the 70th week [since the fifth Trumpet judgment (to occur in the Day of the Lord) will involve an army of demonic locust-like creatures inflicting torment on people for 5 months - Rev. 9:5, 10.]

The sequence of events is:

1) Tribulation

2) Cosmic signs, Rapture, & Day of the Lord

"The sun (will) be darkened" - These cosmic signs are frequently mentioned in Scripture:

Isaiah 13:9-11 - *"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible."*

Isaiah 24:23 - *"The moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously."*

Isaiah 50:3 - *"I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering."*

Ezekiel 32:7-8 - *"And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord GOD."*

Joel 2:10 - *"The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining."*

Joel 2:31 - *"The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come."*

Joel 3:15 - *"The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining."*

Amos 5:18, 20 - *"Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness,a nd not light. Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?"*

Acts 2:20 - *"The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come."*

Revelation 6:12 - *"And I beheld, when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood."*

Luke 21:28 says, *"But when these things* (these signs) *<u>begin</u> to take place,*

straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." Charles Hadden Spurgeon (who would be considered a proponent of the Pre-wrath Rapture view if living today) said in his sermon entitled "Joyful Anticipation of the Second Advent" - "When the Lord Jesus Christ shall come, the heavens shall tell us, *'There will be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars'* . . . Now I come to THE REMARKABLE PRECEPT itself: *'Then look up, and lift up your heads'*. . . Let there be no looking down because the earth is quaking and shaking, but let there be a looking up because you are going to rise from it; no looking down because the graves are opening; why should you look down? You will quit the grave, never more to die. *'Lift up your heads.'* The time for you to hang your heads like bulrushes, is over already, and will certainly be over when the Lord is coming, and your redemption draweth nigh. Wherefore, *'look up, and lift up your heads.'*" (cited by VanKampen, p. 275)

The darkening of the sun and moon and the dropping of the stars will <u>not</u> be a one-day event but will occur over a several-day period. *"But in those <u>days</u>* (plural) *. . . the sun shall be darkened. . ."* (Mk. 13:24)

"The moon shall not give her light" - Actually instead of reflecting the light of the sun, it will evidently reflect the bloody earth (perhaps depicting the blood shed of God's servants (Rev. 6, 20) and the coming blood bath of Armageddon (Rev. 14:20).

"The powers (*dunamis)* ***of the heavens shall be shaken" -***

Isaiah 24:1, 19-20 - *"Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. . . . The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and for like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again."*

The universe (now held together by Christ - Col. 1:17) will be unglued; normal orbits and rotations will be shaken; the tides will be drastically affected (Luke 21:25 - *"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring")*.

"The events will be so calamitous that men will <u>faint</u> (Luke 21:25-26) from absolute terror. The Greek term behind *"faint"* means to expire or stop breathing, indicating that people will literally die of fright" (MacArthur, p. 51).

People will hold onto their stomachs because of the nausea and upsetness caused by the dreadful terror.

II. **The *"Son of Man"* is <u>REVEALED</u>** (v. 30)
(The <u>Shekinah glory</u> of Jesus Christ is seen)

"Then" - At the same time as the cosmic disturbances, Christ appears!

The *"lights"* of the universe are divinely turned off to draw the world's attention to Christ's glorious entrance at His second coming.

"The <u>natural</u> light of the heavenly bodies will be shut off (darkened) and then the <u>supernatural</u> light (the glory of God) will be revealed" (Rosenthal, <u>Pre-Wrath Rapture</u>, p. 111).

"The sign" = (Remember the disciples' question - v. 3) The Shekinah or glory of Christ will be the sign of His second coming.

He is <u>not</u> pictured on a *"white horse"* (Rev. 19:11) at this point in time, but is in the *"clouds"* (Shekinah cloud). Just as He went away (Acts 1:11), He will come again for His own.

This ***"sign"*** of Christ's return is important especially in light of the false signs and false Christ's and prophets prevalent in the Last Days (v. 23-26).

In the Last Days many will say: *"Where is the promise of His coming?"* (II Pet. 3:4). They will mock such a return. And then suddenly (like *"<u>lightning</u>"* - v. 27) and unexpectedly (like a *"<u>thief</u>"*), the Lord will come with a spectacular brilliance, a brilliance that will be seen by every eye (even the "despicably evil eyes of Antichrist and his wicked hosts" - Robert VanKampen, <u>The Sign</u>, p. 268).

"Tribes" - Various nations all over the earth.

"Mourn" - Not a mourning of repentance, but of fear because of the wrath about to be outpoured.

(SEE: Rev. 6:12-17)

The ***"mourning"*** of one tribe will be that of repentance. That tribe is Israel! (Zech. 12:10 - *"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."*)

"They shall see" - The Rapture will not be a secret event. Christ's coming will be undeniable and inescapable.

"Clouds" - not just any clouds (not the clouds covering the earth) - but clouds from Heaven.

Rev. 1:7 - *"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."* Cp. Rev. 14:14

"With power" - Christ's coming will not be humble and lowly like His first entrance into the human race (He came then as a Lamb; He is coming again as a Lion. He came the first time to suffer and die; He is coming the second time to conquer and reign).

"Great glory" - His glory was veiled in His incarnation (Phil. 2), but His glory will shine at His return.

This is why Paul referred to the Rapture as the *"glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ"* (Ti. 2:13).

III. The Saints are <u>RAPTURED</u> (v. 31)
(The <u>elect</u> believers are swept away to Heaven)

"He shall send his angels" - The Son of man (Jesus) has authority over angels; they do His bidding.

"A great sound of a trumpet" - Not speaking of the trumpet judgments (Rev. 8-9) but of the trumpet to summon His elect (cp. Exod. 19:16; Zech. 9:14).

I Cor. 15:52 - *"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."*

I Thes. 4:16 - *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first."*

"They" - God will employ angels to seize away His people. This is how we will be *"caught up"* to meet the Lord in the air.

"Gather" = (*episunaxousin)* - to assemble together at one central location (cp. v. 28).

Many erroneously interpret this gathering as referring to the "regathering of Israel." This, however, is <u>not</u> the meaning as evidenced by Mark's parallel passage, which indicates clearly that the people taken are taken *"<u>from</u>...<u>earth</u>...<u>to</u>...<u>heaven</u>"* (Mk. 13:27).

The ***"elect"*** are those for whom the Days of Tribulation were cut short (v. 22).

Only the ***"elect"*** will be gathered. Who are the ***"elect"***? They are those whom God has chosen (selected) to be saved; and those who are chosen are those who <u>believe</u> the Gospel.

"...God hath from the beginning <u>chosen</u> you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and <u>belief</u> of the truth" (II Th. 2:13).

You can know whether or not you are one of the "elect" by whether or not your total faith and trust is in Jesus Christ and His finished work on Calvary (Jn. 3:36).

Did you come to Jesus for salvation? (Jn. 6:37) If so, you will not be put to shame (Rom. 10:11).

CONCLUSION:

"LIFE ON EARTH WHEN JESUS RETURNS"

("The Times of the End Times")

Matthew 24:32-41

12/30/2018

INTRODUCTION:

***What will life be like in the days before and during the return of Christ?**

I. The Days Before Christ's Coming (v. 33-35)

A. The SIGNS of the days before Christ's coming (v. 32-33)

B. The SHORTNESS of the days before Christ's coming (v. 34)

C. The SURENESS of the days before Christ's coming (v. 35)

II. The Day of Christ's Coming (v. 36-41)

A. The SUDDENNESS of the day of Christ's coming (v. 36)
(A day of secret)

B. The SHOCK of the day of Christ's coming (v. 37-39)
(A day of surprise)

C. The SEVERANCE of the day of Christ's coming (v. 40-41)
(A day of separation)

"LIFE ON EARTH WHEN JESUS RETURNS"

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I. The Days Before Christ's Coming (v. 33-35)

A. The _____ of the days before Christ's coming (v. 32-33)

B. The _____ of the days before Christ's coming (v. 34)

C. The _____ of the days before Christ's coming (v. 35)

II. The Day of Christ's Coming (v. 36-41)

A. The _____ of the day of Christ's coming (v. 36)
(A day of <u>secret</u>)

B. The _____ of the day of Christ's coming (v. 37-39)
(A day of <u>surprise</u>)

C. The _____ of the day of Christ's coming (v. 40-41)
(A day of <u>separation</u>)

"LIFE ON EARTH WHEN JESUS RETURNS"

("The Times of the End Times")

Matthew 24:32-41

12/30/2018

INTRODUCTION:

The failure of date-setters.

(SEE: VanKampen, p. 401)

***What will life be like in the days before and during the return of Christ?**

I. The Days Before Christ's Coming (v. 33-35)

A. The SIGNS of the days before Christ's coming (v. 32-33)

V. 32

"When the sap begins to flow into the branches, making them ***"tender,"*** and new ***"leaves"*** appear on the tree, ***"you know that summer is near."*** (MacArthur, p. 62).

Just as a budding fig tree indicates that summer is approaching, so when you see all of the events mentioned in vv. 4-29, you can know that Christ's return is soon approaching.

"Unfortunately, this parable, like many others, has often been made confusing and misleading by those who view it as a complicated allegory rather than a simple analogy" (MacArthur, p. 61).

Some interpreters view the reference to the ***"fig tree"*** as referring to Israel.

Note: In this context the ***"fig tree"*** is being used as an analogy to teach about the timing of Christ's return.

You don't use a symbol to explain a symbol. Rather, Jesus is speaking of a literal fig tree to explain a spiritual truth.

V. 33

"All these things" - The events of mass deception (v. 4), false Christ's (v. 5), universal wars (v. 6), famines, pestilences, earthquakes (v. 7), persecution (v. 9-13), the Abomination that makes the Jewish Holy Place desolate (v. 15), the Great Tribulation (v. 16-22), false prophets and false miracles (v. 24). . . these are all signs that Christ's coming is approaching.

"It is near" - Christ's coming (v. 30-31) and the establishment of the Kingdom of God (*"the kingdom of God is near"* - Luke 21:31).

"Even at the doors" - When those events transpire, we will know that Christ is ready to open and exit Heaven's doors to make His descent to earth.

The Rapture (Second Coming) is not "sign-less", as pretribulationalism teaches.

When the beginning of birth pangs have run their course, one can know that Christ's coming *"is near"* but still be unsure of the exact *"day and hour"*; hence, the admonition to *"watch"* (v. 42).

B. The SHORTNESS of the days before Christ's coming (v. 34)

"Verily" - Truly, assuredly, positively without a doubt

"This generation" - not the generation Jesus was speaking to (the disciples did not live to see *"all these things")*; but the generation that would be around when these events began to transpire.

In other words, the generation of people who are alive when these events (v. 4-29) begin to be fulfilled, will be the same generation which will experience the second coming. The generation that is present when Antichrist is manifested will be the generation to see the fulfillment of Christ's words.

By speaking of a particular ***"generation"*** Jesus is demonstrating that the events He referred to are not some long, drawn out, century-long Tribulation, but a brief period of time -- no more than 7 years long.

C. The SURENESS of the days before Christ's coming (v. 35)

"Heaven and earth shall pass away" after the 1,000 year Kingdom described in Revelation 20:1-10 is fulfilled. At the time of the Great White Throne Judgment (20:11), this present Heaven (space) and earth will be replaced by a new version (21:1).

Christ's words will:

--endure through the end of time (the preservation of Scripture is taught)

--be fulfilled at God's appointed time (the actual accomplishment of prophetic Scripture is taught).

Luke 16:17 - *"And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."*

Scripture is *"clean, enduring forever"* (Psalm 19:9).

Matt. 5:18 - *"For verily I saw unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."*

II. The Day of Christ's Coming (v. 36-41)

A. The SUDDENNESS of the day of Christ's coming (v. 36)

(A day of secret)

"That day and hour" - refers to the Second Coming and Rapture

It is futile even to attempt to predict a date prior to the budding of the ***"fig tree"*** (i.e. prior to the fulfillment of vv. 4-26).

Acts 1:6-7 - *"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel? And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power."*

Even the Son of God, while He humbly was on earth (Phil. 2:7), did not know the date in which He would return (*"neither the Son"* - Mark 13:32).

Note: If the date of Christ's return could be calculated by dates given in the Old Testament and New Testament and by building a Scriptural chronological time-line, then why wasn't even Jesus able to do so with His superior knowledge of the Scriptures? -- So much for the date-setters!

It is true that Jesus did not say we could not know the year. We will be able to estimate once these predicted events begin to transpire.

B. The SHOCK of the day of Christ's coming (v. 37-39)
(A day of surprise)

V. 37

The days prior to the Coming (*"parousia"* - visible presence) of Christ will be just as they were before the flood came in Noah's day.

"The days of Noah" - What were those days like? SEE: Genesis 6 -

1) Inter-marriage between the saved and unsaved (Gen. 6:2-3)

2) Human notoriety (6:4)

3) Wickedness (6:5)

4) Continual evil thoughts (6:5)

5) Moral corruption (6:11)

6) Violence (bloodshed) (6:11)

7) Unbelief (they did not believe Noah's message - I Pet. 3:20; II Pet. 2:6)

V. 38

"Despite the distress, persecutions,m and upheavals (vv. 4-28), life goes on: people eat, drink, and marry" (Gaebelein, p. 509).

The activities of ***"eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage"*** are not in and of themselves sinful; they are merely normal, daily human activity.

There is nothing spiritual about them; such activities do not show any expectancy of Christ's return and the judgment to follow.

They were simply living independently of God (they was a feeling of ***"peace and safety"*** as they ignored Noah's warning).

Although God's people will not be experiencing ***"peace"*** in the world (rather, Tribulation from the Antichrist world), lost humanity will say ***"peace and safety"*** prior to Christ's coming (I Thes. 5:3-4 - *"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."*).

"Until the day Noah entered into the ark" - On the very day (Gen. 7:7, 12-13, 16) Noah entered the ark, their partying and "liaise fair" life ended, because the flood began.

Note: Just as God delivered Noah and Lot on the same day He poured oust His judgment and wrath on the earth, so it will be at Christ's coming (Luke 17:26-30).

The Day of the Lord's Wrath begins at the Rapture (I Thes. 4 & 5).

*God always delivers His people before He pours out His vindictive judgment.

V. 39

"And knew not" - The world didn't know when the flood would come; and even Noah (who expected it 120 years after the Gen. 6:3 warning) didn't know exactly the day until 7 days prior (Gen. 7:4).

Noah and his family knew the flood would come in their lifetime and they were prepared for it, but the rest of the world was caught by surprise. They had heard that judgment was coming, since Noah (the preacher of righteousness) warned them (II Pet. 2:5), but they did not believe it.

So will it be in the Last Days (they will scoffingly say: *"Where is the promise of His coming?"*) (II Pet. 3:4).

The people in Noah's day no doubt laughed and mocked at his preaching of a coming flood (they had never seen rain, much less a flood -- just as people living today have never seen the sun and moon darkened and the stars fall, etc.). It was business as usual until the day Noah entered the ark.

C. The SEVERANCE of the day of Christ's coming (v. 40-41)
(A day of separation)

V. 40

"Then" - the day of *"the coming of the Son of Man"* (v. 39)

"Field. . . grinding at the mill" - Note: The ones taken will be ready, but still continuing the routines of life. Jesus does not expect us to be waiting on a mountain or in a church building the day He comes back.

Jesus said, *"Occupy till I come"* (Luke 9:13).

A hand mill was "normally operated by two women squatting opposite each other with the mill between them, each woman in turn pulling the stone around 180 degrees" (Gaebelein, p. 509).

When Christ comes, depending on which side of the globe you live on, it will either be daytime (for some) or nighttime (for others).

The jobs described in these verses (v. 40-41) are daylight jobs. However, in Luke 17:34 Jesus said: *"I tell you, in that night there shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left."*

The ones ***"taken"*** (in this context) most obviously refers to the same people who were *"gathered together"* in verse 31.

(Any other view is to twist and coerce a meaning on this text that is unwarranted and inconsistent with the inspired flow of thought in this context)

In verses 32-41, three key words tie this context together in describing the same event -- namely the Second Coming of Christ (v. 3, 30).

v. 33 - *"It is near"*
V. 36 - *"But of that day"*
V. 40 - *"Then shall two be in the field"*

Many pre-tribulationalists in a desperate attempt to make verses 40 & 41 not refer to the Rapture explain it thus:

"Those taken in verses 40 & 41 are not saints but sinners who are removed from the earth at the very end of the 70th week." (Matthew 13:40,41)

This view has a major problem explaining how the previous context (v. 36-37) relates to those seized away (i.e. v. 40-41).

Every pre-tribulationist knows that the end of the Tribulation will involve the most severe, terrifying judgments (bowls - Rev. 15-16) ever to fall on earth.

The world's conditions at the end of the Tribulation will not allow the relaxed, uninhibited, normal "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" scenario described in vv. 36-39.

The "peaceful" conditions on the earth (v. 36-39) experienced by the unsaved prior to the "coming of the Son of man" unquestionably point to the Rapture.

The word translated ***"taken"*** is *paralambano* (*para =* along side of; *lambano =* to take or receive). The word means to "take with one's self" or to "join to one's self" (Strong). This same word occurs in John 14:3 where Jesus promised to *"come again and receive you unto myself"*.

This word is different than the word *"took"* in verse 39, which describes how the flood waters carried the unsaved world to their doom and destruction.

The ones taken are taken to be with Christ; whereas the ones left are left to remain on earth for the Day of the Lord's Wrath.

John the Baptist said, *"Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his flood, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."*

There will be a severance (splitting/breaking) of many close acquaintances (co-workers) and relatives (Luke 17:34) when Christ returns.

"BE READY FOR TAKE-OFF"

Matthew 24:42 - 25:13
1/13/2019

INTRODUCTION: Verse 42

***Be ready for Christ's return!**
(Only those who are ready will be Raptured!)

Readiness involves: Watchfulness
Faithfulness
Preparedness

I. **BE <u>WATCHFUL</u>** (like an <u>alert</u> <u>householder</u>) 24:43-44
(Don't be caught off guard as if a <u>thief</u> broke into your home)

II. **BE <u>FAITHFUL</u>** (like the faithful and wise <u>servant</u>) 24:45-51
(Don't be caught giving in to the pressures of the <u>world</u>)

III. **BE <u>PREPARED</u>** (like the five wise <u>virgins</u>) 25:1-12
(Don't be caught without <u>oil</u> in your lamp)

"BE READY FOR TAKE-OFF"

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I. **BE** _____ (like an alert householder) 24:43-44
(Don't be caught off guard as if a _____ broke into your home)

II. **BE** _____ (like the faithful and wise servant) 24:45-51
(Don't be caught giving in to the pressures of the _____)

III. **BE** _____ (like the five wise virgins) 25:1-12
(Don't be caught without _____ in your lamp)

"BE READY FOR TAKE-OFF"

Matthew 24:42 - 25:13
1/13/2019

INTRODUCTION: Verse 42

ILLUS: The tragedy of a plane not ready for take-off.

The flight of flights is yet to come and millions are not ready for take-off!

V. 42

"Watch therefore" - Jesus draws a practical concluding application to His previous teaching about His coming (READ v. 36-41).

"Watch" - Has 2 main ideas:

1) Being spiritually alert (not blind or in the dark)
(Acts 20:31; I Cor. 16:13; Col. 4:2; I Thes. 5:6, 10; *"vigilant"* - I Pet. 5:8)

2) Being spiritually awake (not sleeping)
(Mt. 24:43; 26:38, 40, 41)

"Ye know not what hour" - Although one living in the Great Tribulation can know that His coming is getting close (v. 32-33), one cannot pinpoint the specific *"day and hour"* (v. 36).

Mark's Gospel tells us that no one knows the specific point of time Jesus will return (Mark 13:35-37 - *"Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."*

The days of Tribulation will be *"cut short"* for the *"elect's sake"* (v. 22); however, no one knows exactly how much they are "cut short."

"The generation living during the Tribulation is specifically told they will not know the exact time of Jesus' appearing, but they are informed in detail as to what signs immediately preceding it will be." (MacArthur, p. 77).

***Be ready for Christ's return!**
(Only those who are ready will be Raptured!)

Readiness involves: Watchfulness
Faithfulness
Preparedness

I. **BE WATCHFUL** (like an alert householder) 24:43-44
(Don't be caught off guard as if a thief broke into your home)

V. 43

"The goodman of the house" - The house master; the head of the home; the homeowner (i.e. the one in charge of the home).

(implicit truth: The husband is responsible for the protection of his family - both physically and spiritually.)

"Watch" - (*phulake*) More time than a specific *"hour" (hora* - v. 44).

"Among the Jews the night was divided into 3 watches (Ex. 14:24; Jud. 7:19) [each of four-hour segments from 6:00 at night till 6:00 in the morning] and this continued on through Roman times. The Romans divided the night into four watches [3 hour guard duty]. This was recognized by the Jews (Mark 13:35)." (Vine, p. 200).

The Lord's point is this: If the head of the home had known the general time period in which the thief would come, he would have been ready at the specific hour he came.

"Thief" - A common expression in describing the Lord's return (Lk. 12:35-40; I Thes. 5:2; II Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3, 16:15).

Although the unsaved world will be caught by surprise (like a *"thief"*) at the Lord's return (I Th. 5:2), true believers will not (I Th. 5:4 - *"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."*)

(SEE: I Th. 4:16 - 5:9)

V. 44

"Be ye also ready" - You too must be ready. Just as it would be advantageous for a homeowner to be ready for the thief and to make preparations for his eventual coming, you must also be ready for Christ's coming.

Some people are more "security conscious" for their homes, than they are for their souls! Many are more worried about their homes being broken into than where they will spend eternity. Many people fear losing their material goods more than losing their souls for ever!

Don't fear him who can wreck your possessions, as much as you fear Him who has the power to confine you to hell forever!

"In such an hour as ye think not" - Christ will come at a time when the world will not expect Him. They will be *"eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage*" (v. 38). It will be life as normal for the unsuspecting world.

II. **BE <u>FAITHFUL</u>** (like the faithful and wise <u>servant</u>) 24:45-51
(Don't be caught giving in to the pressures of the <u>world</u>)

V. 45

"Faithful" = <u>full of faith</u>, which produces reliability, consistency, persistence in one's life.

"Servant" - a devoted bond slave

"Give them meat" - The ministers of Christianity do not dispense steak, pork chops, filet mignon, and chicken cutlets; rather, the *"meat"* of God's Word.

Just as Jesus told Peter to *"feed my sheep"* (Jn. 21:16, 17), so ministers (servants) of Christ are expected to feed God's people (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2) *"in season and out of season"* (II Tim. 4:2).

"His Lord hath made ruler" - It is the Lord who calls a man into ministry (Acts 20:28; cp. *"rule"* Heb. 13:7).

V. 46

"Doing" - The Lord expects us to be faithful to doing His will right up until he returns (no matter how much pressure comes upon us to quit and divert our lives to the pursuit of pleasure or mere existence).

"Occupy till I come" is our Lord's command (Lk. 19:13).

"Every believer has been giving a divine stewardship and responsibility in the work of Christ on earth, and in that stewardship he is to be faithful and sensible. His life, breath, energy, talents, spiritual gifts, and every other good thing he has are trusts from God to be used in His service and to His glory." (MacArthur, p. 78).

V. 47

Those who are faithful (even to the point of death) will have great authority and privilege in the Kingdom to come (SEE: Mt. 25:21, 23) as we live and reign with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:4, 6).

