"THE FAMILY TREE OF ROYALTY"
Matthew 1:1-17
2/9/92

INTRODUCTION: Verse 1a

--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.

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) Christ 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 G o d ' s u n s e a r c h a b l e w i s d o m !

KNOTS ON THE FAMILY TREE

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back from the front lines of battle, where he was loyally serving David. David assumed that Uriah would have sex with his wife. Then when Bathsheba's pregnancy began to show, no one would know that the baby was not Uriah's.

But David's plan failed because Uriah was a man of integrity. As a matter of principle he refused to spend the night with his wife while his men were sleeping in tents on the battlefield. David even tried getting Uriah drunk, but still Uriah would not compromise.

When David realized he could not hide his sin for much longer, he sent a note to his commanding general ordering him to put Uriah on the front line and then fall back in the thick of the battle. Uriah, David knew, would be killed. In effect, he murdered Uriah.

Worse, David then took Bathsheba to be his own wife. The child conceived by their adultery died shortly after birth. David, through Nathan's reprimand, ultimately repented of his sin.

Bathsheba conceived again and bore Solomon, the next link in the messianic line. And thus Bathsheba, though guilty of adultery, also became part of the line that would culminate in the birth of Jesus.

GENEALOGIES OF GRACE

What a genealogy Matthew gives us! It's almost as if he is nominating people for a Hall of Shame! Here are two prostitutes, one cursed Moabite, and an adulteress. These are the only four women mentioned in the entire genealogy, and every one of them was an outcast. Add Jeconiah and all the evil kings of Judah that preceded him, and it begins to seem like Jesus' royal genealogy was filled with sinners.

But that's just the point. Matthew, writing his Gospel for an expressly Jewish audience, must have realized that by deliberately emphasizing these four women, he was confronting the self-righteous arrogance of pharisaic tradition. The fact that the messianic line was populated with Gentiles, adulteresses, liars, cursed kings, and other sinners was something most of Matthew's readers would have preferred to ignore. But the Bible—because it is the inspired Word of God—consistently refuses to obscure what is truly important.

Why? Because the people in the messianic genealogy are not on display: God's grace is. Rahab, for example, is memorable, not because of her sin, but because of God's mercy in forgiving her. Whatever her background as a Gentile and prostitute, she found grace, not because of anything she did, but because the God she turned to is a God of grace and mercy.

But here's the real point of all these "knotty" stories: the same grace that is evident in Matthew's and Luke's genealogies is active today, and the same Jesus they wrote about is still the friend of sinners (Luke 7:34). No sin, no matter how heinous, puts sinners beyond His reach. "He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them" (Heb. 7:25). ◊

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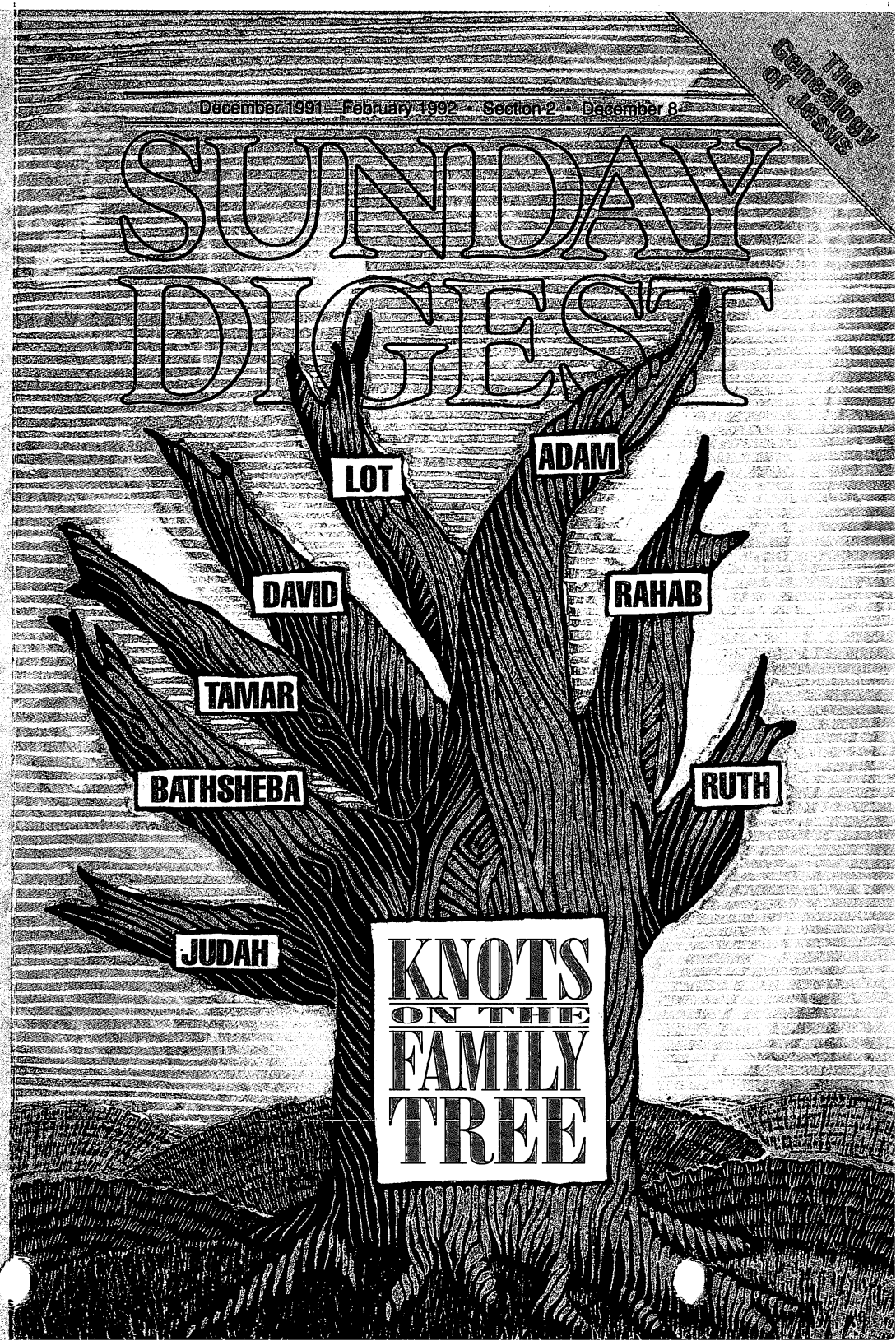
SUNDAY DIGEST