V. 48

The word ***"servant"*** does not necessarily imply that he was saved. The Lord gave this parable not merely to the saved but *"to all"* (Lk. 12:41).

"Evil servant" - Not the same *"faithful and wise servant"* Jesus just described. This servant is morally *"wicked."* He *"serves"* Christ but not from sincere motives (but like Judas Iscariot; like Balaam - II Pet. 2:15; like Diotrephes - III Jn. 9 . . . they serve with false motives: for gain, attention, or fame.

"My Lord delayeth His coming" - spiritually procrastination: Illustration by William Barclay (SEE: MacArthur, p. 80).

Why does Jesus delay His coming? Answer: He wants more people to be saved. The "fullness of the Gentiles" must come in (Rom. 11:25).

II Peter 3:8-10a - *"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night..."*

V. 15 - *"The longsuffering of our Lord is salvation"*

"My lord delayeth his coming" - He's not coming for a long time. Perhaps this man is impatient because he lacks the one virtue that gives patience, and that is faith (James 1:3). His impatience is no doubt due to the tribulations he is facing (cp. Rom. 5:3) and he can't stand it any longer!

V. 49

Out of frustration and anger, he begins to beat his ***"fellow-servants"*** (those he once served with). He succumbs to the pressures of the Antichrist-ruled world and becomes a traitor who turns against his fellow-preachers. He defects from the faith; he becomes offended (SEE: Mt. 24:10), and he departs from the faith *"giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils"* (II Tim. 4:1).

This false servant (this *"hireling"* - Jn. 10:12, 13) abandons God's sheep and begins to associate with the devil's crowd (the heathen, the pagans). He now eats (fellowships) with them and joins them in their abominable practices. To such people God warned: *"For it had been better for them not tot have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing int he mire."* (II Peter 2:21-22).

"Drink with the drunken" - In an attempt to dull his senses to the misery he finds himself in, he turns to alcohol (as an aesthetic to cover up the tough times and as an escape to get out from the pressures). [Note: We should never turn to mind-altering drugs or alcohol to escape the unpleasant reality we find ourselves in. But turn to God -- whose spirit can give us victory (Eph. 5:18)]

Just as drinking and driving don't mix - drinking and "flying" (up - in the Rapture) don't mix! (no one goes to be with Christ who is a drunkard! cp. I Cor. 6:10; I Th. 5:7).

V. 50

"The Lord of that servant" - the Lord Jesus is "Lord of lords." (Rev. 17:14; 19:16) He is Lord over pagan lords; therefore he is Lord over pagan servants as well.

This servant did not have Christ as his personal Lord, but nonetheless is accountable to him.

Jesus is <u>Lord</u> over you whether or not you know Him, trust Him, and live for Him.

One day every tongue will confess His Lordship (Phil. 2:11).

"Looketh not for him. . . not aware of" - Christ will come back so suddenly (v. 27), and so unexpectedly (since this man's senses were dulled by drink) that he will not be ready. He is a lost man who will get no second chance to believe and be saved. He had great opportunity to be saved and blew it. He was given much but was unfaithful (Lk. 12:47-48). The Lord he did not expect to return is now suddenly upon him in judgment.

V. 51

"Cut him asunder" - to cut in two pieces (speaking of severe judgment) He will be physically destroyed when Christ returns (II Th. 1:8 - *"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.")*

"Appoint him his portion" - Assign him his place (of doom). He will be sentenced along with the *"hypocrites."* Why? Because he himself was a hypocrite (whose true character was eventually manifested - vv. 48-49).

He played the part of a servant only so long. [Note: In countries where Christianity is outlawed, you don't find people claiming to be Christians if they are not. When the pressures of the Tribulation come, the masks will come of; the church will be purged of pretenders.].

Why did Matthew record this word *"hypocrites"* rather than *"unbelievers"* (Luke 12:46)?

Answer: To show us the character and practice of this false servant (who no doubt did many wonderful things in the name of Christ - Mt. 7:22-23).

"The hypocrite's hope shall perish" (Job 8:13).

"Weeping and gnashing of teeth" - Describes the remorse and agonies of the darkness of hell (Mt. 8:12, 22:13, 25:30).

"Weeping" - speaks of <u>sorrow</u> (emotional suffering and torment)

"Gnashing of teeth" - speaks of <u>pain</u> (physical suffering and torment)

Jesus said to the suffering church of Smyrna: *"...Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life"* (Rev. 2:10).

III. **BE <u>PREPARED</u>** (like the five wise <u>virgins</u>)25:1-12
(Don't be caught without <u>oil</u> in your lamp)

V. 1

"The kingdom of heaven" - The Kingdom which comes from Heaven, and the Kingdom which belongs to the God of Heaven -- hence, *"Kingdom of God"* (Jn. 3:3).

"Ten virgins" - <u>prospective</u> brides; <u>possible candidates</u> to be part of the bride of Christ. (some view the *"virgins"* as representing the "bridesmaids" rather than the "bride" herself. The reasons is that they don't want in any way to view this parable as referring to the Rapture of the Church. However, in light of the context it can refer to no other event (cp. 24:31, 36-41; 25:10).

"The Bridegroom" - a clear reference to <u>Jesus Christ</u>.

A Jewish marriage consisted of 3 parts:

1) <u>Selection</u> of a bride (father of groom and bride make a contract)

2) <u>Betrothal</u> period (vows; then preparations)

3) <u>Wedding</u> (procession, feast, consummation

(See: MacArthur, p. 84)

v. 3

"No oil" - What good is a lamp without oil? Note: The outside of the lamp is worthless without oil on the inside to give it light.

V. 4

Note: In Rev. 1:12, 13, 20; 2:1 - Christ's 7 churches are called *"lampstands"* (light-holders), and the seven-fold manifestation of the Holy Spirit (7 spirits - Rev. 1:4, 3:1) are evidently the light of those lampstands.

V. 5

"While the Bridegroom tarried" - While Christ delayed His coming.

"They all slumbered and slept" - They all "got drowsy and began to sleep" (NASV).

Perhaps, for the *"wise"* it was a sleep of security (they had peace that their Lord would not come and leave them). For the *"foolish"* it was a sleep of false security (they thought they were ready, when in fact they were not; a faulty self-confidence).

"The delay of the bridegroom was a standard feature of Jewish weddings" (Craig L. Bloomberg, Interpreting the Parables, p. 194).

V. 6

"A cry" - Perhaps this corresponds to the *"shout"* of the Rapture (I Th. 4:16; cp. Rev. 14:15). Or this cry could correspond to the final announcement of the Gospel to all nations (Mt. 24:14); nonetheless, a final wake-up call is given.

V. 7

"All those virgins arose" (lit. were raised up out of sleep). Some view this wake-up call as a "revival" to occur prior to the Rapture.

V. 8

"Our lamps are gone out" - Our lamps are being extinguished, ar being quenched. The wick of their lamp would light and ten go out because there was no oil to keep it burning.

"The foolish virgins, who had provided no oil, saw their dry wicked flicker for a few moments and then die. To insist that they had some oil but not enough contradicts 25:3. The failure to provide any oil at all displays their stupidity (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 974).

"It was not that they had been unaware of their lack of oil, but that they were not concerned enough about it to acquire it before the Bridegroom's arrival. Perhaps they thought they could quickly run down to the oil shop anytime they wanted and secure what they needed in plenty of time" (MacArthur, p. 90).

"Give us of your oil" - Note: No one can give salvation to any other; you cannot get to Heaven because your family or friends were saved. You are not going to be raptured hanging on to the coat strings of anyone. You will answer to God for yourself.

V. 9

No one can transfer part of his/her spiritual life to another.

"Go ye rather to them that sell" - This "selling" and "buying" without price, is without money (Is. 55:1 - *"Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."*)

Caution: Don't press or force every detail in a parable to have interpretive significance. In parables, look for the main point that is being emphasized rather than extracting specific interpretations from every detail.

"Examine (test) yourselves to see if you are in the faith" (II Cor. 13:5).

V. 10

"Ready" - <u>prepared</u>; the wise were all set to meet their bridegroom. Are you ready?

No doubt all ten virgins <u>looked</u> alike; they all had <u>lamps</u>, and they all wanted to be selected as the <u>bride</u>. However, they were not all <u>prepared</u>.

Five were saved and five were not. The <u>even</u> "proportion suggests that a large part (perhaps 50%) of the professing church does not belong to God."

They had the ***"oil"*** of preparedness which is the saving grace and light of the Holy Spirit within them.

Many commentators view the reference to "oil" as being symbolic of the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Is. 61:1; cp. with Psalm 45:7; Heb. 1:9; Zech. 4).

No one gets into the wedding in Heaven without oil (the salvation of the Holy Spirit) nor without a wedding garment (the imputed righteousness of Christ) (Mt. 22:11-13).

"The door was shut" - no one else was permitted entrance (just as the Lord "shut" the door on thee ark (Gen. 7:16) allowing no one else to enter, one day the same will be true of His marriage).

Today is the day to enter by faith in Christ (Luke 13:24-25 - *"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are."*)

V. 11

"Lord, Lord, open to us" - a cry of desperation (Mt. 7:22-23 - *"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."*)

Some will see their need for the new birth, God's grace, redemption in Christ, salvation too late.

V. 12

"I know you not" - While Christ knew about them, He did not have a knowledge of them in the sense of a "relationship knowledge" (*oida*).

This same concept is also expressed by the word *ginosko* (I Cor. 8:3 - *"But if any man love God, the same is known of him"*; cp. Gal. 4:9; Mt. 7:23).

CONCLUSION:

V. 13

Jesus ends this unit of thought the same way He began (v. 42) with an admonition to be awake and alert as to His return.

The only way to be ready is to be born again. Only those who believe in Him will be raptured.

John 14:1-6

Are you ready for Christ's return?

> I Cor. 1:7 -*"So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"*
>
> Phil. 3:20 -"*For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ"*
>
> Heb. 10:24-25 -*"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."*
>
> James 5:8 -*"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."*
>
> I Pet. 4:7 -*"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."*
>
> Rev. 22:20 -*"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."*

Luke records Jesus (in the same context) as saying: *"Let your loins be girded about* (be dressed to go) *and your lights burning"* (Lk. 12:35).

HYMN: "Almost Persuaded"

"BE FAITHFUL TILL JESUS COMES!"

Matthew 25:14-30

1/20/2019

INTRODUCTION:

***Be faithful with what God has given to you until the Lord returns!**

Be faithful because. . .

I. The Lord has entrusted you with responsibility (v. 14)

Be faithful because. . .

II. The Lord has not entrusted you with more than you can handle (v. 15)

Be faithful because. . .

III. The Lord expects you to use the "talents" He has given to you (v. 16-18)

Be faithful because. . .

IV. The Lord is coming back and will hold you accountable for what you have received (v. 19)

Be faithful because. . .

V. Faithfulness in little things (in this life) **will be rewarded with greater privilege in the future** (v. 20-23)

Be faithful because. . .

VI. There are no adequate excuses you will be able to offer the Lord at Judgment Day (v. 24-27)

Be faithful because. . .

VII. There are severe and serious consequences for unfaithfulness (v. 28-30)

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Be faithful because. . .

VII. There are severe and _____ for unfaithfulness (v. 28-30)

"BE FAITHFUL TILL JESUS COMES!"

Matthew 25:14-30
1/20/2019

INTRODUCTION: The tragedy of a wasted life vs the blessedness of a faithful life.

John Greenleaf Whittier wrote the well-known lines, "For all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: *It might have been!*" (MacArthur, p. 96)

"The three servants fall into 2 categories: faithful & unfaithful" (Wiersbe, p.92)

***Be faithful with what God has given to you until the Lord returns!**

Be faithful because. . .

I. The Lord has entrusted you with responsibility (v. 14)

The subject of the *"Kingdom of Heaven"* is continued from verse one.

This parable cannot be disconnected from the parables and teachings preceding it. It ties in with the Lord's teaching about His second coming.

The parable of the virgins (vv. 1-13) focuses on readiness manifested in waiting, whereas the parable of the talents focuses on readiness manifested in working" (MacArthur, p. 97).

On an earlier occasion Jesus gave a similar parable (Luke 19:12-27) in which He said *"occupy till I come"*.

"A man travelling into a far country" - An allusion to the ascension of Christ, who has *"gone into Heaven and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him"* (I Pet. 3:22; cp. Mk. 16:19; Lk. 24:51; Acts 1:11).

"Called" - The fact that one of the servants mentioned in vv. 24-30 ends up going to Hell (v. 30) proves that the Lord's *"calling"* is not necessarily efficacious (*"Many are called, but few are chosen"* - Mt. 22:14).

"Servants" - Slaves; not everyone who serves Christ is saved.

"His goods" - His property, his possessions

That which Jesus has left is His Word - the Bible.
The "talents" given most likely involve TRUTH; Truth which comes to us from His Word, the Bible. God deposits us with TRUTH in accordance with the proportion of our faith.

The more we are given, the greater our responsibility.
Luke 12:48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Lu 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

The Lord also has *"given gifts unto men"* after ascending up on high to heaven (Eph. 4:8).

A spiritual gift may simply a crucified talent (an ability we had prior to salvation, but energized and utilized by the Lord when He saves us and we surrender to him) or it is most likely a new ability we received by the Holy Spirit upon being saved.

Be faithful because. . .

II. The Lord has <u>not</u> entrusted you with more than you can <u>handle</u> (v. 15)

"Talents" - (*talanta)* - a talent was a weight of money equalling about 20 years wages in the days of the Roman empire. The talent was "money" in the form of <u>silver</u> (*argurion* - v. 18).

"To every man according to his several ability" - the Lord, knowing the <u>abilities</u> of each steward, gave them just talents that they could handle, properly manage, and use for Him.

Examples of stewardship responsibilities which God gives in "measured" form:

2 Cor. 10:13 But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule (carpenter's measuring rod or tape) which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

Eph 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Ro 12:6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

The Lord never gives us more than we can handle.

--This is true of the tests we face
(I Cor. 10:13 - *". . . God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able"*)

--This is true of the doors of opportunity He opens for us (Rev. 3:8 - *"I have set before thee an open door, and no many can shut it: for thou hast a little strength."*)

"No one received more or less than he could handle. If he failed in his assignment, his excuse could not be that he was overwhelmed" (Life Application Bible note)

Be faithful because. . .

III. The Lord expects you to <u>use the talents</u> He has given to you (v. 16-18)

V. 16

The steward with five talents immediately went and traded with them and fruitfully doubled that which the Lord gave him.

"Traded" - It took:

<u>risk</u> (faith)
<u>time</u>
<u>effort</u>
<u>wisdom</u>

. . . to invest and use what the Lord gave.

V. 17

In the same way, the one with two talents put them to work, investing them for his Lord and also doubled their value.

Although this steward had less than half of the talents that the man with five had, he was faithful with what he had.

It's <u>not</u> <u>how much</u> you have but what you do with what you have that counts.

(Never despise a small ministry - just be faithful and God will double it!)

V. 18

Like a dog hiding its bone in the ground, this unfaithful steward dug a hole and buried his one talent.

"His lord's money" - Note: Even though he was entrusted with the talent, it was not his. It belonged to the One who trusted him with it.

Ultimately, everything we have is a gift of God. As believers, our bodies don't belong to us (I Cor. 6:19-20). Neither does what we possess (I Cor. 4:7).

Psalm 24:1 - *"The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."* (cp. I Cor. 10:26, 28)

Be faithful because. . .

IV. The Lord is coming back and will hold you <u>accountable</u> for what you have received (v. 19)

"We are living in the time period between Mt. 25:18 & 19" (Wiersbe, p.92)

"After a long time" - after <u>much</u> time; so far, the Lord's tarrying has been nearly 2,000 years.

"Reckoneth" - settled accounts; a day of reckoning is coming. Everyone will be held accountable for what they did with what the Lord gave them.

Everyone will be held accountable for the Light (Scripture) . . . opportunities. . . gifts (abilities). . . time. . . which they had while they lived.

Be faithful because. . .

V. Faithfulness in little things (in this life) **will be <u>rewarded</u> with greater privilege in the future** (v. 20-23)

V. 20

"Behold" (cp. behold - v. 22) - Look! With excitement and confidence, the steward says, "<u>Look</u> at what I did with what you gave me."

Will you be able to face the Lord with optimism or regret?

"I have gained" - Although it is the Lord who gives us the desire and ability to do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13), we are responsible to take the steps of faith to utilize what is given to our care and to work it!

--As you look over your life, what have you <u>gained</u> for Jesus Christ with the talent or talents He has given you?

V. 21

"Well done" - good (job); good (work); acceptable (task). Just to hear the words *"Well done"* will make all of our efforts for Christ worthwhile.

"Thou good and faithful servant" - By God's grace, the moral goodness of this servant had enabled him to be faithful (his love for his Master was no doubt his motive).

He is called ***"faithful"*** because he was "full of faith" and trust in God to prosper him int he risks he took in investing the talents.

This servant was faithful right up until his Lord returned (cp. 24:45-47 - READ).

"Faithful over a few things" - Even though he had more talents than anyone else in this parable, he is still considered faithful over a *"few things."*

The little we do now will have great reward in the future.

"Ruler" - The two faithful people went from *"servant"* to *"ruler"!*

"Ruler over many things" - This rule will happen in the millennial kingdom, when God's people will rule and *"reign with Christ a thousand years"* (Rev. 20:4, 6) Rev. 2:26-27 - *"And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."*

"The joy of thy Lord" - a reference to the kingdom of God. *"In thy presence is fullness of joy"* (Ps. 16:11).

Note: The exact same words are repeated to the servant with two (four) talents as the servant with five (ten). Again, rewards are not based on volume but faithfulness.

"Just as the angels serve God in ranks, so will redeemed men and women, and the degree of their heavenly service will have been determined by the devotedness of their earthly service." (MacArthur, p. 104).

Be faithful because. . .

VI. There are <u>no adequate excuses</u> you will be able to offer the Lord at Judgment Day (v. 24-27)

V. 24

The unfaithful servant is <u>excusing</u> himself (and in a sense blaming his master for his failure).

"An hard man" - He had an inadequate view of God. He is like the person who sees God only as stern, rigid, and ungracious.

Most people in the world fail to see God's grace and trust Him to extend that grace to them.

"Reaping where thou hast not sown" - He knew that God could do miracles. god could reap without ever planting (but has God chosen to do this? No. *"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."* [I Cor. 3:6] God has chosen to use us to plant seed [God's Word] [cp. Ps. 126:6]).

"Gathering where thou hast not strawed (scattered seed)" - A synonymous re-statement of the first phrase (the Lord's doesn't need us to restate something to plead our case, as if He didn't "get it" the first time).

Technically, God does not need us (for Him to get the job done right), but He has chosen to use the instrumentality of men to accomplish portions of His plan (EX: Romans 10:14 - *"How shall they hear without a preacher?")*.

What this man is saying to His Lord is this: "You could have done it without me. You didn't need me." (EX: Hyper-Calvinism - Since god is going to save only the elect, He can do it without me).

V. 25

"I was afraid" - Afraid to take the "<u>risk of faith</u>." Afraid to lose or unfaithfully use what the Lord had given him.

*Remember, whatever God calls you to do, He will enable you to do.

V. 26

"Thou wicked and slothful servant" - the Lord saw through to the heart of the problem. His problem was not really a "fear" of displeasing his Lord. His problem was:

1. Wickedness - Moral evil. A life of sin kept him from being a good steward of what God entrusted to him (this man wanted sin; he didn't' care about pleasing his Lord).

2. Slothfulness - Laziness. A life of ease and laziness kept him from being faithful. He wanted to sleep rather than serve.

Perhaps the unfaithful servant "did not purposely do evil. But by doing nothing, he was committing sin and robbing his lord" (Wiersbe, p. 92)

Sins are of Commission (when we do that which is forbidden) & Omission (when we do not do that which is commanded).

"It is possible that the one-talent man thought that his one talent was not very important. He did not have five talents or even two. Why worry about one?... (however), were it not for the one-talent people in our world, very little would get accomplished" (Wiersbe, p. 92).

V. 26-27

"Thou knowest . . . thou oughtest" - If you really knew My power, you should not have feared to at least deposit what I gave you into the lives of others so they could have produced dividends and interest with them.

Be faithful because. . .

VII. There are <u>severe</u> and <u>serious</u> <u>consequences</u> for unfaithfulness (v. 28-30)

V. 28

"Use it or lose it!" - When you are unfaithful with what God entrusts into your care, He may just take it away from you and give it to someone who is faithful.

V. 29

"Unto every one that hath" - To the one who "hath" <u>been faithful</u>, more will be given. But to the one who "hath <u>not</u>" been faithful, that which was entrusted to him shall be taken away.

V. 30

"Unprofitable" - Useless, worthless

As God measures your life, is it being <u>useful</u> for His glory?

Note contrast:

<u>Little</u> faithfulness (I Cor. 3:15)result = "Suffer lost...saved yet so as by fire"
<u>No</u> faithfulness(Matthew 25)result = Hell

"Servant" - does not imply salvation. For Christ is Lord of all; therefore, all are supposed to serve Him (Judas was a servant, but was unsaved).

Four words or phrases reveal that Jesus is speaking of <u>hell</u>:

1) ***"Cast"*** (throw; hurl - Rev. 20:10, 15)

2) ***"Outer darkness"*** (Mt. 8:12)

3) ***"Weeping"*** (emotional suffering)

4) ***"Gnashing of teeth"*** (physical suffering)
SEE: 24:51

Although some commentators argue that Jesus was not describing such a horrible fate for this man, in the context, the outcome of this unfaithful servant (corresponds to) is the same as the outcome of:

The evil servant(24:51)
The 5 foolish virgins(25:10-12)
The goats on the Lord's left hand(25:41,46)

CONCLUSION:

One is not saved by how he manages the talents entrusted to him. However, how he manages the talents reveals whether or not he has been saved.

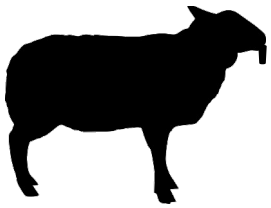
Outward works are a demonstration of inward character (Ja. 2:20, 26)

What have you done with the TRUTH God has given you?
Did you believe it?
Did you live it?
Did you give it?
(cp. Rev. 3:10)

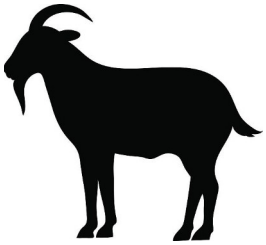
What have you done with the TIME God has given you?
Eph. 5:16 - *"Redeeming the time because the days are evil."*

What have you done with the TREASURE God has given you?
II Cor. 9:6 - *"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."*

What have you done with the TALENTS God has given you?
SEE: Romans 12:3-8



"THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS"



Matthew 25:31-46
1-27-2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 31-33. No unrighteous person will inherit the future Kingdom.

***King Jesus will one day separate the saved (*"sheep"*) from the unsaved (*"goats"*).**

I. The <u>Blessing</u> Upon the "<u>*SHEEP*</u>"(v. 34-40)



A. The <u>Verdict</u>(v. 34)
"Inherit the kingdom"

B. The <u>Evidence</u>(v. 35-36)
"...Ye took me in..."

C. The <u>Inquiry</u>(v. 37-38)
"...Lord...<u>when</u>?"

D. The <u>Summary</u>(v. 40)
"Ye have <u>done</u> it unto me"



II. The <u>Curse</u> Upon the "<u>*GOATS*</u>"(v. 41-45)

A. The <u>Verdict</u>(v. 41)
"Depart...into everlasting fire"

B. The <u>Evidence</u>(v. 42-43)
"...Ye took me <u>not</u> in"

C. The <u>Inquiry</u>(v. 44)
"...Lord...<u>when</u>?"

D. The <u>Summary</u>(v. 45)
"Ye did it <u>not</u> unto me"

"THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS"

Matthew 25:31-46
1-27-2018

INTRODUCTION:

V. 31

Christ's coming in *"glory"* which is also described in Mt. 16:27 was pictured for us (in a preview) in Matthew 17, in which Jesus was *"transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light"* (17:2).

His *"glory"* speaks of His blazing brilliance.

Christ in His first coming entered the human scene in obscurity, veiling from physical sight the splendid glory of His deity. However, when He comes the second time, all of His glory will be displayed.

"Then shall He sit" - After the Rapture and after the trumpet and bowl judgments (in the Day of the Lord's Wrath) and after the Battle of Armageddon, those survivors from all over the earth will stand before Christ, who will *"sit upon the throne of His glory"* at Mount Zion.

When the earth is regenerated (made new) and the promised utopia is ushered in, Christ will rule on His throne (Mt. 19:28 - *"And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*).

V. 32

"All nations" - All of the nations of people (Gentile & Jew) will be summoned to Jerusalem for judgment.

*Be careful not to confuse this judgment with the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20:11-15. That judgment is only of unbelievers and occurs 1,000 years after this judgment (Rev. 20:5, 11) and will involve the unsaved dead who come out of graves and the sea (v. 12, 13).

"Based on the cataclysmic events described in the book of Revelation, we can make an assessment that only a relatively small number of men and women from among the earth's more than four billion [now 7 1/2 billion] survive the seventieth week" (Rosenthal, "Zion's Fire," June 1993, p. 11).

"<u>He</u> shall separate" - The Son of man = Jesus Christ

Jesus is the only Judge (Jn. 5:22), who as the *"Good Shepherd"* (Jn. 10:11, 14), will separate His own sheep from the goats.

Give chronology of End Time events:

1. 70th Week of Daniel 9:26, 27

2. Great Tribulation

3. Rapture

4. Day of the Lord/Armageddon

5. The separation of sheep/goats (living Gentiles & Jews, who will inherit the Messianic Kingdom - over which mortals we will rule and reign)

The *"sheep and goat"* judgment will evidently take place sometime in that extra 75-day period spoken of in Daniel 12:11-12.

V. 33

"Sheep" are a common description of God's people.

The reason why Jesus uses the "sheep" motif as an illustration of His relationship to His children (John 10 and here) is because there are many similarities between sheep and people.

- --Sheep, like people, are <u>dumb</u> and will wander (if left to themselves)
  Isaiah 53:6
  - *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*
- --Sheep, like people, are <u>dirty</u> and need the cleansing that comes from the shepherd
- --Sheep, like people, are <u>dependent</u> (and require the shepherd to led, feed, and stay with them)
  Psalm 23:1-3 A Psalm of David.
  - *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. [2] He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. [3] He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

- --Sheep, like people, are <u>vulnerable</u> and need the shepherd to <u>protect</u> them
  Psalm 23:4
  - *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*
- (Sheep, like people, if abandoned would be lost, ravaged and devoured by wolves, and die)
  -

--We once like sheep went astray (Is. 53:6)

--The God Shepherd gave His life for His sheep (Jn. 10:11)

--The sheep hear His voice and follow Him (Jn. 10:27-28)

Though Sheep and Goats are anatomically very similar and have many similarities, they are totally distinct species (as sheep have 54 chromosomes, while goats have 60).

Differences between Sheep and Goats:

Distinctions	Sheep	Goats
Tail	Hangs down	Sticks up vertically
Horns	Most species have NONE	Naturally horned
Hair	Wool coats	Hair coats
Eating	Graze on ground	Browse tops of plants
Reproduction	Seasonal mating	Less Seasonal
Mating	Less prolific	More Prolific & more "Bizarre" in behavior
		Males emit Offensive Odor during mating season
Diseases	Less susceptible to parasites (worms etc.)	More susceptible to parasites (worms etc.)
Nutrition	Lower maintenance Narrow Diet	Higher maintenance Broader Diet
Social Dominance	Less aggressive	More aggressive
Behavior	More Dependent and stick to themselves	More Independent and very curious

"His right hand" - The place of honor, privilege, and blessing

EX: Jacob was careful to place his right hand on Ephraim's head rather than Manasseh's (Gen. 48:8-20).

As is the consistent teaching of Scripture, there are only two groups of people in the world (sheep and goats, saved and unsaved, believers and unbelievers, heaven-bound and hell-bound).

Incidentally, one of the most well-known symbols of Satanism today is the goat's head.

Verses 31-33. No unrighteous person will inherit the future Kingdom.

***King Jesus will one day separate the saved (*"sheep"*) from the unsaved (*"goats"*).**

I. The Blessing Upon the "*SHEEP*"(v. 34-40)

A. The Verdict(v. 34)
"Inherit the kingdom"

"Blessed" - perfect passive participle - God granted them the blessing of inheriting the Kingdom before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4 - *"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."*).

These ***"blessed" "sheep"*** will not worship the Antichrist because their names are written in God's Book before the foundation of the world (Rev. 17:8).

*Note: Although they do not become true, saved believers in Christ until after the Rapture when they *"look on Him"* as He comes in his glory, they did not receive the mark of the Beast, nor worship him nor do his bidding in persecuting God's children. Rather, they assisted God's children.

The Bible gives other examples of people who had never met Jesus Christ personally, yet evidenced God's sovereign working in their lives so that they showed deeds of kindness even before experiencing Salvation.

> For example: Cornelius, prior to hearing the Gospel of Christ performed righteous acts (alms) that were never forgotten by God. *"...And he (the Lord) said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God."* (Acts 10:4).
>
> In Luke 7:5, a Roman Centurion (whose heart God evidently was touching) had an unusually great love for others (ex. his servant) and for the Jewish people. His servants told Jesus how he *"loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue."*

"Inherit the Kingdom" - This is the Millennial Kingdom spoken about in Rev. 20:1-10.

This is the promised Golden Age which the Old Testament prophets spoke of frequently (EX: Is. 11:1-12).

Since Christ will rule the nations with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:9), there will be no corrupt government, wife-beating, child-molesting, abortion, rape, murder, pornography, drug or alcohol use tolerated.

Still in mortal bodies and able to have offspring, these people will inhabit the "*new heavens and new earth*" which the Lord will create (SEE: Is. 65:17-25).

"From the foundation of the world" - The Millennium is no afterthought of God. It was part of the plan of God since the beginning of creation. Its coming has been detained until God's timetable for the ages comes to a close (Acts 1:6-7 - *"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power."*).

B. The <u>Evidence</u>(v. 35-36)
"...Ye took me in..."

V. 35
This judgment will not be arbitrary, vague, or not objective. But the <u>outward evidence</u> which revealed inward character will be the basis of this separation.

V. 35-36
These are basic human needs, essentials for physical sustenance and emotional encouragement.

"I was in prison" - <u>not</u> in prison for crimes or corruption but for *"righteousness sake"* (Mt. 5:10).

Christians and Jews will be persecuted for their faith during the coming Tribulation (Mt. 24:9 - *"Then shall they deliver you up tot be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.").*

"During the Holocaust of World War II, hundreds of Gentiles fed, housed, and clothed Jewish people escaping the wrath of Nazism. The same will take place during the Great Tribulation" (David Levy, Israel My Glory, April 1994, p. 25).

Christ feels the hunger, thirst, solitude, cold, sickness, and unjust treatment His followers face.

C. The Inquiry(v. 37-38)
"...Lord...when?"

V. 37

Note: The *"sheep's"* astonishment and shock - a surprise of joy as contrasted with the *"goat's"* shock of woe and sorrow (v. 45).

D. The Summary(v. 40)
"Ye have done it unto me"

"Unto one" - He knows and keeps track of every single righteous deed extended toward just one of His own.

"The least" = Those Christians whom people didn't think much of; they were insignificant from human evaluation.

Many would serve the Apostle Paul or Peter, but what did you ever do for a child of God with AIDS? What have you ever done for a homeless believer? What have you ever given to a poor Christian family in need? What time and energy did you ever extend toward someone who had no means of ever repaying you?

"My brethren" - Who are Christ's brethren? Answer: Mt. 12:48-50 - those who do the will of God.

As we have *"opportunity"* (occasion of need and resources to meet that need), we are to *"do good unto all [men], especially unto them who are of the household of faith"* (Gal. 6:10).

Whatever you do for Christ's brethren, you do for Him (Prov. 19:17 - *"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will He pay him again."*)

Whatever you do against Christ's brethren, you do against Him (EX: *"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?"* (Acts 9:4).

Prov. 14:31 - *"He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor."*

"Ye have done it unto me" - Because of Christ's oneness (Eph. 5:30; I Cor. 6:15) with His believers, to do something for them is to do it for Him.

The Lord never forgets what you do for His people.

Heb. 6:10 - *"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."*

The Lord repays even the most minimal deed done for His people (*"For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward"* - Mark 9:41).

II. The Curse Upon the "*GOATS*"(v. 41-45)

A. The Verdict(v. 41)
"Depart...into everlasting fire"

"Depart from me" - go away from me (be removed from my presence)

"Ye cursed" - All who reject Christ are under a curse -- the curse of the Law which they broke (Gal. 3:10) -- but a curse which Christ died to break and remove from us (Gal. 3:13).

"Everlasting fire" - the fires of Hell (Luke 16:24).

"Prepared for the devil and his angels" - Hell was not originally made for man; God created that place of torment for Satan and the demons who fell with him (Is. 14:9-15; Rev. 12:9).

Note the contrasts:

"Come (v. 34) . . . *depart*" (v. 41)
"*Blessed* (v. 34) . . . *cursed*" (v. 41)
"*Kingdom prepared for you* (v. 34). . . *everlasting fire prepared for the devil"* (v. 41)

B. The Evidence(v. 42-43)
"...Ye took me not in"

Note: These people are not condemned for mistreating God's people (i.e. treating them badly), but for not positively doing good for God's people.

C. The Inquiry(v. 44)
"...Lord...when?"

D. The Summary(v. 45)
"Ye did it not unto me"

"Obviously everyone present at the sheep and goats judgment will realize who Christ is, and if given a second chance would be willing to sacrifice all for the sake of Christ rather than spend eternity in the Lake of fire." (VanKampen, The Sign, p. 389). However, such a second chance will not be offered.

"Ye did it not to Me" - To fail to ever do something for *"one of the least"* of Christ's brethren is to fail to serve Him. And to fail to serve Him is fatal!

CONCLUSION: Verse 46

The words *"everlasting"* and *"eternal"* are the same Greek word - *aionion*. Therefore, the everlasting punishment will last as long as the eternal life does. If one is forever, so is the other.

Two groups of people:
*"**These . . . the righteous"***

Two eternal destinies:
"Everlasting punishment. . . life eternal"

It was <u>not</u> the service (v. 35-37) that earned the *"sheep"* eternal life; <u>nor</u> was it the absence of service that was the core reason why the *"goats"* went into everlasting punishment.

It was God's sovereign grace in the sheep (that resulted in fruitfulness) which was the <u>root</u> cause of their *"life eternal"* and it was the absence of God's sovereign grace in the goats which resulted in their fruitlessness and condemnation.

"To fail to serve Christ's people is to fail to serve Him, and to fail to serve Him is to prove one does not belong to Him." (MacArthur, p. 126).

The Bible teaches that you cannot separate <u>action</u> from <u>attitude</u>. The right <u>attitude</u> of <u>faith</u> will always produce the right <u>action</u> of <u>love</u>.

Everyone who has God's salvation will have an imputed righteousness which will show itself by one's actions toward others (SEE: James 2:14-26).

I John 2:29 - *"If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him."* I Jn. 3:7 - *"Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."*

"The righteous" - How does one become righteous?

--Believe God's <u>Word</u> (EX: Abraham - Rom. 4:3 - *"For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.")* (Cp. 4:9; Gen. 15:6; Gal. 3:6)

--Receive God's <u>Son</u> (II Cor. 5:20-21 - *"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as thou God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.")* (cp. Jn. 1:12).

For all who reject Christ's salvation (provided at His first coming) will face His judgment (executed at His second coming).

"SHE DID A GOOD WORK"

Matthew 26:1-16

2-3-2019

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 6

A great contrast:

The religious leaders hated Him,

The disciples dishonored Him,

Judas Iscariot betrayed Him,

But Mary (sister of Martha & Lazarus) loved and worshipped Jesus.

***What will you do for Jesus?**

Six features of Mary's good work for Jesus Christ:

I. **Mary Made a Great SACRIFICE**(v. 7a)
when she did a good work for Jesus

II. **Mary Showed Great HUMILITY and AFFECTION** (v. 7b)
when she did a good work for Jesus

III. **Mary Overcame Great OBSTACLES**(v. 8-10a)
when she did a good work for Jesus

IV. **Mary had Great PRIORITIES** (v. 10b-11)
when she did a good work for Jesus

V. **Mary Revealed Great FAITH**(v. 12)
when she did a good work for Jesus

VI. **Mary Left a Great MEMORY**(v. 13)
when she did a good work for Jesus

CONCLUSION: Verses 14-16

"SHE DID A GOOD WORK"

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***What will you do for Jesus?**

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I. Mary Made a Great _____(v. 7a)
when she did a good work for Jesus

II. Mary Showed Great _____ and _____ (v. 7b)
when she did a good work for Jesus

III. Mary Overcame Great _____(v. 8-10a)
when she did a good work for Jesus

IV. Mary had Great _____ (v. 10b-11)
when she did a good work for Jesus

V. Mary Revealed Great _____(v. 12)
when she did a good work for Jesus

VI. Mary Left a Great _____(v. 13)
when she did a good work for Jesus

CONCLUSION: Verses 14-16

"SHE DID A GOOD WORK"

Matthew 26:1-16

2-3-2019

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 6

V. 1

"When Jesus had finished all these sayings" - After the Olivet Discourse, in which Jesus gave specific details regarding His second coming, He now gives the disciples details about how His first coming would end.

V. 2

"After two days" - If Passover (14th Nissan) occurred on Friday, this would have been Wednesday that these events occurred.

The omniscient Christ knew that on Passover, He (as the Passover Lamb) would be killed. He also knew how He would die: by crucifixion (Gal. 3:13).

V. 3

Religious people (priests, scribes, elders) gathered at a religious place (the palace of the High Priest) to do Satan's work!

Just because people are religious doesn't mean they are of God!

Caiaphas was like the powerful pope of Judaism who served as High Priest from A.D. 15 to 37.

V. 4

"Consulted" = to plot together

"Subtilty" = by guile, trickery, or deceit

Because they didn't know who Jesus was, they actually thought they could trick Him and kill Him without His suspecting it (however, He was one step ahead of them and had already on numerous occasions foretold His death - Mt. 16:21, 17:22, 20:18, 26:2).

V. 5

"Not on the Feast Day" - not on the Passover. Yet that was the very day Christ said He would die (v. 2).

"Lest there be an uproar" - They would have to seize Christ quietly and privately so as to not stir up the crowd who were "pro-Jesus."

Judas would become their man for a quick and easy betrayal (Lk. 22:6).

V. 6

"Now when Jesus was in Bethany" - Matthew deliberately takes an event (v. 6-133) which occurred *"six days"* before the day of Passover (Jn. 12:1) and thematically interjects it in the midst of Christ's rejection by the religious leaders (v. 1-5) and by Judas Iscariot (v. 14-16) to make a point.

[Christ's rejection by the religious leaders occurred two days prior to Passover - v. 2]

The point God is making by moving this account out of chronological order is this:

--The religious leaders hated Him
--Judas betrayed Him
--But a woman loved and worshipped Him

"In Bethany" - In the same town of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead (Jn. 11).

"In the house of Simon the leper" A man who no doubt was cured from leprosy by Christ. In the house was a former leper! Plus a former dead man raised to life!

"Lazarus" - sat at the table while his sister Martha served the food (Jn. 12:2).

V. 7

"A woman" - Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus (Jn. 12:3). The same Mary whose devotion tot Christ was evident when she sat at his feet and listened to Him (Luke 10:39).

Mary no doubt had heard Jesus state that He would be crucified, and she believed Him and anointed Him as a parting kind deed (v. 12).

This Mary is not:Mary Magdalene (who had 7 demons cast out of her by Jesus - Mk. 16:9)
Mary, the mother of Jesus'incarnation, the wife of Joseph

Matthew gives us a definite contrast between Mary's worship and Judas' betrayal (Wiersbe, p. 94); between Mary's worship and the religious leaders plot to kill; between Mary's worship and the disciples' misplaced priorities.

A great contrast:

The religious leaders hated Him,
The disciples dishonored Him,
Judas Iscariot betrayed Him,
But Mary (sister of Martha & Lazarus) loved and worshipped Jesus.

***What will you do for Jesus?**

Six features of Mary's good work for Jesus Christ:

I. **Mary Made a Great <u>SACRIFICE</u>**(v. 7a)
when she did a good work for Jesus

"Alabaster box" - contained about a pound of ointment; half a liter (Jn. 12:3).

"Precious ointment" - spikenard (Jn. 12:3)

Very costly perfume of pure nard, valued at a <u>year's wages</u> for a common worker or soldier.

In ancient Israel, such an anointing of fragrant oil would have been extremely refreshing (cp. Ps. 133:2).

"Being absolutely controlled by adoration for her Lord, she lost all sense of restraint and economy" (MacArthur, p. 134).

God loves a *"cheerful giver"* (II Cor. 9:7).

II. Mary Showed Great <u>HUMILITY</u> and <u>AFFECTION</u> (v. 7b)
when she did a good work for Jesus

"Poured it on his head" - John, who also was at the table, records that Mary also anointed Jesus' feet with the ointment and wiped His feet with her hair filling the whole house with the aroma of the perfume (Jn. 12:3).

"A woman's hair is her glory (I Cor. 11:15). She surrendered her glory to the Lord and worshipped Him" (Wiersbe, p. 95).

Mary's life is only recorded 3 times in the Gospels, and at each time she is at the <u>feet</u> of Jesus -

1) To hear the Word (Lk. 10:38-42)
2) In sorrow after her brother's death (Jn. 11:28-32)
3) Now, to anoint Him

"Mary was a deeply spiritual woman. She found at His feet her <u>blessing</u>; she brought to His feet her <u>burdens</u>; and she gave at His feet her <u>best</u>" (Wiersbe, p. 94-95).

Out of a grateful heart, Mary worships Jesus for what He did for her personally and for what He did for her brother Lazarus.

Another woman offered a similar act of worship in <u>Luke 7:36-39.</u>

III. Mary Overcame Great <u>OBSTACLES</u>(v. 8-10a)
when she did a good work for Jesus

V. 8
"Indignation" - The indignation was *"within themselves"* (Mk. 14:4).

"<u>Disciples</u> (plural) ***saw it, <u>they</u> had indignation" -*** perhaps <u>all</u> of the disciples became upset by what they viewed as a "waste."

"To what purpose is this waste?" - "A whole year's income wasted in one minute!", They thought. "Why this waste of ointment?! Mary, why didn't you sell that perfume and put the money to real use?!"

*Nothing we give to Jesus is a waste!

(EX: the person who happened to see the size of a check a believer was putting in the offering plate -- looked horrified at the large amount and said, "Why don't you give that to me? <u>I</u> need it!")

It was actually Judas which instigated the murmuring (Jn. 12:4-6 - *"Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray Him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief and had the bag, and bare what was put therein."*).

Satan always seems to have his tares among the wheat, which spread their poison to others.

It was not "waste" but <u>worship</u> she gave Jesus.

If anything was a waste, it was the life of Judas Iscariot. He wasted privileges, opportunities, his life, and his soul! Jesus called him *"son of perdition"* (Jn. 17:12) which literally means "son of waste" (Wiersbe, p. 95).

V. 9
"Sold for much" - *"more than three hundred pence"* (Mk. 14:5) (300 denarii, or approximately a year's salary of a rural worker - Ryrie note).

Their criticism of Mary sounded so "spiritual." They were totally blind to the very high act of spirituality Mary was showing.

"Everytime Mary sought to do something for Jesus, she was misunderstood. Her sister Martha misunderstood her when Mary sat at Jesus' feet to hear Him teach the Word. Judas and the other disciples misunderstood her when she anointed Jesus. Her friends and neighbors misunderstood her when she came out of the house to meet Jesus after Lazarus had been buried (Jn. 11:28-31). When we give Jesus Christ first place in our lives, we can expect to be misunderstood and criticized by those who claim to follow Him" (Wiersbe, p. 95).

V. 10

"Why trouble ye the woman?" - Mark records that they *"murmured against her"* (they scolded her; they rebuked her harshly).

Perhaps they thought that Jesus (being the practical Lord He was) would have agreed with them, that this was not "good stewardship."

"Why trouble ye the woman?" - Why are you bothering this woman who is serving me?

Well meaning people often do cause trouble to those who are expending time, money, energy, and service to Christ. Without realizing it, because they are walking in the flesh, or listening to disgruntled instigators, they are a bother rather than a blessing to those living for Christ.

IV. Mary had Great <u>PRIORITIES</u> (v. 10b-11)
when she did a good work for Jesus

V. 10b

"She hath wrought a good work upon Me" - She did not <u>waste</u> her perfume, she invested it!

Rather than letting it gather dust at home, or using it solely on herself, she gave it all to Christ!

What good works have you done directly for Jesus lately? (works you did <u>not</u> do to receive the recognition of others, but to simply please Jesus?)

V. 11

"For ye have the poor always with you" - This was not a calloused or cold remark toward the poor; rather, Christ is saying, "You will have many, many more opportunities to do kind deeds for the poor, but this was her last chance to do something for me (in the flesh) before my death and burial."

We must make time for meeting the needs of the poor (Gal. 6:10), for evangelizing the lost (Mk. 16:15), for discipling the saved (Mt. 28:19-20), for teaching God's Word . . . but at the heart of all ministry lies the necessity to worship Jesus!

V. Mary Revealed Great <u>FAITH</u>(v. 12)
when she did a good work for Jesus

"Though the disciples ignored Christ's many predictions of His approaching death, apparently this woman (Mary) believed them" (Ryrie note).

"She did it for my burial" - Rather than using it to anoint His body when He was dead, she used it *"aforehand"* (Mk. 14:8) before He died.

(We often think to do something for someone after they are dead and neglect them while they are alive!)

VI. Mary Left a Great <u>MEMORY</u>(v. 13)
when she did a good work for Jesus

"This gospel" - What gospel?

The gospel of His <u>death</u> (v. 2) and <u>burial</u> (v. 12). The Gospel is Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (I Cor. 15:1-3).

"A memorial" - Mary's memory will be as sweet as the fragrance that filled that room the day she spent a year's wages on the Lord.

What memories will you leave behind?

After your life's work is ended and God calls you home, what will people remember you for? What will come to their mind when they recall your name? What legacy will you leave? What will the wording be in your eulogy?

Her memory encourages us to love and serve Christ with our very best.

CONCLUSION: Verses 14-16

V. 14

"Then . . . Judas . . . went" -Upon seeing what he viewed as a tremendous waste of money, he became so indignant that he could not stand it any longer. This was the "last straw" (the "straw that broke the camel's back").

His self-centered anger was all it took to open the door for Satan (Eph. 4:26-27).

No doubt, the Lord's rebuke also moved Judas to anger.

"Judas Iscariot went" **-**Satan literally entered into Satan (Lk. 22:3).

V. 15

"What will ye give me?" - Judas' god was not Jesus Christ, but money.

What price tag would pull you away from Christ? One million? 100 million?

For Judas, the price of a slave (Ex. 21:32) was all it took.

"So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver" (Zech. 11:26

What is it that you would not give up for Jesus?

Isn't He worth your time, energy, money, possessions, your very life?

The Sovereignty of Jesus in

THE FINAL PASSOVER

Matthew 26:17-30

2/17/2019

INTRODUCTION:

***Jesus Christ was in full <u>sovereign control</u> as the <u>final Passover Lamb</u> who would die for the sin of the world!**

I. Jesus made <u>sovereign preparations</u> to celebrate the final Passover (v. 17-20)

II. Jesus made <u>sovereign predictions</u> of His betrayal & death at the final Passover (v. 21-25)

III. Jesus established a <u>sovereign perpetual reminder</u> of the true significance of the final Passover (v. 26-30)

CONCLUSION: Is Jesus Christ your Passover Lamb?

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CONCLUSION: Is Jesus Christ your Passover Lamb?

The Sovereignty of Jesus in
THE FINAL PASSOVER

Matthew 26:17-30
2/17/2019

INTRODUCTION:

Describe the story of the Exodus - Israel's bondage in Egypt and the ten plagues.

Read the Passover story - Exodus 12:1-27

In Matthew 26, we find Jesus partaking in the final Passover. And He is described by every Gospel writer as being in full control of that event and of his betrayal, arrest, crucifixion, death and resurrection.

The Lord is Sovereign What is sovereignty?
It describes His authority over all creation. His rulership, His authority, His throne. God is "subject to none, influenced by none, absolutely independent; God does as He pleases, only as He pleases, always as He pleases" (Pink).

God says, "I will do all my pleasure" (Is. 46:10). God is working all things "after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11).

a. God is sovereign over HEAVEN & EARTH (Deut. 10:14-17)
(God is in control of the universe)

God has every right and ability to be sovereign over creation because He is the Creator of it (II Ki. 19:15).

God is called: "Possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14:19)

The harlot Rahab admitted: "The LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Josh. 2:11).

1) God is in control of Heaven

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be cone on earth as it is in heaven. Thine is the kingdom. . ." (Mt. 6:10, 13)

2) God is in control of Earth

". . . the earth is the Lord's" (Ex. 9:26).

Ps. 24:1 - "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein."

Who is regulating affairs on this earth today--God or the devil? (Pink). God or man? God or mere chance?

a) God controls the earth's weather

(1) Miraculously - Exod. 9:29 (hailstorm in Egypt)
Josh. 10:12-14 (sun stood still for 24 extra hours)
James 5:17-18 (rain delay for 3 years & 6 months)

(2) Providentially -
The Lord upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3)
"By Him all things consist (hold together)" (Col.1:17)

b) God controls the earth's food supply
EX: 7 year famine in Canaan & Egypt (Gen. 41:29-32)

b. God is sovereign over KINGS & NATIONS
(God is in control of emperors and empires)

Seated infinitely above every seat of power, exalted above every ruler, elevated above every emperor, raised above every King and Queen, advanced above every President, above every dignitary, every guru,…sits the Supreme One of the Universe.

1) God is in control of kings

God is "He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that bringeth the princes to nothing; He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity" (Is. 40:22-23).

SEE: Prov. 21:1 - "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD. . ." (cp. Ezra 6:22, 7:27).

It is God who removes kings and sets up kings (Dan. 2:21).

EX: Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:3, 17, 25, 35-37)
Belshazzar (Dan. 5:18, 26-28)

2) God is in control of nations (Deut. 32:8, 39)

He withholds land from those to whom He chooses (Deut. 2:19).

"The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble" (Ps. 90:1).

Every knee will one day bow (Is. 45:28).

c. God is sovereign over the lives of EACH INDIVIDUAL
(God is in control of all that has breath)

Moses called the LORD - "The God of the spirits of all flesh"
God Himself declared: "Behold, all souls are mine" (Ezek. 18:4).
"We are clay, He is the potter" (Jer. 18:6).

1) Man's personality and abilities from conception are in His hands
(Ps. 139:13-16; Ex. 4:11)

Example of Jeremiah: God sovereignly prepared and ordained this man to be His prophet even before birth (Jer. 1:4-8)
Example of Paul: God…"separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace" (Gal.1:15)

Solomon observed "that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God" (Eccl. 9:1).

No one has any strength unless God allows it; no one has any wealth, fame, wisdom or power unless God allows it.

As Jesus said to Pilate, who thought he had power to either crucify or release Jesus: "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." (Jn. 19:11a)

2) Man's circumstances of life are in His hands

God "hath determined the times before appointed" (Acts 17:26).

3) Man's very breath and heart beat are in His hands

In God's "hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind." (Job 12:10).

". . . None can keep alive his own soul" (Ps. 22:29).
". . . I have the keys of death and hell" (Rev. 1:18).

Jesus has all authority (Mt. 28:19) over:
a) the timing of death, and
b) the place of the departed dead

"It is appointed (reserved) unto man once to die…" (Heb.9:27)

When God says you have breathed your last breath, you will not breathe another"

Sovereignty does not exclude human responsibility

"Is man a mere puppet whose actions are determined by a behind-the-scenes God who pulls the strings as it pleases Him?" (Tozer, p. 184).

A belief in God's sovereignty is not a fatalistic attitude.

We cannot have a "whatever will be, will be" attitude.

God has given man a will by which we can choose to do His will or not to choose to do His will.

God is so sovereign that He can give mankind freedom of choice, and yet everything still fulfills His perfect plan.

"A God less than sovereign could not bestow moral freedom upon His creatures. He would be afraid to do so" (Tozer, p. 185).

Everything will turn out as God planned it would even though man is a free moral agent with liberty to make choices for which he is responsible.

Sovereignty does not exclude human accountability.

Man will answer for his own sin. God is not responsible for it.

***Jesus Christ was in full <u>sovereign control</u> as the <u>final Passover Lamb</u> who would die for the sin of the world!**

I. Jesus made <u>sovereign preparations</u> to celebrate the final Passover (v. 17-20)

V. 17

"The <u>first</u> day of the feast" = the 14th day of Nisan (the Babylonian name of the month) (Abib = the Canaanite name - Dt. 16:1)

This was the 14th day of the first month on the Hebrew calendar (March-April).

This was the first day of a week-long celebration of unleavened bread. The week would begin with the Passover Lamb being killed (Lk. 22:7) and then eaten as part of the Passover meal.

"Where wilt thou?" - It was not a matter of *"if"* they would celebrate Passover, but "*<u>where</u>.*" The Jewish disciples were to give unquestioned obedience to this ceremonial law of Israel.

"Prepare" - "In crowded Jerusalem, Peter and John would have had to secure the bread and bitter herbs, as well as the wine, for the feast. They would have had to find a perfect lamb, and then have had the lamb slain in the court of the temple and the blood put on the altar. The lamb would be roasted whole, and then the feast would be ready." (Wiersbe, p. 96)

V. 18
"Go into the city" = the crowded city of Jerusalem

"To such a man" - The omniscient Lord Jesus further described this *"man"* as being on who would meet them carrying a *"pitcher of water."* (Mk. 14:13) ("Since women usually performed this task, they would easily notice a man carrying water" - Ryrie note).

"The Master saith" - the authoritative <u>teacher</u>.
Note: The disciples don't merely say "<u>our</u> teacher" as if Jesus was only their teacher, but "<u>the</u> teacher," since He is the only authoritative truth giver for all people (*. . . "<u>One</u> is your teacher. . . even Christ"* - Mt. 23:8)

"My time *(kairos)* ***is at hand" -*** God's sovereign time table for the most significant, momentous sacrifice had come. The time for Christ's fulfillment of the Passover sacrifice had come.

Now the Old Testament prophecies, types, and foreshadows would be accomplished by the death of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29).

"At thy house" - This specially ordained house would have a guest chamber in a large upper room that would be fully furnished (Lk. 22:11-12).

It is amazing how the Lord always has everything fully arranged, set, and in place to fulfill His sovereign will.

*Let Him prepare the way for you in life. He will smooth out your path if you trust Him to (Prov. 3:5-6).

The Lord's sovereign preparation was previously exemplified as He commanded the disciples to go and take a <u>colt</u> which was sovereignly reserved just for Jesus' triumphal entry on Palm Sunday (SEE: Mark 11:2-7).

V. 20

"Even" - evening; on the brink of the 15th of Nissan (the Jewish day began at sundown - 6:00 p.m.). (This day would be the very day Christ would die.)

By collating all of the Gospel accounts, the order of events that night was:

1) Eating the Passover meal (Jn. 13:1-4)
2) Washing the disciples' feet (Jn. 13:5-20)
3) Identifying one who would betray Him (Jn. 13:21-27)
4) Then the disciples' quarrel as to who was the greatest among them (Lk. 22:24-30)
5) The institution of the Lord's Supper (Lk. 22:19-20; with Judas present - v. 21)
6) Judas departs to betray Christ (Jn. 13:30)
7) Messages and prayer in the upper room (Jn. 14 - 17)
8) A hymn in the upper room (Mt. 26:30)
9) Walk to the Mount of Olives to the Garden of Gethsemane (Jn. 18:1)
10) Christ's statement that all including Peter would deny Him (Mk. 14:26-31)
11) Christ's anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt. 26:36-46)
12) Christ's betrayal and arrest (Mt. 26:47-56)

"He sat down" - lit. He reclined

II. Jesus made <u>sovereign predictions</u> of His betrayal & death at the final Passover (v. 21-25)

V. 21

"One of you shall <u>betray</u> Me" - To "betray" is to hand over or deliver someone to their enemy.

Can you imagine the amazement, the shock, the horror at the thought that one of the twelve who walked with Christ, ate with Christ, heard His messages, saw His miracles, received power themselves to perform miracles, witnessed for Christ, witnessed His impeccable sinless life. . . that one would give Him over to the devil's crowd.

V. 22

"Exceeding sorrowful" - They were deeply grieved, very saddened. Instant depression overcame them

They know by now <u>not</u> even to think about questioning the validity of His statement. Hence, they don't ask, "Is it true?" But "Is it I?"

The question is asked in such a way as to expect a "No" answer.

"Lord, is it I?" - lit. "I am not [the one] Lord, [am I]?". "Surely it is not me, Lord, is it"

The way they ask the question proves that each thought that he could never do such a thing.

So they each look at each other with bewilderment (Jn. 13:22). John was reclining next to Jesus, and Peter gets John's attention and whispers, "Ask Him who it is" (Jn. 13:23-25).

Judas must have been a <u>master at deception</u>; no one except Jesus suspected him.

What is amazing is that no one has the foggiest idea as to who it might be. Even when Judas leaves the upper room in haste, they don't assume he is the culprit. Rather, they thought he was buying some more food for the Passover Feast, or that he was going out with his pouch of money to show benevolence to the poor (Jn. 13:29).

"They did not see any difference in the way Jesus treated Judas, which is remarkable testimony to our Lord's patience and love" (Wiersbe, p. 96).

If in a group of twelve apparently committed disciples, one was a traitor to Christ, it would be safe for us to assume that perhaps in a group the size of this congregation that a "Judas Iscariot" might be present. Someone no one would expect not to be a Christian. It is imperative, therefore, that each of us seriously examines our faith and the condition of our hearts before God.

V. 23

"He that dippeth" = lit. "the one who has (already) dipped" (aorist participle). The one who dipped may have known, but it would have been impossible for anyone else to have known, since they were all dipping into the Charoseth" (a dip of ground fruits [apples, dates, and pomegranates] and nuts).

At one point in the night, Jesus and Judas had both reached their hands out to moisten and flavor their bread in the dish.

Later, Jesus then (in a gesture of friendship and love) gave a dipped morsel to Judas, who ate it and then left to betray Him, after Jesus cryptically (yet in full awareness of what He was saying) said, *"That thou doest, do quickly"* (Jn. 13:26-27).

V. 24

"As it is written" - Judas' betrayal did not catch God by surprise (Ps. 41:9 - *"Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."* cp. John 13:18-19).

Christ's death was predicted hundreds of years prior to the event (Is. 53).

"Matthew 26:24 presents both the human and the divine sides of this event. From the divine point of view, Judas' treachery was predicted in Scripture and was part of the plan of God. But from the human point of view, Judas was guilty of a base crime and was completely responsible for what he did. Divine sovereignty and human responsibility are not in conflict, even though we may not be able to understand how they work together to fulfill God's will." (Wiersbe, p. 96).

"Woe" - an expression of sorrow and pity (like "I feel sorry for him!" "I pity you")

"It had been good for that man if he had not been born" - Judas, who had the greatest privilege, will be judged with the greatest severity (Lk. 12:47-48 - v. 47 - *"And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes."*) (II Pet. 2:21 - *"For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."*).

Judas was part of the most elite group of people in history. He also had an important responsibility as treasurer for the twelve.

> Remember, the more privilege and opportunity you have, the higher you are, and the higher you are, the harder you fall!

Judas, after throwing down the 30 pieces of silver, hung himself (Mt. 27:5), burst open in the mid-section of his body (Acts 1:18), and then went to *"his own place"* (Acts 1:25) -- that is, to perdition (destruction) (Jn. 17:12).

Rejecting Christ is man's way of shaking his fist at God and saying, "No! I don't want you in my life!" Hell is God's way of saying, "Okay, you may have your wish!"

V. 25

Judas, who had previously agreed with the Jewish religious leaders for 30 pieces of silver to betray Jesus (v. 15-16), perhaps thought that the Lord Jesus didn't know what he had done. Maybe Jesus didn't know after all . . . or maybe He did!

"Master, is it I?" - "Master, I am not the one, am I?" The disciples had said, *"Lord (kurios), is it I?"*; whereas Judas significantly used the term *"Master (rabbi), is it I?"*

Judas viewed Jesus as *"Rabbi"* (teacher) but never *"Lord" (God)*!

Who is Jesus to you?

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9).

"Thou hast said" - (a common expression of Christ in response to questions - Mt. 26:64, 27:11). "You have said it yourself"; "It is as you have said."

Judas' own words would condemn him (*"By your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned")*.

III. Jesus established a <u>sovereign perpetual reminder</u> of the true significance of the final Passover (v. 26-30)

V. 26

"As they were eating" - i.e. as they resumed eating the Passover meal

Jesus took two elements of the Passover meal to illustrate his impending death and to institute something new.

Jesus introduces what would be perpetually known throughout the Church Age as "The Lord's Supper."

"Bread" - a loaf of unleavened bread (since no leaven was allowed any where in sight on Passover - Dt. 16:3-4).

The <u>unleavened</u> bread was the bread of "affliction," showing how the Israelites had to eat it in a <u>hurry</u> without waiting for yeast to cause it to rise (Dt. 16:3).

The *"unleavened"* bread also pictures the pure, sinless, undefiled, unhypocritical life and body of Jesus (I Cor. 5:6-8 *V. 7 - *"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."*)

Whereas Passover typified Christ's sinlessness and death, unleavened bread typified His uncorruptness in His burial (Acts 2:27, 31, 35).

"Blessed it" - gave *"thanks"* (I Cor. 11:24). Although He had previously eaten bread and food, Jesus pauses to give thanks because He was establishing a pattern for his followers to model at the "Lord's table" (I Cor. 11:23-26).

"Brake it" - the breaking of the common loaf symbolized two things:

1) How Christ's <u>Body</u> would be <u>broken</u> on the cross (I Cor. 11:24) [not His bones (Jn. 19:33, 36) but His flesh (I Pet. 2:24)].

2) How <u>each</u> person must personally <u>appropriate</u> the <u>one</u> Christ by faith (Jn. 6:51 - *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*) (I Cor. 10:17 - *". . . we are all <u>partakers</u> of that <u>one bread</u>")*

"This is my body" - Obviously, the disciples saw that Christ was speaking figuratively (the bread being a symbol or picture of Christ's Body). He was not teaching cannibalism nor transubstantiation.

V. 27

"Drink ye all of it" - All of you drink it

Some Bible interpreters believe that Judas was not present at this Last Supper because He left immediately after receiving the sop (Jn. 13:30). However, the statement of Luke 22:21, *"But, behold the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table"* in the context of the Lord's Supper seems to indicate that Judas was present.

Note: The fact that Judas was present is proof that one does not receive efficacious grace by receiving the elements of the Lord's Supper.

V. 28

"This is my blood" - The unfermented grape juice pictures Christ's pure blood (note: An unfermented juice would best correspond to the "unfermented" [unleavened] bread that was eaten at this meal).

What is a ***"testament"***? A covenant; a binding promise. It is like a "will" which goes into effect after the death of the one who wrote it (Heb. 9:16-17).

"Blood of the new testament" - i.e. the blood which would provide a new covenant.

Every time God established a covenant, the blood of an innocent animal was shed to confirm that covenant --

--EX: The Noaic Covenant (Gen. 8:20)
--EX: The Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 15:7-21)
--EX: The Mosaic Covenant (Ex. 24:6-8; cp. Heb. 9:18-20)

The first covenant was conditional: I will bless you if you are faithful
The second covenant was unconditional: I will bless you because of Christ's sacrifice

When we speak of our Bible being an Old Testament and a New Testament, we are not saying that the Old was bad and needed to be replaced by a New (as some Muslims falsely assume). Rather, the New fulfilled the Old. The Old predicted the New (Jer. 31:31-34).

The New accomplished what the Old could not! Namely:

1) A change of heart
2) Fellowship with God
3) Knowledge of the Lord
4) Forgiveness of sins

"Shed . . . for the remission of sins" -

It is not merely the blood, but the shed blood on Calvary's cross that saves (when the proper emphasis is placed on the word "shed", the modern confusion over the blood issue is resolved).

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mt. 26:28; cp. Mk. 12:24; Lk. 22:20).

"Without the shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

1) The cross of Christ and the blood of Christ are theologically indivisible in Scripture -
"And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto Himself" (Col. 1:20).

2) Christ's death and blood are linked together in Scripture.
"Christ died for us. . . justified by His blood" (Rom. 5:8-9).

3) Jesus' suffering is linked with His shed blood.
"Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without [outside] the gate" (Heb. 13:12).

4) Note the connection between Christ's blood, his offering of his flesh and His death on the cross in Eph. 2:13-16.

"By the blood (v.13). . .in His flesh (v.15). . ."by the cross" (v.16)

*Salvation is provided because of the fact that Christ's literal, physical blood was shed on the cross to make atonement for sin.

To be precise: We are saved by Christ's one-time act of shedding His blood (Heb. 9:22) and not by some supposed enduring "eternal" blood that was retrieved from the ground under the cross, carried to Heaven and

literally sprinkled on the mercy seat (an erroneous view promoted by the commentator John A. Bengel).

Interesting Analogies:

Note: In the Old Testament sacrificial system, the blood of the animal was applied to the horns on the altar (Exod. 29:12; Lev. 4:18). Just as the horns held the sacrifice to the altar, so Christ was fastened to the cross by spikes - the blood applied to the horns was perhaps a symbolic foreshadowing of Christ's blood that would spurt out when He was held to the cross.

Note: The rest of the blood was then poured out at the base of the altar into the ground. In similar manner, Christ's blood was spilled below the cross (Exod. 29:12; Lev. 1:15; 3:2; 4:18, 25, 30, 34, etc.; cp. Jn. 19:34).

The blood "atonement is the scarlet chord running through every page in the entire Bible. Cut the Bible anywhere and it bleeds; it is red with redemptive truth." (William Evans).

"Remission of sins" - The forgiveness of sins; the releasing of sins (because of Christ's shed blood, God no longer holds our sins against us who believe).

"For many" - i.e. for multitudes Christ's <u>one</u> death will save <u>multitudes</u>. This verse is <u>not</u> teaching a "limited atonement." Although, in the final outcome only a limited number will benefit from what His bloodshed accomplished. However, Christ's death was sufficient for all men.

1) *I John 2:1-2 - "He is the propitiation for <u>our sins</u>; and <u>not for ours only</u>, but also for the sins of the <u>whole world</u>."*

2) *I Timothy 2:4 - "Who will have <u>all men to be saved</u> and come unto the knowledge of the truth"*

3) *I Timothy 2:6 - "Who gave Himself <u>a ransom for all</u>"*

4) *I Timothy 4:10 - "Who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe" (Christ's death is <u>sufficient</u> for all, but only <u>efficient</u> for those who believe)*

5) *Hebrews 2:9 - "Christ...tasted death for <u>every man</u>"*

6) *Titus 2:11 - "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared <u>to all men</u>"*

7) *II Peter 2:1 - "False teachers . . . even denying the Lord that <u>bought them</u>"*

8) God offers salvation to **"<u>all</u>"** (Is. 53:6; Mt. 11:28; Rom. 3:22; 5:18; Acts 17:30; II Pet. 3:9)

9) God offers salvation to the **"<u>world</u>"** (Jn. 1:29, 3:16-17; II Cor. 5:18-20; I Jn. 4:14)

10) God offers salvation to the **"<u>whosoevers</u>"** (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 10:13; Rev. 22:17) ("Whosoever" occurs 110 times in the New Testament)

Christ's shed blood provides many other blessings as well

That <u>past</u>, completed sacrifice gives <u>present</u> blessings!

Because Jesus over 2,000 years ago shed His blood for sinners, believers now have the following blessings:

1) Propitiation (Rom. 3:25)
2) Justification (Rom. 5:9)
3) Redemption(Eph. 1:7; cp. Acts 20:28; Col.1:14; Heb.9:12; I Pet.1:19; Rev.5:9)
4) Intimacy with God (Eph. 2:13)
5) Forgiveness (Col. 1:14; Rev. 1:5)
6) Reconciliation (peace)(Col. 1:20)
7) Boldness in prayer(Heb. 10:19)
8) Sanctification (Heb. 13:12; cp. Rev. 7:14)
9) Power to overcome(Rev. 12:11)

Why don't we celebrate the "<u>Passover</u>" as Christians? Three reasons:

1) No more <u>Passover lambs</u> are to be killed (Heb. 8 - 10) (*"Christ <u>our</u> Passover is sacrificed for us"* - I Cor. 5:7).

2) The Passover was a feast to be observed only by the <u>nation of Israel</u>, who alone were brought out of the bondage of Pharaoh in Egypt (Ex. 12:1ff).

3) The "<u>Lord's Supper</u>" instituted by Christ on Passover, became a <u>replacement</u> for Passover (The Early Church in Acts or the Epistles were never admonished to celebrate the Passover but were told to celebrate the Lord's Supper - I Cor. 11).

V. 29

Christ has been in Heaven for nearly 2,000 years and has not taken a sip of the fruit of the vine since. He is awaiting that eventual reunion in the future millennial kingdom when He will enjoy the fellowship of his resurrected and regenerated saints in that kingdom to come (Micah 4:4; Mt. 6:10; Acts 1:6-7; Rev. 20:4-9).

"New" may refer to:

1. "New wine" - i.e. not fermented (Zech. 9:17; Mt. 9:17)

2. A new type of wine - i.e. from trees bearing 12 types of fruit (Rev. 22:2)

3. A "renewed" (NIV) fellowship in the kingdom

Until Jesus comes back, we are to remember His death with this memorial service (I Cor. 11:25-26)

V. 30

"Sung an hymn" - Probably all or part of Ps. 115 - 118, the traditional Passover Hallel. In light of Christ's impending crucifixion and death, Psalm 118:22-29 would have been most appropriate.

CONCLUSION: From start to finish, Jesus was in full control of His life and death. He was in full control of everything He did and He was in full control of everything which was done to Him. Nothing was an accident; Nothing was an after-thought; Nothing caught Him by surprise!

What was the Passover? It was ultimately a picture of the Perfect Lamb Jesus Christ, His death on the cross, and His shed blood to save people from their sins.

For Jewish people to annually celebrate the Passover without seeing its fulfillment in Christ is to be missing the real significance of Passover.

It's like a book's introduction without a conclusion.
It's like a shadow without substance.
It's like birth without life.

"Celebrating deliverance from Egypt is (is good and meaningful) but is a weak substitute for celebrating deliverance from sin" (MacArthur, p. 151).

The first Passover predated the Law. It had been celebrated for 1,500 years. "But the Passover Jesus was now concluding with the disciples was the last divinely sanctioned Passover ever to be observed" (macArthur, p. 150).

He fulfilled it. Do you see Him as the fulfillment?
Is Jesus Christ your Passover Lamb?
Because He is sovereign, He is worthy of your trust!

"THREE BIG MISTAKES
On the Night of the Betrayal"

Matthew 26:31-56

2/24/2019

INTRODUCTION: Verses 31-32

***Don't make the same mistakes Peter did!**

Three big mistakes:

I. **<u>PROUD</u> SELF-CONFIDENCE** (v. 33-35)
(Never say, "I will never. . .")

II. **<u>PRAYERLESSNESS</u>** (v. 36-46)
(Never sleep when you should pray)

III. **<u>PRESUMPTION</u>** (v. 47-55)
(Never do for Christ what He did not tell you to do)

CONCLUSION:
Verse 56: *"Then all the disciples forsook Him, and fled."*

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INTRODUCTION: Verses 31-32

V. 31

"Offended" - lit. "caused to stumble"; you will "fall away."

Jesus specifically addressed Peter and said, *"Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat"* (Lk. 22:31).

As Jesus and the disciples leave the upper room and walk through the darkness toward the Mount of Olives, Jesus foretells what the disciples would do that night.

Because the disciples would see Jesus betrayed, captured, mistreated, etc., they--for fear of their own lives--would become offended (scared into abandoning Christ) that same night.

One would think that the disciples could muster up enough courage to stand firm to the end, but such could not occur, because the Scriptures had to be fulfilled.

"For it is written" - Zech. 13:7

V. 32

Although they all scattered, they would all be regathered after Christ's resurrection.

This verse should have given the disciples the confidence that they would not die, but would survive through the dark three days ahead.

***Don't make the same mistakes Peter did!**

Three big mistakes:

I. PROUD SELF-CONFIDENCE (v. 33-35)
(Never say, "I will never. . .")

V. 33

Impulsive, impetuous Peter pipes up with proud self-confidence, ***"Though all [men] shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended."***

Peter had a knack for putting his foot in his mouth (cp. Mt. 16:22-23).

"Peter was unwilling to apply the word *'All'* (v. 31) to himself" (Wiersbe, p. 97).

"All [men]" - i.e. all the other disciples; Peter somehow thought he had something they didn't have.

--Maybe he thought he had more <u>love</u> for Christ than they did; or more <u>boldness</u> & <u>courage</u> or more <u>dedication</u>.

Peter obviously viewed himself as spiritually superior to others.

Be careful never to think this way. Think humbly about yourself (Phil. 2:3 - *"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."*).

Right now "ask God to forgive you for your feelings of superiority" or you are headed for a nose dive (ILLUS: the minister, boy scout, and computer expert on board a small plane that was going down).

V. 34

"Verily" - truly; as impossible as such a denial seemed to Peter, Christ's words will <u>always</u> be fulfilled. What He says, will happen!

"Deny Me thrice" - Peter would even swear, saying, *"I know not the man"* (26:74)

V. 35

"Peter said" - <u>Not</u> with a skeptical tone of voice; but with intense, brazen confidence, he **"*<u>vehemently</u>"** (Mk. 14:31) spoke.

Peter still had not learned not to contradict Jesus!

"Though I should die with thee" - I am willing to be a martyr for You! *"I am ready to go with thee, both to prison and to death"* (Lk. 22:33).

"Yet I will not" - an emphatic double negative. The word *"not"* translates two Greek words for "not" (*oi ma*).

Peter speaks as emphatically as possible.

We should never say "never" when it comes to trusting in ourselves.

Rather say, "If God is willing..." "By God's grace..." "With His enabling power..."

Martin Luther said: "Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing, if the right Man were not on our side, the Man of God's own choosing."

We truly do not realize the evil and deception of our own hearts (Jer. 17:9).

At times, we are so smug, so sure, so bold, so enthused, so brave, etc. that we say things that we end up later eating.

Don't put confidence in yourself or in your plans, but in God and in His will.

James 4:13-16 - *"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that. But now ye rejoice in your boasting: all such rejoicing is evil."*

"Likewise" - Note: Peter's self-confidence spirit spread to the others.

Be careful your children will catch and copy your spirit as well.

II. PRAYERLESSNESS (v. 36-46)
(Never sleep when you should pray)

V. 36

"Gethsemane" - The name means "oil press." This ancient garden, which still remains to this day, was on the west side of the Mount of Olives.

V. 37

"Two sons of Zebedee" = James and John

Jesus often brought this inner circle of Peter, James, and John to be eye-witnesses of certain events (Mt. 17:1) . . . *"That in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established"* (Mt. 18:16).

"Sorrowful" - to grieve over the separation which was about to take place (Mt. 27:46).

"Heavy" - to be distressed because of the weight of the sin He would bear for the world (I Pet. 2:24).

V. 38

The impending judgment from Heaven which was to fall upon Jesus so deeply grieved His soul so that He felt as if He would die even at this point.

"Watch" - stay awake so as to pray

V. 39

The cup that Jesus was to drink was not drunk in the Garden, but later that day (Jn. 18:11) at Calvary

Jesus didn't fear death. "Many godly people have been (wrongly) arrested, beaten, and slain because of their faith. But only Jesus experienced being made sin and a curse for mankind" (Wiersbe, p. 97) (II Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13).

"This cup" - not speaking of the mere physical suffering Jesus would have to endure, but of the spiritual agony He would endure and drink for all of humanity.

Later that day from 12:00 - 3:00 p.m., "darkness" would mysteriously cover the earth (Mk. 15:33), as the Son of God would become a *"curse"* by hanging on the cross (Gal. 3:13), bearing the *"iniquity of us all"* (Is. 64:6), and as the Father would turn His back on His own Son (Mt. 27:46).

In that *"cup"* were all of the vile sins you committed, are committing, and would commit.

In that *"cup"* was death, as Christ would *"taste death for every man"* (Heb. 2:9).

The pure, spotless, undefiled, holy soul of Jesus was repulsed by the thought of becoming a sin offering and experiencing the equivalent of our hell on that cross.

"Not as I will, but as thou wilt" - When Christ became man, He totally subjected Himself to the will of the Father (Jn. 6:38 - *"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."*)

For Him to ever violate the will of the Father would be to sin. This was an impossibility for the Son of God.

Although Jesus wished not to be accursed for those three hours on the cross, severed for the first time in eternity from the presence and power of the Father, He was willing to do the will of the Father no matter what the cost!

Is such your desire? If so, you must be a man/woman of prayer.

V. 40

"Asleep" - Due to the intense pressures of the hour, the disciples gave in to the suggestion of the devil to sleep their problems away rather than pray their problems away.

V. 41

"Watch and pray" - stay awake and alert so as to pray.

"That ye enter not into temptation" - daily prayer is the only secret to overcoming the strong solicitations to evil that will come our way.

"Deliver us from evil" needs to be our daily prayer (Mt. 6:13).

Note: Proud self-confidence will always result in prayerlessness.

There is a time for sleep and there is a time for prayer. This was no time for sleep. The biggest trial Peter would ever face was minutes away!

"The spirit" - a believer's inner regenerated spirit, which is the aspect of man (which separates him from the animal realm) which alone is eager (***"willing"***) to commune with God.

"The flesh is weak" - Our bodies and old nature succumb and seek to gratify the impulses of the carnal body.

This war of "spirit versus flesh" is a real one (Gal. 5:17) which can only be won by the spirit if you daily feed the spirit and allow the Holy Spirit to control you.

Whenever the Spirit prods you to do something, do it. This is the secret to the Spirit-filled life.

V. 42

"O my Father" - the depth of Christ's intimacy with the Father and agony at the thought of His being separated from the Father drives Him to plead a second time.

V. 43

"Asleep again" - They woke up momentarily only to fall back into slumber.

When the temptation to sleep conflicts with your doing the will of god, fight it! Fight it out of love for Christ and His will!

V. 44

Christ intensely requested that the Father remove the bitter, hellish cup of spiritual suffering and separation. Although an angel was sent to strengthen Christ (Lk. 22:43), *"being in agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were <u>great drops</u> of <u>blood</u> falling down to the ground"* (Lk. 22:44).

V. 45

"Sleep on now, and take your rest" - The verb endings could be translated as imperative (KJV) or indicative (NASV; NIV). The context of the second half of verse 56 proves that the indicative is correct. The statement should be translated as a question, "Are you <u>still</u> sleeping now and taking your rest?"

"The hour is at hand" = the hour of the power of darkness (Lk. 22:53).

III. PRESUMPTION(v. 47-55)
(Never do for Christ what He did not tell you to do)

V. 50

Jesus calls Judas ***"friend"*** (comrade or companion).

V. 51

"One of them" - John specifically identified this *"one"* as *"Simon Peter"*, who *"having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus"* (Jn. 18:10).

The 10 disciples actually asked Jesus, *"Lord, shall we smite with the sword?"* (Lk. 22:49), but Peter didn't even wait for an answer. He just hacked away! (Lk. 22:50; Jn. 18:10).

"Smote off his ear" - Just as quickly as it came off, Jesus put it back on again! *"And He touched his ear, and healed him"* (Lk. 22:51).

V. 52

"They that take the sword shall perish with the sword" - The principle of sowing and reaping (Gal. 6:7) is implied. (cp. *'He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword..."* - Rev. 13:10).

V. 53

Proud self-confidence will always lead to prayerlessness, which will inevitably lead to presumption.

Jesus is saying to Peter, "I don't need you to defend me."

Peter may have meant well, but good intentions don't "cut the mustard" with God.

"Twelve legions of angels" - A Roman legion varied from 3000 to 6000; hence, 12 legions would be 36,000 to 72,000 angels. Jesus, who created the angels (Col. 1:16) could have called on any number of powerful angelic creatures (*"the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousand of thousands"* - Rev. 5:11).

Any sword Peter had (Lk. 22:36-38) was to be used for self-defense (perhaps) but not to fight for Jesus.

Presumption is the sin of assumption based on "gut feeling" rather than Biblical precept and principle.

"Presumption" is basically caused by an over-confident, egotistical, big-headedness, which results in the audacity to do your own will, rather than the will of your superior.

To presume is to assume or take for granted you can do something even though you have no authority or Bible to back you up.

People often take liberties that aren't theirs; overstep boundaries they should not; intrude into areas they are forbidden; surge ahead like gangbusters down a path they should not be on!

Principle for Christians: Don't react, but act based on solid Bible truth. *Don't do anything you don't have full confidence in doing (Rom. 14:23).

If we would simply do what we are told rather than being innovative and "adding" to His Word through man-made "traditions," man-made creeds and self-induced visions and dreams, Christendom would not be filled with the confusion we see today among various religions.

"Peter rushed ahead and trusted the arm of the flesh. Had Jesus not healed the ear of Malchus, there probably would have been four crosses at Calvary!" (Wiersbe, p. 98).

To act presumptuously is to act independently of God's will and orders.

People who acted presumptuously:

1) Sarah in giving Hagar to Abraham to obtain a son
2) Moses at Egypt (Ex. 2:11-15)
3) False prophets (Dt. 18:20 - *"But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die."*)
4) King Saul (I Sam. 15:22)
5) Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1 - *"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not.")*
6) Samson (Jud. 14:9)
7) Uzzah (II Sam. 6:6, 7)
8) The old unnamed prophet (I Ki. 13)
9) Josiah - a king who got involved in a battle that wasn't his (II Chron. 35:20-25)

Many presume that it is okay to:

1) Abort an unborn child
2) Date an unsaved boy or girl
3) Divorce one's spouse
4) Move to another location without considering God's will
5) Pursue the pastorate when God did not call
   --EX: women preachers (I Cor. 14:34; I Tim. 2:12)
   --EX: novice Christians (I Tim. 3:6)
6) That their works/religion etc. will get them into God's Kingdom

Sometimes the "Ooops, I shouldn't have done that" is too late!

V. 54

To fulfill (carry out to completion) the Scriptures was Christ's highest goal.

When it comes to doing your will or obeying Scripture, which do you choose?

V. 55

"With swords and staves (clubs)**"** - Incidentally, this big band of men armed with ***"lanterns and torches and weapons"*** when they heard Jesus identify Himself as the *"I AM"* (Jn. 18:6; cp. Jn. 8:24, 58; 13:19), they *"went backward, and fell to the ground!"* (Jn. 18:6).

'Ye laid no hold on Me" - Because Christ's time had not come until now.

Jesus described this time in this words: *"This is your hour and the power of darkness"* (Lk. 22:53).

CONCLUSION:

Verse 56: *"Then all the disciples forsook Him, and fled."*

Peter talked when he should have listened,
slept when he should have prayed,
and fought when he should have trusted.

What a contrast is seen between Jesus and Peter (and the others) in this chapter!

Humility even to death vs. pride
Prayer vs. prayerlessness
Submission to God's will vs. resistance to God's will

"Each of us must decide: Will it be the sword or the cup? Will I resist God's will or submit to God's will?" (Wiersbe, p. 98)

"HE ENDURED INJUSTICE PATIENTLY"

(The Night Jesus was Unjustly Condemned to Death)
Matthew 26:57-75
3-17-2019

INTRODUCTION:

***The King of the universe patiently endured much injustice and mistreatment on a dark Passover night long ago.**

I. **He Endured False <u>ARREST</u>** (v. 57-58)
(His enemies seized Him by force)

II. **He Endured False <u>WITNESS</u>** (v. 59-62)
(His enemies lied about Him)

III. **He Endured Misplaced <u>VERBAL ABUSE</u>** (v. 63-66)
(His enemies accused Him of blasphemy)

IV. **He Endured Undeserved <u>INSULT</u> and <u>INJURY</u>** (v. 67-68)
(His enemies spit in His face, beat Him, and mocked Him)

V. **He Endured the <u>Denial</u> of One He Loved** (v. 69-75)
(His own disciple denied that he knew Him)

CONCLUSION:
He endured *"such contradiction of sinners"*;
what are you willing to endure for Him?

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INTRODUCTION:

We are so prone to think too much of ourselves, demand our rights, plot to get even, etc., when treated unjustly.

SEE: Philippians 2:5-8

He who was and is God humbled Himself so low as to allow puny mortals to unjustly condemn Him to death.

"His judgment was taken away" (Acts 8:33; cp. Is. 53:8)

"Matthew 26:57-68 reveals at least five aspects of that illegal and unjust treatment of our Lord: the convening of the Sanhedrin (vv. 57-58), the conspiracy to convict Jesus without evidence (vv. 59-61), the confrontation to induce His self-incrimination (vv. 62-64), the condemnation based on false charges and testimony (vv. 65-66), and the conduct of the court in the physical and verbal abuse of Jesus (vv. 67-68)." (MacArthur, p. 202).

***The King of the universe patiently endured much injustice and mistreatment on a dark Passover night long ago.**

I. He Endured False <u>ARREST</u> (v. 57-58)
(His enemies seized Him by force)

V. 57

Since God's timetable had now come for His Son to be crucified, Jesus for the first time allowed Himself to be grabbed, tied up, and led away.

John records that they not only seized Jesus, they *"<u>bound</u> Him"* (Jn. 18:12).

They tied His hands, like hand cuffs on a criminal.

Before appearing before Caiaphas, they *"led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year"* (Jn. 18:13).

"Caiaphas" - On an earlier occasion this same man did not even realize the significance of the words that came out of his mouth when he had actually foretold the impending substitutionary death of Christ (SEE: John 11:45-52; cp. Jn. 18:14).

"Scribes and elders were assembled" - like hungry, salivating wolves, these religious leaders were awake and gathered in a pack in the middle of the night to devour Christ any way they could.

V. 57-58

The whole trial was a sham. "The Sanhedrin was permitted to hold a trial involving capitol punishment only in the <u>Temple</u> and only in <u>public</u>. The <u>private</u> meeting at Caiaphas' <u>house</u> (after midnight) clearly violated both stipulations (MacArthur, p. 204).

V. 58

Even though all the disciples had previously scattered (v. 56), Peter (remembering his promise to go with Christ both to prison and death) followed Christ at a distance to the high priest's palace.

"He went in" - Because John (who humbly doesn't mention himself by name) was *"known to the high priest"* was permitted entrance along with Peter (Jn. 18:15-16).

"<u>Sat with</u> the servants" - Peter sat with the enemies that night and would warm himself at their fire (Mk. 14:54).

II. He Endured False <u>WITNESS</u> (v. 59-62)
(His enemies lied about Him)
V. 59

"The council" = The Sanhedrin (the Jerusalem Sanhedrin was a judicial committee "composed of 70 chief priests, elders, and scribes, with the High Priest making a total of 71" - MacArthur, p. 198).

The Sanhedrin's stated purpose was "to save, not destroy life." Such intentions were not present in the trial of Jesus.

The Law of Moses warned against bearing false witness against someone (Ex. 20:16; Dt. 19:15-21).

In our Law system (as in the Mosaic Law), a person is presumed innocent until proven guilty. Christ, however, was presumed guilty and they were not interested in any evidence to prove otherwise.

"They had already determined that He was guilty, but they wanted to go through the motions of a legal trial" (Wiersbe, p. 98).

V. 59-60

Why do Satanically inspired people today seek to extinguish public awareness of who Jesus is and what He did for the world?

1) They love darkness rather than light (Christ's light is a rebuke to the world's darkness)

2) They are controlled by Satan and do His bidding (Satan seeks to keep people as far away from Jesus as possible)

V. 60

"But found none" - They invited everyone who had any "dirt" on Jesus to come and testify against Him, but no charge would stick.

Either the ones who came didn't have the required two or three witnesses with them to substantiate their allegations (Dt. 17:6, 19:15) or their testimonies contradicted (and didn't agree with) each other (Mk. 14:59).

A valiant effort was made to find Jesus guilty of some sin, some heresy, some failure to keep the Law, some disobedience to government, etc. but they *"found none."*

The best of Israel's liars, con artists, town gossips, etc., could not pin anything on Christ that merited punishment or death.

"Many false witnesses came" **-**Who knows how many liars paraded in and out of Caiaphas' palace?

"Yet found they none" **-** Although the "judge" and "jury" desperately wanted to nail Christ with some felony, they couldn't find even a trace of iniquity in Him.

Christ lived a sinless (impeccable) life!

Jesus bolding asked His enemies: *"Which of you convinceth me of sin?"* (Jn. 8:46).

Paul testified: Christ *"Knew no sin"* (II Cor. 5:21).

The writer of Hebrews testified that Christ, our High Priest, *"...was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"* (Heb. 4:13).

Again the writer of Hebrews states: *"For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."* (7:26)

Peter, who intimately knew Christ for 3-1/2 years, said in I Pet. 2:22, *"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth"*

Not even a demon could find in Jesus the least transgression of God's moral or spiritual law. "His only transgressions had been against the man-made, legalistic, and unscriptural rabbinic traditions." (MacArthur, p. 206)

V. 61

"This [fellow] ***said"*** **-** With disrespect for Jesus, they don't even use His name, but say, "This [one] said."

They <u>misquote</u> Jesus.

> He did <u>not</u> said the words *"<u>I am able to</u> destroy"* nor did He qualify the temple with the words *"<u>of God</u>" "Temple <u>that is made with hands"</u>* (Mk. 14:58). Rather He said, *"Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."*

They <u>misinterpret</u> what Jesus said.

> When He said this, He was not referring to the physical religious place of worship, but to *"the temple of His body"* (Jn. 2:21).

V. 62

"Answerest thou nothing" - Jesus didn't need to verbally defend Himself; His testimony spoke for itself.

Don't be so quick and concerned to defend yourself; let your life speak for itself. And let God defend you! David said, *"God is my defense"* (Ps. 59:9).

The best Lawyer is God. Psalm 35:1 - *"Plead my cause, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me."*

III. He Endured Misplaced <u>VERBAL ABUSE</u> (v. 63-66)
(His enemies accused Him of blasphemy)

V. 63

"But Jesus held His peace" - Is. 53:7 - *"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."*

"I adjure thee by the living God" - Caiaphas didn't realize it, but he was standing in front of the "<u>living God</u>"!

"I adjure thee by the living God" - Caiaphas put Jesus under <u>oath</u> (Ex. 20:7; Lev. 19:12; Num. 30:2) to incriminate Him.

Sly Caiaphas knew that Leviticus 24:16 said, *"The one who blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death"* If he could succeed in getting Jesus to affirm His own deity with His own mouth, he would steer Jesus into self-incrimination.

"The Christ, the Son of God" - the word "Christ" refers to Jesus' <u>Messiahship</u> (Jn. 4:25-26).

The phrase "Son of God" refers to Jesus' <u>deity</u> (Jn. 5:18).

V. 64

"Thou hast said" - "You said it." "It is as you said." (Jesus responded the same way to Judas - Mt. 26:25). Jesus actually also said a direct *"I am."* (Mk. 14:62).

After Jesus attests to His Messiahship and deity, He gives a future validation to His claim as the Christ.

"Hereafter shall ye see the son of man sitting ont he right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven"

This scene will be witnessed by all of the unsaved at the Great White Throne Judgment (SEE: Dan. 7:9-14).

Caiaphas was now standing as judge and Jesus as the criminal, but one day the tables will be turned and Jesus will be the Judge and Caiaphas the criminal.

"Ye shall see the Son of Man" - Although Caiaphas the High Priest will one day bow the knee before Christ (Phil. 2:9-10) and will meet Him at the Great White Throne Judgment (Jn. 5:22, Rev. 20:11-15), the ***"ye"*** may also refer to <u>Jews</u> like him, who, in the Last Days when Christ returns for the Rapture and wrath of God, will *"look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him. . ."* (Zech. 12:10).

V. 65

"Rent his clothes" - "An action expressive of grief, obligatory on hearing blasphemy" (Ryrie note).

"Blasphemy" - He accuses Jesus of slandering God by His claim to <u>equality</u> with God (*"sitting on the right hand")*.

V. 66

If Jesus were not the Messiah, He would be guilty of blasphemy, but He was the Messiah -- but they didn't accept that.

IV. He Endured Undeserved <u>INSULT</u> and <u>INJURY</u> (v. 67-68)
(His enemies spit in His face, beat Him, and mocked Him)

V. 67

"Spit in his face" - To express disgust; spitting in one's face is a sign of humiliation and disgrace (Is. 50;6 - *"I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.")*

"To Jews, the supreme insult was to spit in another's face (SEE: Num. 12:14; Dt. 25:9) (MacArthur, p. 209).

EX: Absalom's tomb is still spit upon to this day because of His treacherous rebellion against his father, David) (MacArthur, p. 209).

"Buffeted him" - They violently abused Him by beating Him with their fists (treating the Son of God like a human punching bag).

"He was bruised for our iniquities" (Is. 53:5).

"<u>Others</u> smote Him" - These were the "servants" of the Temple (Mk. 14:65), with whom Peter had sat (v. 58). It's sadly amazing how people who see others doing something are quick to jump into the fray, like irrational, impulsive vicious animals.

They didn't just want to kill Christ, they wanted to make His last hours on earth as miserable as possible.

What depravity lies in the human heart! What an urge lies in the human heart to strike out against Jesus Christ.

--You are either *"for Christ or against Him"* (Mt. 12:30). You are not neutral toward Him. Which is it?"

The beating Christ received even before His crucifixion was so severe that Isaiah prophesied, *"As many were astonied at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."* (52:14).

"Prophesy unto us" - They had blindfolded Jesus (*"covered his face"* - Mk. 14:65) and now were testing his ability to tell who was doing the punching. It was a mockery of His omniscience and insight.

V. He Endured the <u>Denial</u> of One He Loved (v. 69-75)
(His own disciple denied that he knew Him)

V. 69

"Peter sat without" - He who gave his word to go "*<u>with</u>*" Jesus (v. 35) event o death is now <u>outside</u> (*"without"*) (at a distance).

V. 70-74

With each denial Peter gets more specific and serious:

"I know not what thou sayest" (v. 70)

"I do not know the man" (v. 72)

"Then began he to curse and to swear saying, I know not the man"
(v. 74)

V. 74

When Peter had denied the Lord for the third time, "*the Lord turned and looked upon Peter"* (Lk. 22:61).

Peter and Jesus locked eyes, and this triggered Peter's remembrance of Christ's words about a *"thrice"* denial.

Can you imagine the gripping emotion the Lord felt as He turned to look at Peter as he even swore that he didn't know who Jesus was!

How does the Lord feel in His heart about your life and testimony? Do you bring grief or joy to His heart?

"The look must have penetrated the disciple's very soul, burning deep into his heart and conscience the evil of his sin. Seeing his Lord standing there with His hands bound and His face covered with spit and bruises was more than Peter could bear" (MacArthur, p. 218).

V. 75

"And he went out and wept bitterly" - He wept because he knew the Lord knew what he had done. He, because of fear and intimidation, had lied about his relationship to Christ. The tears, however, reveal that Peter really loved Christ. Therefore, Peter will not be in the list of the doomed whose life was characterized as being *"fearful"* (Rev. 21:8).

Jesus had said: *"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."* (Mt. 10:32, 33).

Peter would be *"converted"* from His fear (Lk. 22:32) and become one of the mightiest preachers for Christ (Acts 4:13).

It is easy for us to criticize Peter for his denial of Christ.

But stop for a minute and compare his situation with yours.

> --He didn't have the baptism of the Spirit (until Pentecost - Acts 2) . . . you have the Spirit
>
> --He had faithfully left all to follow Christ for 3-1/2 years (and would for the rest of his life). . . what have you left for Christ?
>
> --His life was on the line; Golgotha could just as easily have had four crosses on it that afternoon instead of three. . . Have you ever been threatened or beaten for your faith?

CONCLUSION:

He endured *"such contradiction of sinners"*;
what are you willing to endure for Him?

Remember, what they did to your Master, they will do to you (Jn. 15:20 - *"Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also."*)

If He endured such mockery and abuse for you, should you be willing to endure the same for Him? (Heb. 12:3 - *"For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."*)

Christ was misjudged. "The irony is that all who misjudge Jesus will themselves be rightly judged by Him one day" (MacArthur, p. 210).

Isaiah 53:3 - *"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not."*

Don't hide from Jesus Christ any longer! Come to Him today for salvation!

"THE INNOCENT WAS CONDEMNED FOR THE GUILTY"

Matthew 27:1-26

3/24/2019

INTRODUCTION:

***Jesus Christ was condemned to death, although He was innocent, to die for the guilty.**

Five indications of Christ's innocence:

I. The <u>REGRET</u> of Judas (v. 3-10)

II. The <u>SILENCE</u> of Jesus (v. 11-14)

III. The <u>ENVY</u> of the Jews (v. 15-18)

IV. The <u>DREAM</u> of Pilate's Wife (v. 19)

V. The <u>WASHING</u> of Pilate's Hands (v. 20-25)

CONCLUSION: Verse 26 -- The release of sinful Barabbas in the place of innocent Jesus illustrates the substitutionary sacrifice which Christ made on behalf of all sinners.

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III. The _____ of the Jews (v. 15-18)

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V. The _____ of Pilate's Hands (v. 20-25)

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"THE INNOCENT WAS CONDEMNED FOR THE GUILTY"

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3/24/2019

INTRODUCTION:

The Martin Scorzese film "The Last Temptation of Christ" was total blasphemy, picturing Jesus as having a lustful heart toward Mary Magdalene and longing to marry her and have children by her.

Christ's sinlessness:

He was called The *"Holy Child"* (Lk. 1:35)

He entered the Temple often, but never had to offer a sacrifice for Himself (Heb. 7:27)

Jn. 8:29, 46 - *"I do always those things that please Him. . . Which of you convinceth Me of sin?"*

II Cor. 5:21 - *"Who knew no sin"*

I Pet. 1:19 - *"a Lamb without blemish and without spot"*

I Pet. 2:22 - *"Who did no sin"*

Heb. 4:15 - *"was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"*

Heb. 7:26 - *"Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"*

I Jn. 3:5 - *"in Him is no sin"*

Christ was acknowledged as innocent eleven times during His trials and crucifixion (Mt. 27:4, 19, 24, 54; Lk. 23:14, 22, 41; Jn. 18:38, 19:46).

Psalm 94:21 - *"They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood."*

In Mt. 27:1-26, Matthew systematically proves the innocence of Jesus Christ.

V. 1

"When morning was come" - the unjust arrest, trials, mockery and beatings Christ endured took all night. Now, the sun is coming up, the rooster has crowed (26:75), and the mob of blood-thirsty Sanhedrin come to a decision as to how they would rid themselves of the righteous Jesus.

V. 2

The reason the Jewish leaders brought Jesus to Pilate was to seek the death penalty.

"The Sanhedrin could condemn a man to death, but the Roman government had to approve and execute the sentence" (Ryrie note)

Pilate said, *"Take ye Him, and judge Him according to your law; the Jews, therefore, said unto Him, It is not lawful* [according to Roman law] *for us to put any man to death."* (Jn. 18:31).

From God's standpoint, however, Jesus' being brought to Pilate was to fulfill the words of Jesus, who predicted that He would be crucified (Jn. 18:32; cp. Mt. 20:190.

***Jesus Christ was condemned to death, although He was innocent, to die for the guilty.**

Five indications of Christ's innocence:

I. The <u>REGRET</u> of Judas (v. 3-10)

V. 3

"When he [Judas] ***saw that He*** [Jesus] ***was condemned" -*** Judas actually did not want Jesus to be condemned. This outcome was not what Judas had in mind. He never really expected Jesus to be condemned and sentenced to death.

Judas, motivated by self-seeking motives, through that his betrayal would be the catalyst to incite Jesus to assert His Messiahship, rebel against the system, usurp the government, set up His Kingdom, and give the Twelve an exalted position judging the 12 tribes of Israel (Mt. 19:28 - *"And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.")* This promise was Judas' motive.

Judas obviously did not want Jesus to think less of him, which is why when he betrayed Jesus he did so with a kiss.

For Judas there was more to the betrayal than the motive for money. Most likely Judas thought that by betraying Christ he would force Jesus' hand and provoke Him to defend Himself, rebel against Rome and set up a new political government with Judas as treasurer or some other high position.

Judas is like all people who attempt to force the will of God. They do something they know is wrong because they selfishly want something to suit them or their timetable, even though it is clearly against God's Word.

"Repented himself" - The word translated "repented" is not the normal word for repentance, which means a "change of mind" (*metanoeo)*, but is *metamelomai*, which means to have a "change of interest or concern." It means to regret, to wish it were undone.

Judas was called *"the son of perdition"* (Jn. 17:12) because he would (as his title means) be destroyed.

Judas returned the money in an attempt to undo what he had done.

Sometimes, what we do can never be undone. It can be genuinely repented of and forgiven, but its scars may remain a lifetime. The effect of the wrong we did against someone may be reaped in the lives of others.

V. 4

Judas is going to the wrong place with those words, *"I have sinned."* No human high priest (v. 3) can do a thing to remove your sin.

Judas should have gone to God with his confession of guilt, but his heart was too hardened and his doom was settled.

Such regret or confirmation of Christ's innocence meant absolutely nothing to those who wanted Christ's blood.

"What is that to us? See thou to that" - That is no concern to us! That's your problem, not ours!

"Innocent blood" - The blood of Christ did not deserve to be shed. He should not have been punished for any transgression of His own. He was innocent of the charges laid against Him. Other than the eleven, no one could attest to the sinlessness of Christ like Judas could.

V. 5

"He cast down the pieces of silver" - That which he had loved and lived for now became an abhorrent thing to be discarded and rid of. That silver was a perpetual reminder of his betrayal. When he looked at the 30 pieces, all he could think about was *"innocent blood"*!

I can imagine that Judas, in hell now, is still tormented by his betrayal, still trying to get rid of that bag of silver. The memory lingers on (Lk. 16:25).

Throughout eternity, people engulfed in darkness and lostness will be trying to rid themselves of whatever it was that kept them from a saving knowledge of Christ.

The boozer will forever attempt to rid himself of the liquor that so often intoxicated him and made him oblivious to his need for Christ. The same goes for the adulterer, drug user, thief, liar, etc.

But the haunting thought will remain! Oh the regret of those who reject the innocent Son of God!

"Hanged himself" - For Judas, the only way of escape was suicide. In an attempt to rid himself of the deep regret, torment, and unrest, he ended his life. . . only to find that this really did not end his misery. It goes on!

V. 6

What inconsistency! What duplicity! What hypocrisy!

These "chief priests" refused to put the silver "blood money" into the Temple treasury because they were concerned not to defile or pollute it, and yet they could without conscience condemn an innocent man!

They worry about keeping the Law at one point and yet totally violate the Law at another point. (the Law condemned *"false witness"* [Exod. 20:16] yet they hired them [Mt. 26:59]; the Law condemned the execution of *"innocent blood"* [Dt. 19:10] yet they could care less.

Many today have a "pick and choose" theology where they pick to obey what they want to obey and completely ignore the rest.

V. 9

"Spoken by Jeremy" - "These words are found in Zech. 11:12-13 with allusions to Jer. 18:1-4, 19:1-3. They are ascribed to Jeremiah since, in Jesus' day, the books of the prophets were headed by Jeremiah, not Isaiah as now, and the quotation is identified by the name of the first book of the group, rather than by the name of the specific book within the group" (Ryrie note)

"The price of Him that was valued" - The innocent Lord Jesus was betrayed for silver, that He according to God's sovereign plan might save us from perishing.

Another young man was sold for silver (20 pieces, the price of a slave back then), who also according to God's plan ended up saving his brethren and people from perishing --- His name was Joseph (Gen. 37:28).

II. The <u>SILENCE</u> of Jesus (v. 11-14)

V. 11

"Thou sayest" - You said it! It is as you said.

Although Jesus as the Messiah was the ***"King of the Jews,"*** He was more than that: He is *"King of kings and Lord of lords!"* (Rev. 19:16)

However, His Kingdom was not the wicked, evil society (the *kosmos*) of the days of the Roman Empire. But His Kingdom is yet to come (Mt. 6:10).

John 18:36 - *"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."*

V. 12

"The chief priests and the elders" - They made accusations while standing outside the ***"Judgment Hall."*** *". . . and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover"* (Jn. 18:28).

The multitude falsely accused Jesus before Pilate by saying: *"We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute* (taxes) *to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King"* (Luke 23:2).

"He answered nothing" - Jesus didn't have to defend Himself, even before the governor. His perfect life substantiated His innocence of the false accusations made against Him.

For Jesus to answer would show His accusers as worthy of a response.

Jesus would have lowered Himself down to their game by verbally defending Himself. Their statements were not even worth rebutting.

". . . As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Is. 53:7).

Cp. Psalm 38:13 - *"But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not His mouth."*

V. 14

Pilate was greatly amazed that Jesus did not respond to a single charge.

Usually, you can tell a man is guilty by how much he desperately tries to convince you of his innocence. Because of the verbosity of his mouth, his own defense usually ends up contradicting itself and thereby incriminating him.

Although Pilate asked Jesus *"What is truth?"* (Jn. 18:38), he didn't realize that he was standing in front of the One who was *"the Truth"* (Jn. 18:37; 14:6).

Jesus always told the truth, lived the truth, upheld the truth, revealed the truth, and fulfilled the truth, because He is the Truth.

"No lie is of the truth" (I Jn. 2:21).

After Pilate's amazement at Christ's silence, he (passing the buck) sends Christ to King Herod, since Christ was a Galilean.

Hoping to see a sign or miracle from Christ, Herod was glad to see Him.

Even Herod's numerous questions went unanswered (Lk. 23:6-9). After a time of contempt and mocking, Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate and on this occasion became friends with Pilate (Lk. 23:10-12).

III. The ENVY of the Jews (v. 15-18)

V. 15

At the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread, Pilate had a custom of releasing someone the Jews requested. Very picturesque of the release of bondage from Egypt, but especially of the release Jesus provided by giving His life on this feast day.

V. 16

Barabbas actually was a rebel and a murderer. He *"committed murder in the insurrection"* (rebellion) (Mk. 15:7).

V. 17

***"Barabbas or Christ"* -** Which do you want? It's like asking:

A sinner or a righteous man - whom will you pick?
A law breaker or a law-abiding man?
A murderer or a life-giver?

It's sad to see which the world chooses.

If they chose Barabbas over Christ, it's no wonder that many choose abortion over life, A communist-liberal over a for-the-people conservative, Led Zeplin or Michael Jackson over Ron Hamilton, "NYPD Blue" over "Little House on the Prairie."

V. 18

***"Envy"* -** "the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others" (Vine, p. 37).

They were envious of Christ because:

1) He had a moral excellence which they did not have
2) He had a Biblical intelligence which they did not have
3) He had an impeccable righteousness which they did not have
4) He had a Kingdom which they were not part of
5) He had a following which they did not have

--Christ's moral excellence was a rebuke to their sinfulness.
--Christ's Biblical insight and wisdom was a rebuke to their ignorance and tradition.
--Christ's perfect life was a rebuke to their vanity.
--Christ's Kingdom was something they would never see without the new birth.
--Christ's large following made them worry about losing theirs.

Their fears and selfish concerns are evident in John 11:47-48 - *"Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him:*

and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation."

IV. The DREAM of Pilate's Wife (v. 19)

"Have thou nothing to do with that just man" **-** i.e. Don't have any part in His sentence and execution.

"That just man" **-** righteous man

Christ was the only just man to ever walk on the earth (Eccles. 7:20 - *"For there is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not";* cp. Rom. 3:10, 23).

The just died for the unjust (I Pet. 3:18).

"In a dream" **-** Evidently a supernaturally-sent dream whereby God directly communicated a message to her, like He did to other pagans prior (cp. Gen. 20:3; Dan. 2, 4)

I can imagine Pilate's wife suddenly waking up, head dripping with sweat, heart pumping, eyes widely opened, hands shaking. We don't know the contents of that dream. Maybe it was a dream of her husband standing before God at the Judgment or perhaps of her husband engulfed in flames.

V. The WASHING of Pilate's Hands (v. 20-25)

V. 20

"The multitude" - which on Sunday was praising Christ and throwing palm branches in His path (Mt. 21:8), would now on Friday swing to the far left and be persuaded that Jesus should be destroyed. How fickle people can be.

V. 23

"What evil hath he done?" - Pilate further said, *"I find in him no fault at all"* (Jn. 18:38).

V. 24

Neither Pilate nor Herod found anything worthy of death in Christ (Lk. 23:14-15 - *"Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have no fault in this man touching those things where of ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him."*

"Tumult" - A riot, an enormous uproar.

They --on one of the holiest holidays of their year-- became a mob of wild, frenzied, blood-thirsty wolves.

"Washed his hands" - symbolizing how he viewed himself as being clean and guiltless of whatever was done to Jesus.

"See ye to it" - Whatever happened to him is your responsibility.

Since Pilate had the authority to release Jesus but did not, he himself has bloody hands.

"Had Pilate been a man of real courage, he would have released Jesus no matter what the consequences. But the crowd roared and Pilate buckled. We are like Pilate when we know what is right, but decide not to do it. When you have a difficult decision to make, don't discount the effects of peer pressure. Realize beforehand that the right decision could have unpleasant consequences: social rejection, career derailment, public ridicule" (Life Application Bible note, p. 1886).

V. 25

"His blood be on us, and on our children" - The Jewish crowd claims responsibility forwhattheydid (Acts4:10;Zech.12:10). RejectingChristhascomebacktohauntthem over and over again (since 70 A.D.).

CONCLUSION:

V. 26

The release of sinful Barabbas in the place of innocent Jesus illustrates the substitutionary sacrifice which Christ made on behalf of all sinners.

"Scourged Jesus" - Pilate thought that by *"chastising"* Him he would appease the crowd, and then could *"release Him"* (Lk. 23:16).

"He released Barabbas" - In the release of Barabbas in the place of Jesus, who would experience crucifixion, we see an amazing illustration of the substitutionary death of Christ and the redemption it provides.

One man came out of a prison sentence he deserved, while Another would be executed for a reason He didn't deserve.

One man would be free from the judgment he should have paid, because the Other would be condemned to a judgment He shouldn't have had to pay.

More went on the day Christ was crucified than the people who had part in that crime realized.

Christ (as the spotless Lamb of God) would give His innocent life to be a substitute payment for the sins and crimes of the world.

The Substitutionary Death of Christ

a. Christ's death for sinners was a predicted event

1) Abraham by faith said to his son Isaac: "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (Gen. 22:8). Note: Abraham's offering of Isaac on Mount Moriah was not only a test of faith (Heb. 11:17-19), it was a foreshadowing of God offering up His "only begotten Son" (Heb. 11:17; Jn. 3:16).

2) Isaiah, who lived over 700 years B.C., foretold of Christ's substitutionary death with these words:
"But He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." (53:6)

"The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (v. 6)
"For the transgression of my people was he stricken" (v. 8)
"Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin" (v. 10)
"He shall bear their iniquities" (v. 11)
"He bare the sin of many" (v. 12)

3) Daniel, speaking of the Messiah's death, said: 5
"Messiah [shall] be cut off, but not for himself" (Dan. 9:26).

By "substitute" we mean that Christ "took the place of us." The death we deserved, He died; the penalty we should have paid, He paid.

Two New Testament Greek words emphasize the substitutionary death of Christ:

1. ἀντι (anti) - meaning:
   To take the place of someone else

   Mk. 10:45 - "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (cp. Mt. 20:28)

2. ὑπερ (huper) - meaning:
   To do something on behalf of someone else

Scriptures emphasizing the fact of Christ's substitutionary death (using the word huper):

"This is my body which is given for you" (Lk. 22:19)
"This cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you" (Lk. 22:20)
"The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (Jn. 6:51)
"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (Jn.10:11)
"I lay down my life for the sheep" (Jn. 10:15)
". . . He (Caiaphas) prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation. . . and not for that nation only . . ." (Jn. 11:51-52, cp. 18:14)
"Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6)
"Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8)
"He . . . delivered him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32)
"Christ died for our sins" (I Cor. 15:3)
"For he hath made him to be sin for us" (II Cor. 5:21)
"Christ . . . gave himself for our sins" (Gal. 1:4)
"Christ . . . loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20)
"Christ [was] . . . made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13)
"Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2)
"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25)
"Our Lord Jesus Christ. . . died for us" (I Th. 5:10)
"Who gave himself a ransom for all" (I Tim. 2:6)
"He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9)
"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12).
"Christ also suffered for us" (I Pet. 2:21)
"Christ also hath once suffered for sins" (I Pet. 3:18)
"Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh" (I Pet. 4:1)
"He laid down his life for us" (I Jn. 3:16)

b. Christ's death for sinners was an <u>important</u> event

The crux (key truth) of the Gospel message is the substitutionary ("vicarious") death of Christ (I Cor. 15:3; cp. I Cor. 2:2).

Christ's death for (in the place of) sinners is the <u>most essential element</u> of God's plan of salvation (In I Cor. 15:3, the words "first of all" mean "first in importance" - showing Christ's substitutionary death and bodily resurrection to be the most essential contents of the Gospel message).

c. Christ's death for sinners was a <u>blessed event</u>

Christ became the sinner's substitute so that we would:

1) Have <u>life</u> (Jn. 6:51)
2) Be made <u>righteous</u> (II Cor. 5:21)
3) Be <u>delivered</u> from this present evil world (Gal. 1:4)
4) Be <u>redeemed</u> from the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13)
5) Be <u>resurrected</u> and <u>raptured</u> to live together with him (I Th. 5:10)
6) Be <u>redeemed</u> from iniquity, purified and zealous (Titus 2:14)
7) Be <u>brought to God</u> (I Pet. 3:18)

"THEY INSULTED THE KING!"

Matthew 27:27-44

3-31-2019

INTRODUCTION:

***He allowed Himself to be humiliated so that you could be honored!**

I. They Insulted His Claim to be <u>KING</u> (v. 27-38)

A. They mocked Him with an <u>old scarlet robe</u> (v. 28)

B. They mocked Him with a <u>crown of thorns</u> (v. 29a)

C. They mocked Him with a <u>reed for a scepter</u> (v. 29b)

D. They mocked Him with a <u>bow of insincere homage</u> (v. 29c)

E. They mocked Him with <u>spit in His face</u> (v. 30a)

F. They mocked Him with <u>physical violence</u> (v. 30b)

G. They mocked Him with <u>death by crucifixion</u> (v. 31-37)

H. They mocked Him with <u>association with two criminals</u> (v. 38)

II. They Insulted His Power to do <u>MIRACLES</u> (v. 39-40)

III. They Insulted His Ability to <u>SAVE</u> (v. 41-42)

IV. They Insulted His Relationship With the <u>FATHER</u> (v. 43-44)

"THEY INSULTED THE KING!"

Matthew 27:27-44

3-31-2019

INTRODUCTION:

***He allowed Himself to be humiliated so that you could be honored!**

I. They Insulted His Claim to be _____ (v. 27-38)

A. They mocked Him with an _____ (v. 28)

B. They mocked Him with a _____ (v. 29a)

C. They mocked Him with a _____ (v. 29b)

D. They mocked Him with a _____(v. 29c)

E. They mocked Him with _____ (v. 30a)

F. They mocked Him with _____ (v. 30b)

G. They mocked Him with _____ (v. 31-37)

H. They mocked Him with _____ (v. 38)

II. They Insulted His Power to do _____ (v. 39-40)

III. They Insulted His Ability to _____ (v. 41-42)

IV. They Insulted His Relationship With the _____ (v. 43-44)

"THEY INSULTED THE KING!"

Matthew 27:27-44

3-31-2019

INTRODUCTION:

"The crucifixion of Christ was the climax of redemptive history. . . It was also the apex of man's depravity." (MacArthur, p. 246)

***He allowed Himself to be humiliated so that you could be honored!**

I. They Insulted His Claim to be <u>KING</u> (v. 27-38)

V. 27

"The soldiers of the governor" - Roman soldiers under Pilate's command

If Pilate had paid attention to his wife (v. 19) and if he had respected Christ as an innocent man (v. 24), he should have restrained his cohort of soldiers from mocking Christ.

When you are in a position of authority, you are responsible for the actions of those under your authority.

"The common hall" + The Praetorium. A hall <u>outside</u> of the Judgment Hall, where matters of justice were dealt with.

"Whole band of soldiers" - A cohort, one-tenth of a legion, which could have been anywhere from 300 to 600 men (it was 300 to 1).

Earlier that night the Jewish High Priest's servants had mocked Him as *"prophet"* (26:67-68); now these mock Him as king.

They made public sport of Jesus; they had a time of cold-hearted entertainment at Jesus' expense. With merciless cruelty, they made Jesus the object of a fiendish game.

A. They mocked Him with an old scarlet robe (v. 28)

"They stripped Him" - How humiliated it was to have all clothes of modesty ripped off.

"A scarlet robe" - A mockery of the Kingly red robes a monarch would wear

"Jesus' face was swollen from the slaps and beatings He received from the Temple police and was covered with spittle from His Jewish tormentors. He was bleeding profusely from the scourging, with terrible lacerations from His shoulders down, exposing muscles, ligaments, blood vessels, and perhaps even internal organs. Because He had not spoken for the past hour or so, the soldiers may have considered Him mentally deranged and worthy only of ridicule. They played Him as the fool, making sport of the comments they had overheard about His claim to kingship." (MacArthur, p. 248)

B. They mocked Him with a crown of thorns (v. 29a)

"Plated a crown of thorns" - A King needs a crown, they jeered, so they cut a thorn bush and weaved a crown out of thorns to mock Jesus further.

As the *"thorns"* were pressed over His precious brow, no doubt the sharp points pressed into His skin, drawing blood out to cover His already black-and-blue face from the beating received earlier (26:67-68).

Note: Just as thorns are a result of the curse, the crown of thorns is an appropriate symbol of how Jesus became a curse for us!

C. They mocked Him with a reed for a scepter (v. 29b)

The jeering crowd of disrespectful Roman fighting men then figured that a king needs a scepter, so they found a reed and had Him hold it so as to get a bigger laugh out of the "king" they were dressing up.

D. They mocked Him with a <u>bow of insincere homage</u> (v. 29c)

They then, with scorn and ridiculous laughter, fall down in front of the beaten, bloodied, costumed King, and pretend to worship Him (Mk. 15:19).

"Hail" - To stretch out the two hands so as to salute the king

E. They mocked Him with <u>spit in His face</u> (v. 30a)

"Spit upon Him" - The height of contempt and ridicule. The insult of insults to a Jew.

Jesus, who face had now dried from the former spitting (26:67), now becomes the target of the saliva of 300 men.

F. They mocked Him with <u>physical violence</u> (v. 30b)

"Smote Him on the head" - To grab the King's scepter and to strike Him with it is really humiliating for the Son of God.

By beating Him with His own scepter, it is as if they said: "Your kingliness is a joke. Look how easily we strip you of your dignity and your authority. We beat you with your own scepter. Where is your power?" (MacArthur, p. 250).

V. 28-30

Why such horrible treatment? Why such a wild, frenzied, painful, and insulting time?

Answer: Satan hates Jesus Christ.

This was Satan's last and final chance to strike out at Jesus.

This was the hour of the *"power of darkness"* (Lk. 22:53).

Satan's captive servants, who are responsive puppets to do His will any time he chooses (II Tim. 2:26), were gleeful to carry out his wish to mock and humiliate the Son of God.

They did to Jesus what no person would ever do to a King.

They didn't realize that He was King of kings and Lord of lords (I Cor. 2:8 - *"Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they know it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.")*.

Christ's willingness to take the mocking was not a sign of weakness but strength. It takes strength to control your emotions and reactions when you know people are treating you wrongly. *"He that is slow to anger if better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city"* (Prov. 16:32).

Jesus didn't enjoy the shame; He *"despised the shame"* (Heb. 12:2); yet He had the self-control not to retaliate in like manner, but delivered His life over to the will of the Father.

V. 28-29

What is interesting is that the mock costume they were dressing Christ up with will one day be His real garb.

Except then He will not have a cheap scarlet robe, but a red vesture dipped in the blood of His enemies (Rev. 19:13).

The crown of thorns will be replaced by a golden *stephanos* (victor's crown) at the time of Rapture reaping (Rev. 14:14), and replaced by many *diadematas* (king's crowns) at the time for Armageddon (Rev. 12:12).

The *"reed"* will one day be replaced by a *"rod of iron"* with which He will rule the nations and dash them to pieces like pottery (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:27, 12:5, 19:15).

The mock bowing will be replaced with people falling down to worship Him (Rom. 14;11).

And the mockery "Hail King of the Jews" will be replaced by their tongues confessing that *"Jesus Christ is Lord."* (Phil. 2:10).

*SEE: Rev. 19:11-16 for a glimpse of Christ's future glory.

G. They mocked Him with <u>death by crucifixion</u> (v. 31-37)

V. 31

So as to cover up and hide the shameful treatment they gave to our Lord (so as to retain any dignity they may have had in the minds of the populace), they put His own clothing back on Him.

It's amazing what people will do behind closed doors which they would never do out in public.

As Jesus walked toward Golgotha, many Jewish women wept for Him (to which He replied, *"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.")*

V. 32

Jesus, whose deity was housed in mortality and human flesh and blood, was now so physically weary that He could not bear the cross.

Normally, the one to be crucified would carry his own cross to the place of execution, but Jesus was drained from the torturous, inhuman pummelling and blood loss He had already endured.

"Simon" was from Cyrene, North Africa. "He had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, and now he was humiliated by being forced to carry the cross of an unknown criminal" (Wiersbe, p. 102)

If Simon knew who Jesus was, he would have viewed anything done for Him as a great honor.

"Mark referred to Simon as though people reading his gospel would recognize him: *"the father of Alexander and Rufus"* (Mk. 15:21). Apparently these two sons were well-known members of the church. It seems likely that this humiliating experience resulted in Simon's conversion as well as the conversion of his family.

Simon came to Jerusalem to sacrifice his Passover lamb, and he met the Lamb of God who was sacrificed for him (Wiersbe, p. 102).

It is possible that Simon's wife (the mother of Rufus) is the woman who became like a mother to Paul (Rom. 16:13).

"It was required that the prisoner carry his own cross (or at least the cross beam), and that he wear a placard around his neck announcing his crime. That placard was then hung over his head on the cross for all to see" (Wiersbe, p. 102).

Christ's only "crime" was claiming to be the ***"King of the Jews,"*** so this is what He was condemned for. And yet He really was and is the King of the Jews!

Are you willing to bear a cross for Jesus? *"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."* (Lk. 9:23)

V. 33

"Skull" **-** Greek = *kranion* Latin = *calvaria* (cranium; Calvary)

"Golgotha" **-** The Aramaic word for "skull," perhaps indicating that the place where Jesus was crucified had the appearance of a skeleton head. It had the semblance of death.

Such a place exists today, just outside the old city walls of Jerusalem (often referred to as "Gordon's Calvary"). Jesus hung *"outside the gate"* (Heb. 13:12).

V. 34

"Vinegar" **-** lit. wine

"Mingled with gall" **-** gall was a narcotic that was mixed into the wine so as to help deaden the pain.

"He would not drink" **-** Our Lord, however, refused the drugs this world offered Him.

He would not allow any mind-altering substance to enter His body! Neither should you!

Jesus intended to accept the full brunt of the world's punishment and wrath without impairing His faculties.

Evidently the offering of this "gall" mixture was not an act of mercy on the part of the soldiers, but an act to ease the pain so that the victim would not by struggling violently jar a hand or foot loose from the cross, which would require more work on the part of the soldiers to re-nail the loose limb.

V. 35

"They crucified Him" - The most humiliating way to die. A method used for the scum of society.

The Jewish law viewed such a one hanging on a cross as a curse (Gal. 3:13 - *"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."*; cp. Deut. 21:23).

VINNY, SEE: PHOTOCOPY OF MACARHTUR, P. 255

Christ's only physical possessions were taken and gambled off so as to fulfill Psalm 22:18.

He had next to nothing as He lived on this earth (Mt. 8:20 - *"And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests: but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.")*, and He had nothing at His death. . . And yet His impeccable life and His substitutionary death gave Him the right to purchase the greatest treasure of all! --His Church, the Bride of Christ (Rev. 21:9).

V. 36

They ***"watched"*** Him primarily to guard Him (they were well aware of His miracles and powers).

"They watched Him" - looking to see what He would do, whether He would come down from the cross or whether Elijah would come to save Him (v. 49), etc.

V. 37

The accusation written by Pilate (Jn. 19:19) and placed above His cross actually said: "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (cp. Jn. 19:19), and it was written in the three languages of the day - Greek, Latin, and Hebrew (Lk. 23:38).

The Jewish religious leaders, not believing that the accusation was true, asked Pilate to change it (which he did not) (Jn. 19:21-22).

"In one sense, this title proved to be the first 'Gospel tract' ever written" (Wiersbe, p. 103). One thief read it and was saved!

H. They mocked Him with <u>association with two criminals</u> (v. 38)

Christ was further humiliated by being associated with two thieves. One wicked man on His right and another on His left, and Perfection placed in the middle.

"He made His grave with the wicked" (Is. 53:9).

II. They Insulted His Power to do <u>MIRACLES</u> (v. 39-40)

V. 39

"Reviled Him" - hurled verbal abuse at Him; used insulting language to describe Him.

"Wagging their heads" - Again, a mockery. No doubt, with their eyes lifted up, a smirk on their faces, perhaps arms crossed or finger pointing at Him -- they shook their heads back and forth to express their disbelief at one who supposedly was so awesome, so powerful, so mighty, and yet He just hung there like a helpless, hoopless common criminal.

V. 40

They mocked, "If you could do what you said you could do, then why not prove it, and prove it now!"

Could Jesus come down off of the cross? Of course He had the spiritual power to do so. However, He did not for at least three reasons:

1. His coming down at their request would be to submit to their wishes, thus making Christ subordinate to their will

2. His coming down would be to fail to fulfill the will of the Father (Lk. 22:42) and to fail to fulfill the whole purpose for which He came to earth (Mt. 20:28)

3. His coming down would be to fail to purchase your salvation

Can you imagine the hardness of heart to insult a man as His life is being poured out?

Many would no doubt insult a convicted criminal, but not even the hardest of hearts would insult him as he fries in the electric chair right before one's eyes.

"Jesus enemies so hated Him that even His death seemed to be a disappointment, because it ended their opportunity to spew venom on Him" (MacArthur, p. 246).

[ILLUS: Bill Murray's testimony of how his mother's (Madaline Murray O'Hair) hatred of Jesus Christ proved His reality and existence to Bill, who recognized that no one hates someone who does not exist.]

III. They Insulted His Ability to <u>SAVE</u> (v. 41-42)

V. 41

Those religious Jews never stopped opposing Christ right up until His final breath on the cross.

*Don't tell me all religions lead to Heaven!

V. 42

"He saved others" - And He did! EX: Jairus' daughter (Mt. 9:18); Lazarus (Jn. 11; v. 24-26 - *"Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?")*.

"Himself He cannot save" - It's not that He <u>could</u> not. It's that He <u>would</u> not.

If He chose to save Himself, He could not have saved the world.

His death means life to you and me.

"And we will believe Him" - Christ did more than enough miracles to authenticate Himself. He would never succumb to this request.

Would they really believe? These same people knew how Christ raised Lazarus from the dead (Jn. 11:47-48 - *"Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on Him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.")*. Yet rather than believing the evidence, *"they took counsel together for to put him to death"* (Jn. 11:53).

The rich man in hell thoughts that a miracle would save his five brothers (Lk. 16:30, 31).

If people will not believe God's Word and submit to the working of the Holy Spirit, neither will they be persuaded by a miracle (EX: Judas).

Jesus was their "Brand of Messiah." They were all looking for a different type - a political deliverer, not a Savior from sin.

Beware of demanding to have things <u>your</u> way. Accept God's way!

IV. They Insulted His Relationship With the <u>FATHER</u> (v. 43-44)

V. 43

"Let Him deliver Him now" - They not only put the Son of God to a test, but God the Father also.

They in effect say, "Where is that mountain-moving faith now, Jesus?!"

Of course, Jesus didn't need "faith," because faith is believing the unseen. Jesus of course saw everything; had been in the Father's presence in eternity past, and was in essence *"one with the Father."*

The hymnwriter said; "...He could have called 10,000 angels to destroy the world and set Him free...but He died alone for you and me."

V. 44

Out of their mouths came the same insults the rest had given; however, one of the thieves saw the error of his words and repented, rebuked the other thief for insulting Christ, and came to faith in Christ (Lk. 23:39-43).

CONCLUSION:

In this text, there is a message to the saved and unsaved alike.

The message to the saved is that you should *"follow in His steps"* (SEE: I Peter 2:19-24 *V. 21).

"For this is thankworthy: if a man, because of his conscience toward God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. **For even unto this were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps**, "who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth"; who when He was reviled, reviled not in return; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously; who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed."

How do you respond to unjust treatment?

I Peter 2:18-25
Keep doing right when you are treated wrong!

I. GOD IS MY MOTIVE
To keep doing right even when I'm treated wrong (v. 19-20)
A. A clean conscience toward God (v. 19)
B. A clear testimony for God (v. 20)

II. CHRIST IS MY EXAMPLE
To keep doing right even when I'm treated wrong (v. 21-25)
A. He suffered unjustly though He was sinlessly perfect (v. 22)
B. He suffered unjustly and did not retaliate (v. 23)
C. He suffered unjustly to pay for our sins (v. 24a)
D. He suffered unjustly so that we would live righteously (v. 24b-25)

The message to the unsaved is this: Although Christ had the power to come down from the cross, He stayed there to bear yours sins in His own body and pay the price to ransom you.

"THREE MIRACULOUS SIGNS AT CALVARY"

Matthew 27:45-54

4-14-2018

INTRODUCTION: Matthew 27:27-44

I. Sign # 1 <u>DARKNESS</u> (v. 45-50)
(The Sin of the World Had Been Paid For)

II. Sign # 2 <u>THE TORN VEIL</u> (v. 51a)
(A New Covenant Had Been Provided)

III. Sign # 3 <u>EARTHQUAKE</u> (v. 51b-53)
(God's Power Over the Grave Had Been Promised)

CONCLUSION: (v. 54)

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"THREE MIRACULOUS SIGNS AT CALVARY"

Matthew 27:45-54
4-14-2018

INTRODUCTION: Matthew 27:27-44

V. 45-54

These verses are among the most awesome in the Bible.

God is making a powerful statement by three supernatural events that occurred ont he day Christ died.

The crucifixion lasted a total of <u>six hours</u> (from 9:00 a.m. [Mk. 15:25} until 3:00 p.m.). Verses 45-54 focus on the last 3 hours.

Whether Wednesday or Friday, this was no normal day in human history.

I. Sign # 1 <u>DARKNESS</u> (v. 45-50)
(The Sin of the World Had Been Paid For)

V. 45
The last 3 hours of Christ's death on Calvary are the most important and significant moments of human history.

During these short 180 minutes (or 10,800 seconds), the most vital work for humanity was accomplished.

After the scorning of the crowd and after the saving of the penitent thief (Lk. 23:43), a mysterious, eerie darkness started to fall upon the earth.

A "shepherd stands staring at the now blackened sky. Only seconds before he had stared at the sun. Now there is no sun. The sky is black. No thunder. No lightening. Noclouds. Thesheeparerestless. Thefeelingiseerie. Whatisthishellish darkness? What has happened?" (Max Lucado)

Perhaps a scream is heard in the distance. Many, pointing to the sky, momentarily forget about those on the crosses. Then the crowd begins to break up and hurry toward the gates. The men cease their work, and the women fling their shawls over their heads and run with their children to get shelter from what seems to be a brewing storm.

People in fear say: "What is this? What's going on?"

What is amazing is that noon time is the time that the sun is at its highest point, at its zenith.

The means God used to darkness the earth is uncertain. We know that *"the sun was darkened."* (Lk. 23:45)
A prolonged eclipse is one answer, or a miraculous Heaven-sent darkening of the sun is another.

"Over all the land" - the word *"land"* can also mean "earth" (SEE: quote from Jim Bishop, *"The Day Christ Died"*, p. 327).

This darkness "was as though all of creation was sympathizing with the Creator. There were three days of darkness in Egypt before the Passover (Ex. 10:21-23) and there were three hours of darkness before the Lamb of God died for the sins of the world" (Wiersbe, p. 103).

The darkening of the sun marks the time of God's Judgment. God's Son was judged for our sin! (NOTE: The "Day of the Lord" will be initiated by darkness! - Joel 2:31; Rev. 6:12, 17; cp. Amos 5:20; Zeph. 1;14-15).

God's judgment of those in hell involves darkness (II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Mt. 8:12).

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" - This is a quote from Psalm 22:1; read Ps. 22:1, 7-8, 13-18).

From 12:00 - 3:00, Christ fully drank of that bitter cup He so much dreaded. (SEE: Mt. 26:36-42).

The phrase *"exceedingly sorrowful"* (mt. 26:38) indicates an unfathomable depth of anguish and sorrow.

What was that *"cup"?* It was the spiritual suffering (the *"travail of his soul"* - Is. 53:11) as He took upon Himself the full brunt of the sin of the world (Is. 53:4-6).

The contents of this cup involved the poisonous, toxic, dark, putrefying, cursed sin of the world that Jesus took upon Himself (II Cor. 5:21).

This horrible cup of agonizing pain and suffering was a cup given by God the Father.

Jesus was *"smitten of God, and afflicted"* (Is. 53:4).
"The LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (is. 53:6)
"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; he hath put him to grief. . . [the Father made] his soul an offering for sin" (Is. 53:10)

The most horrible contents of the cup of which Jesus drank was the momentary yet infinite separation between He and the Father.

As Jesus *"bore our sins in his own body ont he tree" (I Pet. 2:24)*, the Father as it were turned His back on His Son and forsook Him. For the first time in eternity, a split, a schism, a separation between the Father and the Son occurred.
At no time in history or eternity past had the Son ever been abandoned by the Father.

Christ experienced not only a physical death, but during those 3 hours on the cross He "tasted" a spiritual death (which involved the separation of his soul from the Father.

God the Father and the Son had known perfect intimacy in eternity past. Together, the triune Godhead planned creation. *"Let us make man in our image."*

Together, the Father and Soon created the universe - *"by whom also he made the worlds"* (Heb. 1:2; cp. Col. 1:16; Jn. 1:3)

The Father and Son both confused the languages at Babel (Gen. 11:7); the Father and Son both desired that a prophet be sent to preach to Israel - Is. 6:8).

Together the Father and Son had an unfathomable love (Jn. 17:23-24, 26). Since they shared the same nature, they knew each other more fully and completely than any other could (Mt. 11:27). While on earth, Christ desired nothing more than to please the Father (Mt. 3:17; Mt. 17:3; Jn. 8:29).

The Father and Son had a unity that was so personal and intimate (Jn. 17:21, 23) because together they were one in essence and nature (Jn. 10:30).

Yet on the cross an abandonment occurred.

Jesus *"endured the cross despising the same"* (Heb. 12:2)

He was made a *"curse for us"* in order to remove us from *"the curse of the Law."* (Gal. 3:13).

"The Bridge Story"

V. 50
What did Jesus cry out with a loud voice? Two cries -
1) *"It is finished"* (Jn. 19:30)
2) *"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"* (Lk. 23:46)

II. Sign # 2 THE TORN VEIL (v. 51a)

(A New Covenant Had Been Provided)

As the sun begins to shine again, a man rushes into his house. His wife, huddled with her children and about to blow out the flame in her lamp, hears him breathlessly say: *"The temple curtain. . . torn!"*

V. 51

"Behold" - Look! See! God is grabbing our attention to a significant fact.

Each year on "Yom Kippur" (the Day of Atonement) the High Priest would enter where no one else was allowed. He would go into the Holy of Holies with blood to make atonement for Israel. This was the most somber of all Jewish holy Days. (Lev. 23:26-32). Such mourning and gloom over their sin perfectly corresponds to the dark and somber day Christ died.

The "*veil*" - was the curtain which separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place and the rest of the Temple (In the holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat).

"Josephus reported that the veil was four inches thick, was renewed every year, and that horses tied to each side could not pull it apart. (cited by Ryrie).

"top to bottom" – The fact that the veil was ripped in the direction from the top to the bottom shows that it was God who tore the veil and not man. It was God who completed the Old Covenant and provided a New. It was God who now invites all of His redeemed children into His immediate presence without any further need of a human mediator. The torn veil was the Lord's way of showing that the Old Testament priesthood was completely and totally done away with and that we now have complete and total access into God's presence.

The tearing of the Temple veil symbolized the fact that believers (after Christ's one, final, and complete sacrifice) now have direct access into God's presence through Christ (SEE: Heb. 10:19-22)

III. Sign # 3 <u>EARTHQUAKE</u> (v. 51b-53)
(God's Power Over the Grave Had Been Promised)

V. 51

The third climactic sign that occurred was *"The earth shook and the rocks split open."*

One of the most powerful ways for God to make a statement is to send an earthquake.

The timing of this quake has great significance. It occurred at the same moment Christ *"yielded up the ghost."*

So as the draw people's attention to the great significance of Christ's death, God sends an earthquake marking the finality and completion of Christ's work on earth, and marking Christ's grand exit from this world. (EX: the noise and power of the thrust a rocket makes when it launches off of the earth).

The New Covenant had been provided!

Note the parallel: The earthquake at Mount Sinai (when the O.T. Covenant was given - Ex. 19:16ff).

The earthquake at Calvary (when the N.T. Covenant was provided)

V. 52

"The graves were opened" - The earthquake caused the stones to roll away from the burial caves.

NOTE: the connection between this earthquake and the graves opening, and the earthquake and Christ's grave opening (Mt. 28:2).

The last clause of V. 52 must be connected to v. 53. Although the graves were opened at Christ's death, this resurrection of many saints did not occur until <u>after</u> His resurrection. (since Christ is the *"firstfruits of them that slept"* - I Cor. 15:20).

CONCLUSION: (v. 54)

All of Christ's life on earth had been building up toward this great climax. This 3 hour period (a "baptism" of death) was the goal and purpose of His entrance into the human race (Lk. 19:10; I Tim. 1:15).

What do you do with that day in history? What does it mean to you?

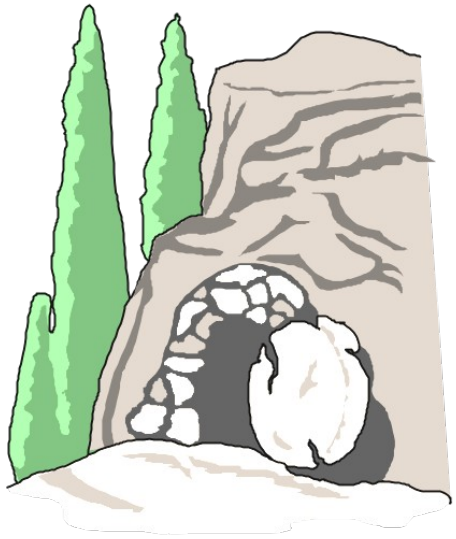
If God sent darkness and turned his back on his one-of-a-kind Son, if God ripped the Jewish temple veil in two; if God split the earth's rocks open and flung open the graves, then this was the most critical moment in history!

1. Have you accepted the fact that your sins were paid for on Calvary?

2. Have you understood that a new and living way has been provided for you?

3. Have you trusted in the finished work of Jesus Christ and his promise off life after death?

"The Irrefutable Fact of the Resurrection"



Matthew 27:57 - 28:15
4/28/2019

INTRODUCTION:

Christ's resurrection is an irrefutable fact of history!
(a fact which has practical ramifications for you!)

Evidences for Christ's resurrection:

I. **The <u>FACT</u> of His <u>BURIAL</u>** 27:57-61

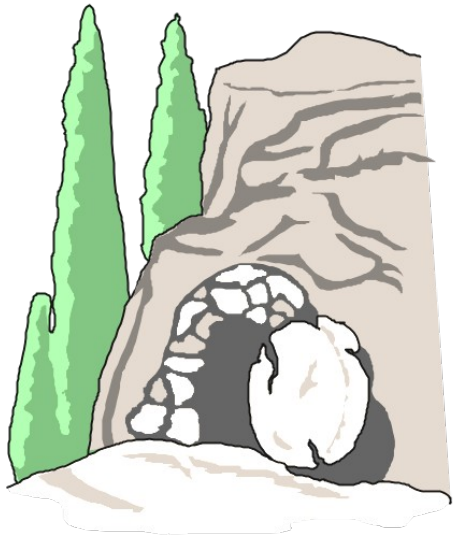
II. **The <u>GUARDING</u> of His <u>TOMB</u>** 27:62-66

III. **The <u>TESTIMONY</u> of an <u>ANGEL</u>** 28:1-8

IV. **The <u>PHYSICAL APPEARANCE</u> of <u>CHRIST</u>** 28:9-10

V. **The <u>BRIBE</u> of the <u>JEWS</u>** 28:11-15

"The Irrefutable Fact of the Resurrection"



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IV. The _____ of CHRIST 28:9-10

V. The _____ of the JEWS 28:11-15

"The Irrefutable Fact of the Resurrection"

Matthew 27:57 - 28:15
4/28/2019

INTRODUCTION:

SEE: MacArthur, p. 317-319 on the theories which deny Christ's resurrection.

Christianity is irrefutable; it can't be explained away, because of one simply fact of history: the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

***Christ's resurrection is an irrefutable fact of history!**
(a fact which has practical ramifications for you!)

Evidences for Christ's resurrection:

I. The FACT of His BURIAL 27:57-61

V. 57
"Even" **-** the end of the day, which was from 3:00 until 6:00. 6:00 began the new day.

Christ had died at 3:00, and it was unlawful for a corpse to stay on the cross past 6:00 when the Sabbath began (Jn. 19:31).

Joseph of Arimathaea was an *"honorable counsellor, who waited for the kingdom of God"* (Mk. 15:43). He is called *"a good man, and a just"* (Lk. 23:50).

Although he was a member of the Sanhedrin (a *"counselor"* - Lk. 23:50), he did not consent to what the Sanhedrin did to Jesus (Lk. 23:51) (He stood alone for what was right).

Both Joseph and Nicodemus were secret followers of Christ. They did not openly testify of Christ because of fear (SEE: *John 19:38-40).

"Jesus' disciple" - Joseph had been a secret believer, who for a while hid his faith in Christ.
Now, however, he was bold (Mk. 15:43) and unashamed of his Lord. He no longer would remain a closet Christian. His bold stand no doubt began when he would not comply with the decision of the Sanhedrin to condemn Christ.

"A rich man" - Although it is very rare for a rich person to be saved (Mt. 19:24), it is not impossible for God (19:26).

V. 58

"He went to Pilate" - This Roman governor, who "washed his hands" of the crucifixion of Jesus was very surprised to hear from Joseph that Jesus was dead already (Mk. 15:44).

Knowing Christ's powers and reputation, Pilate never expected Christ to expire so soon. Christ, however, *"gave up His spirit"* (Mt. 27:50).

V. 59

By handling the body, Joseph and Nicodemus defiled themselves and would not be able to continue the Passover feast. But what difference did it make? They had found the Passover Lamb of God! (Wiersbe, p. 104).

Joseph took a clean strip of cloth and wound it around Jesus body. Imagine the great emotion and grief in Joseph's heart as he (alone) prepares Christ's body for burial (all the disciples had forsaken Him and fled for fear of their own lives).

V. 61

Matthew mentions the two Mary's both to show their loyalty to Christ, and to provide the two or three witnesses to attest to the fact that Christ was literally buried.

The women of Galilee followed Joseph (Lk. 23:55) as he took the body down from the cross (Lk. 23:53). He then placed it in a sepulchre in which no corpse ever had entered (Lk. 23:53).

V. 57-61

Christ's burial was evidence of His death (He didn't "swoon," lose consciousness and then recover). He really did die.

And His burial sets the stage for the validity of His coming alive from the dead.

II. The GUARDING of His TOMB 27:62-66

V. 62

"The next day" **-** Saturday

V. 63

"That deceiver" **-** They terribly maligned the perfect Son of God, who alone was the Truth! (Jn. 14:6).

He was not a deceiver! They were deceivers and were victims of the greatest deceiver, Satan (Jn. 8:44).

"After three days I will rise again" **-** These wicked religious pagans remembered something even Jesus' own disciples had forgotten (Lk. 24:6-8; Mk. 16:14).

V. 64

"The last error **[deception]** ***shall be worse than the first"*** **-** They are saying: The deception of the disciples stealing His body and saying He is risen will be worse than His deception of saying that He would arise on the third day.

V. 65

"A watch" = a guard

"Make it as sure as ye can" - Secure the tomb as best as you are able

V. 66

"Sealing the stone" - This was likely done by connecting the stone to the tomb with a cord and sealing clay so that any tampering could easily be detected (Ryrie note).

The sealing of the tomb made it impossible for anyone, friend or foe, to steal the body. Without realizing it, the Jewish leaders and the Roman government joined forces to help prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Wiersbe, p. 104).

"A watch" - this watch involved more than one guard (v. 4 - *"keepers"* - plural).

*The fact that Christ's tomb was sealed and guarded by His enemies supports the validity of His resurrection!

III. The TESTIMONY of an ANGEL 28:1-8

V. 1

"In the end of the Sabbath" - As the Passover Sabbath (14th Nissan) and the Saturday Sabbath (15th Nissan) came to an end.

"The first day of the week" = lit. *"the first [one] of the Sabbaths"*

Some use this reference to the "first of the Sabbaths" to attempt to prove that Sunday became the new Sabbath. This is not what the text is saying. The Jews, who did not count the days of the week like we do ("Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc.), rather counted the days in their relationship to the Saturday Sabbath.

"The first of the Sabbaths" - refers to the Sabbaths for the new week.

The Old Testament Law required the Jews to celebrate 7 days of rest after Passover in connection with the Feasts of Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits (Lev. 23:7-8; Ex. 12:16).

This text is not a cryptic way for God to reveal a Sunday Sabbath, but is a disclosure of the Jewish week of rest and celebration.

"To see the sepulchre" - They came hoping to get someone to remove the stone (Mk. 16:3) so that they could anoint the body of Jesus with some *"sweet spices"*

(Mk. 16:1).

V. 2

"Earthquake" **-** Reminiscent of 27:51

The angel did not roll away the stone so Jesus could get out. He was already out (and could walk through walls - cp. Jn. 20:26).

The angel rolled away the stone so that people could see for themselves that the tomb was empty, that Jesus was not there!

V. 3

The dazzling, brilliant glow of this angel must have been a terrifying sight to behold.

V. 4

The guards shuddered in fear and became powerless like dead men, unable to move a single limb. Such a phenomena occurs when a mortal comes face to face with a powerful supernatural being (cp. Dan. 10:8, 10).

V. 5

After the guards fled the scene, this angel along with another angel (Lk. 24:4), greet the two Mary's as they come to the tomb and find the stone rolled away.

V. 6

"He is risen" **-** This short statement is the basis of the Christian faith.

"He is risen, as He said" **-** i.e. as He had promised you.

The Lord is always faithful to His promises. Trust Him!

IV. The PHYSICAL APPEARANCE of CHRIST 28:9-10

V. 9

"All hail" **-** Grace to you

"Held Him by the feet" **-** Christ had a literal body which could be clung to (Jn. 20:17).

"Worshipped Him" **-** the immediate response of anyone who enters the presence of the resurrected Christ.

Jesus appeared to:

--Mary Magdalene (Mk. 16:9)

--The two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Mk. 16:12; Lk. 24:13-35) and ate with them in their home (Lk. 24:30)

--Peter (Lk. 23:34)

--The eleven disciples (Mk. 16:14). They also handled Him, saw His hands and feet, and saw Him eat in their presence (Lk. 24:36-43).

* At His first appearance, Thomas was missing (Jn. 20:19-25), then again He appeared with Thomas present (Jn. 20:26-31)

* Then to seven of the disciples up in Galilee (Jn. 21:1ff)

--Then to over 500 brethren at once (SEE: I Cor. 15:1-8)

--Then to Stephen (Acts 7:55-56)

--Then to Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:5)

V. The <u>BRIBE</u> of the <u>JEWS</u> 28:11-15

V. 11

"Some of the watch" **-** Some of the guards w ho had experienced the encounter with the angel (v. 4).

V. 12

Rather than accepting the testimony of the guards, and not having the character to examine the validity of Christ's resurrection, they in hardened unbelief muzzled the mouths of the soldiers with money.

In order to cover up the resurrection, they bribed the guards with that which most godless heath would gladly take to keep their mouths shut.

Could you ever be bought off if a ***"large sum of money"*** was offered to you? What would it take to silence your witness?

They had given money to Judas to betray Christ, and now they give money to cover up His resurrection.

V. 13

"While we slept" **-** If they were sleeping, how did they know what happened?!

What a haphazard, ill-planned alibi! How would sleeping people know who it was that stole the body!?

Guards were not allowed to fall asleep on the job anyway. They could lose their lives for such irresponsibility.

Since the Pharisees and chief priests had hired the guards, their fate would be determined by this Jews rather than by Pilate.

Their story was <u>self-contradictory</u>.

Oh, the hardness of man's heart! These people were stubbornly unwilling to at least say: "Maybe there is something to this Jesus of Nazareth." There had been so many attestations to His Messiahship. This was the ultimate!

Maybe deep down inside they know what the soldiers say is true. They don't deny or question their story; they just seek to cover it up.

V. 15

"They did as they were taught" **-** Rather than doing what was right, they violated the truth, violated their own conscience, violated what they saw, heard, and experienced. All for the sake of filthy lucre.

Their lie became the common belief among the Jews.

"Until this day" **-** It is sad how false doctrine has a way of continuing from

generation to generation. The lies go on and one, to those who have their heads in the sand.

"Mark Twain once wrote that a lie can go around the world while truth is still lacing up her boots. There is something in human nature that makes it easy for people to believe lies" (Wiersbe, p. 106).

CONCLUSION:

Other proofs of Christ's resurrection:

1. The grave clothes were left behind (Jn. 20:5-7)
   (If Christ's body had been stolen, there is no way they would have wasted the time to unwrap Him)

2. The cowardly disciples were transformed and were even willing to all die as martyrs for their faith

3. Even Saul of Tarsus, an enemy of Christ, was compelled to believe in Him when he saw the resurrected Savior

4. Jesus is transforming people today, as He has for nearly 2,000 years
   Hymn: "You ask me how I know He lives, He lives within my heart"

Because Jesus arose from the dead. . .

1. He is proven to be the <u>Son of God</u>
   (Rom. 1:4 - *"And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead"*)

2. His <u>promises</u> are <u>trustworthy</u>
   (Jn. 10:18 - *"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have i received*

of my Father.") (cp. Mt. 12:40, 16:21, 17:9, 23)

3. He has <u>power over life</u> and <u>death</u>
(Rev. 1:18 - *"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."*)

4. He can now <u>give eternal life</u> to all who believe
(Jn. 10:28 - *"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."*) (cp. Rom. 10:9-10)

5. He can <u>intercede</u> as our High Priest
(Heb. 7:25 - *"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them")*

6. He can <u>empower</u> us to live victoriously
(Rom. 6:4 - *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life")*

7. Our <u>labor</u> for Him is <u>not in vain</u>
(I Cor. 15:14 - *"And if Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain"*) (I Cor. 15:58 - *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord")*

8. We are assured that <u>we, too, shall rise</u> from the dead
(Jn. 11:25 - *"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live"*) (Jn. 14:19 - *"Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also"*)

9. He is <u>coming</u> back <u>again</u>
(I Th. 4:13-18)

10. He will one day <u>judge the world</u>
(Acts 17:31 - *"Because He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he ordained;; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead"*)

HYMN: "<u>Christ Arose</u>"

"BE A DISCIPLE-MAKER IN 1995!"

Matthew 28:16-20

1/1/95

INTRODUCTION: Verses 16-17, *verse 19a

If you are a born-again Christian, the Lord Jesus Christ has a commission for you!

***Be a Disciple-Maker this year!**

I. Jesus Christ Gives Us the AUTHORITY to Disciple Others (v. 18-19a)

II. Jesus Christ Gives Us the ACTIVITY to Disciple Others (v. 19-20a)

A. Discipling involves going

B. Discipling involves baptizing

C. Discipling involves teaching

III. Jesus Christ Gives Us the ABILITY to Disciple Others (v. 20b)

CONCLUSION: We must give Him our AVAILABILITY!

"BE A DISCIPLE-MAKER IN 1995!"

Matthew 28:16-20

1/1/95

INTRODUCTION: Verses 16-17, *verse 19a

When someone is dying or leaving us, his or her last words are extremely important.

Last words are important words. All four Gospels end with a command to evangelize and disciple the world (Mt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:47-48; Jn. 21:15-17).

V. 16

"Eleven" - With unbelieving Judas having committed suicide, the eleven remaining disciples fulfilled Christ's prediction (mt. 26:32) and obeyed both the angels' (Mt. 28:7) and Christ's command (Mt. 28:10) to go up north into the region of Galilee for "fourth quarter" training.

"Into Galilee" - It was up in this northern region of Palestine that Christ for nearly 40 days taught His disciples many things *"pertaining to the Kingdom of God"* (Acts 1:3).

V. 17

"They worshipped Him" - They fell down prostrate in front of Jesus Christ and gave Him the honor, respect, and adoration He so rightly deserves. Because He is God, He must be worshipped! (Mt. 4:10)

"Some doubted" - It was so incredible that Christ had conquered death that some of the disciples found it difficult to believe their own eyes and ears. That is, until Christ *"opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures"* (Lk. 24:45). Lk. 24:46-47 - *"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer,a nd to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."*

"Some doubted" - Not only were the 11 present, but *"more than 500 brethren at one time"* (I Cor. 15:6) were with Jesus at this point. I believe the doubters were among them.

V. 19

For the disciples to make disciples is to reproduce themselves. To pass on the revelation, principles, and precepts that Christ gave to them.

"Teach all nations" - lit. make disciples of all nations. The verb *"teach"* is the same root as the word *"disciples"* (v. 16).

A "disciple" is a disciplined one, one who is trained int he disciplines of His Master.

The obvious prerequisite of discipling someone is evangelizing them.

--They must hear the Gospel, and you and I are expected to give it (Mk. 16:15 - *"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.")*

"In most churches, the congregation pays the pastor to preach, win the lost, and build up the saved--while the church members [stand on the sidelines and] function as cheerleaders (if they are enthusiastic) or spectators (if they lack all zeal)." (Wiersbe, p. 107).

How much faster churches would grow and how much stronger would believers be if each Christian was discipling another believer.

Which step are you on?

1. Saved

2. Saved and growing

3. Saved and growing and helping others become saved and growing

If you are a born-again Christian, the Lord Jesus Christ has a commission for you!

***Be a Disciple-Maker this year!**

I. Jesus Christ Gives Us the AUTHORITY to Disciple Others (v. 18-19a)

During His earthly ministry, Christ proved His authority over sickness and disease (Mt. 4:23; 9:35), over demons (4:24, 8:32, 12:22), over sin (9:6), and over death (Mk. 5:41-42; Jn. 11:43-44) (MacArthur, p. 339).

V. 18

"All power [authority] is given unto me" - After Jesus paid redemption's price and rose from the dead, He was given from the Father the same "power" (authority) He had and shared with the Father prior to His coming into the world (cp. Jn. 17:5, 24; Phil. 2:6).

"Power" - *exousia* - the absolute, unrestricted right to rule.

Jesus rules Heaven and earth! What He says goes. What He wants done gets done.

"By Him all things consist" (Col. 2:17).

By claiming to own all the authority of Heaven and earth, Jesus is either liar, lunatic, or LORD!

"Therefore" - In light of the fact that Christ has all the authority to command Heaven's angelic occupants and earth's mortals, Christ gives a command with total clout behind it.

I do not disciple others based on my authority, a church's authority, some other man's authority. . . but on the authority of Jesus Christ, my Command-in-Chief who sent me!

II. Jesus Christ Gives Us the ACTIVITY to Disciple Others (v. 19-20a)

Some people try to excuse themselves from following this Great Commission by calling it "the Disciples' commission" and saying that this imperative was only for the disciples to carry out.

This position is not correct for several obvious reasons:

1) It would be impossible for only 11 men to disciple *"all nations"*

2) The command is valid for as long as Christ presence is promised: *"even until the end of the world [age]"* (The eleven did not even see the end of the first century!)

3) Elsewhere, Scripture applies the responsibility of evangelism and

discipleship to all believers

a) The Early Church obeyed this Commission (Acts 8:4)

b) We are all called *"ambassadors for Christ"* (II Cor. 5:20) II Cor. 5:18 - *"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ,a nd hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation."*

The Early Church carried out this Great Commission:
They *"went"* (Acts 8:4)
They *"baptized"* (Acts 2:41, 8:38, 10:45)
They *"taught"* (Acts 18:26)

Discipleship involves 3 key elements:
1) Going
2) Baptizing
3) Teaching

A disciple is "one who has believed on Jesus Christ and expressed this faith by being baptized. he remains in the fellowship of the believers that he might be taught the truths of the faith (Acts 2:41-47)." (Wiersbe, p. 107).

A. Discipling involves going

"Go ye" - As you go. . . make disciples. The *"go"* is not commanded but assumed. You can't disciple someone unless you get up and go do it!

Discipleship is to be woven into our "going" through life. As we "go" through life, we are to fulfill the responsibility of discipling others to maturity in Christ.

"Go ye. . . all nations" - Christ intends that there not be a country, a state, a tribe, etc., that is neglected or by-passed. All nations need the Gospel, need discipleship.

In Jesus' previous commission, which applied specifically to His first-century disciples, He sent His disciples only to the Jews (Mt. 10:5-6). From now on their mission would involve the Gentiles and be worldwide.

Going to people of all nations requires:

1. A willingness to cross language and cultural barriers

2. An unprejudiced heart toward others of diverse ethnic

backgrounds and skin color

B. Discipling involves baptizing

"Baptizing them" = immersing them in water (Acts 8:38-39).

The same word "baptize" was the Green word the rich man in Luke 16:24 used when He requested Lazarus to "*dip" (baptse)* his finger in water.

"Baptizing them" - the "them" refers to ones discipled. The day an infant is intelligent enough to be discipled is the day infants can be baptized.

Infant baptism is a violation of the Great Commission!

Only those who have repented (Mt. 3:2-6; Acts 2:38), believed (Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 8:37) and received the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:47) can be baptized.

"In the name (singular) ***of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" -*** This verse is proof for the unity of the Trinity ("name" - singular) and the equality of the Trinity (it would be blasphemous to putt Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit on par with the Father if indeed they were not co-equal with the Father).

By baptism, a convert identifies with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(For a Jew, baptism in the name of the Father and Spirit was no big deal, butt in the name of "Jesus" was the biggest test. Hence, the emphasis in the New Testament is baptism in the name of Jesus - Acts 2:38, 8:12).

Baptism is a picture of one's union with Christ and a proclamation of one's devotion to Christ.

C. Discipling involves teaching

"Teaching" - to impart Biblical instruction

This teaching is not designed to inform a mind or fill up a notebook but to transform a life" (Doug Finkbeiner)

This teaching is to be formal (Eph. 4:12) and informal (cp. Dtt. 6:7). It should be visual (modeling) and verbal (instructing)/

"Disciple" - IMPORT NOTES FROM DISCIPLESHIP LESSON

"All things . . . I have commanded you" -

*The whole counsel of God must be taught (like Paul did - Acts 20:27)

*Complete obedience is expected of disciples of Christ.

III. Jesus Christ Gives Us the ABILITY to Disciple Others (v. 20b)

"Lo" - Listen, see or look!

An attention grabbing little word to point to a great truth.

It is a fact that Jesus gives us His:

1. Personal presence (*"with you")*

2. Perpetual presence (*"always")*

It is unheard of for a commander or king to give a subordinate a command and then go accompany that person on the assigned task. Yet this is what Christ our exalted King does!

Discipling others is the only specific New Testament command which is accompanied with a promise of Christ's presence!

Why does Jesus promise His presence?

--to relieve fears (EX: Acts 18:9-10)
--to provide enablement
(Christ empowers us, sharpens our mind, etc. when we are busy about His commission)

How would Jesus remain with us? Answer: In the person of the Holy Spirit; He is with us by His Spirit (Acts 1:4, Jn. 14:26)

The Holy Spirit is our power (Acts 1:8).

The end of the age marks the time when the Lord Jesus shall return from Heaven (The age of the Gentiles will come to an end and the Day of the Lord will begin)

CONCLUSION: We must give Him our AVAILABILITY!

This "passing on" of what Christ gave us is the ultimate duty of a disciple of Christ (II Tim. 2:2).

--Discipleship begins at home!
Parents are expected to disciple their children; saved husbands their wives

--Discipleship then extends to relatives, neighbors, co-workers, people whose path crosses yours.

What is called by many the "great Commission" has become by much of the pressing church the "Great Omission"

For a Christian to not disciple someone else is to . . .

--Live an unfulfilled life (incomplete; you are not fulfilling a major purpose for which you were saved; we must have an inlet and outlet, be a lake not a stagnant pond).

--Live in sin (the sin of omission; you are not right with God if you are not involved in the spiritual growth of someone else)

Are you willing to be a disciple maker?
--right now?

--Are you willing to be a missionary for Jesus Christ?

"Some years ago, a missionary went to a primitive, pagan society. She became especially burdened for a young wife and eventually was used to win the woman to Christ. Almost as soon as she was saved the woman told the missionary with great sorrow, "I wish you could have come sooner, so my little boy could have been saved." When the missionary asked why it was too late, the mother replied, "Because just a few weeks before you came to us, I offered him as a sacrifice to the gods of our tribe." (MacArthur, p. 347).

Which step are you on?

1. Saved

2. Saved and growing

3. Saved and growing and helping others

become saved and growing

Discipleship involves 3 key elements:

1) Going
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