these four women epitomizes the kind of person we would expect to find in the royal lineage of the King of Kings. All of them were outcasts.

Tamar. The first is Tamar: "Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar" (Matt. 1:3). What kind of woman was Tamar? Her story is told in Genesis 38. It is a sordid tale of incest, prostitution, and deception.

Judah chose Tamar as a wife for his firstborn son, Er. Er was evil. We don't know what he did, but God struck him dead for it (see Gen. 38:7). Er's brother Onan then became Tamar's husband, as the law at that time required. When he spitefully refused to father children by Tamar, God struck him dead too (see vs. 10).

Frustrated at being childless, and unwilling to wait on the Lord's timing for the right husband, Tamar concocted an evil scheme to become pregnant. She dressed up as a prostitute, put a veil over her face, and waited by the road until Judah, her own father-in-law, came along. Not realizing who she was, Judah sinned too by hiring a prostitute—which resulted in his having sex with his own sons' widow (see vs. 18)! Twin sons were conceived through that shameful act of incest. Their names were Perez and Zerah. Perez, who was born first, became part of the messianic line.

Did you realize a woman like Tamar was part of Jesus' ancestry? Don't bother looking for her redeeming virtues. Almost nothing more is said about Tamar in the Old Testament account. She's really just a footnote in the early history of the Hebrew nation, but she stands as a classic illustration of the sinfulness of humanity.

Rahab. The next woman Matthew mentions may be more familiar to you. She's referred to in Scripture as "Rahab the prostitute" (Josh. 6:17, 25; Heb. 11:31; Jas. 2:25). The name "Rahab" may mean "pride," "insolence," or "savagery."

Rahab was one of the Canaanites, mortal enemies of God's people. When we first encounter her in the biblical account, she is nothing more than an idolatrous Gentile woman, a professional prostitute. Her most memorable act was telling a lie.

Joshua 2 records that part of her story. After forty years of wandering in the wilderness, the Israelites were finally preparing to enter the promised land. Joshua sent spies to scout out the city of Jericho. They happened upon Rahab, who hid them in her home. When city officials came looking for the men, Rahab lied to protect them. Knowing that the Israelites would destroy Jericho and everyone in it, she bargained with the spies to save her family. They agreed to do so, but only if Rahab hung a cord of scarlet thread from her window to let the Israelites know which house was hers.

She did, and the Israelites spared Rahab and her family. Rahab abandoned the gods of Canaan for Jehovah. She became not only a convert to the true God but also a part of the messianic line. She was the great-great-grandmother of David.

Ruth. Rahab was the mother of Boaz. Matthew's genealogy continues: "Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth" (1:5). Here, just one generation later, is another Gentile woman in the messianic line. Unlike Rahab and Tamar, Ruth was not an immoral woman. But she was a Gentile.

In fact, Ruth was a Moabite. The entire Moabite race was a product of incest. The incident is chronicled in Genesis 19:30-38.

Lot was living in a cave with his two daughters after the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah had been leveled by fire. The daughters were afraid there would be no one to marry them and carry on the family. So the elder of the two suggested they persuade their father to get drunk so they could seduce him.

We're not sure of the extent to which Lot was to blame for the situation, but Scripture clearly focuses on the sin of his daughters who, on two successive nights, slept with their own father. Scripture records that "both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their father. The older daughter had a son, and she named him Moab; he is the father of the Moabites of today. The younger daughter also had a son, and she named him Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the Ammonites of today" (Gen. 19:36-38).

Thus Ruth was from a tribe of people who were the product of incest. Their very existence was repugnant to the Hebrew people. Deuteronomy 23:3 contains one of the laws that governed worship in Israel: "No Ammonite or Moabite or any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the Lord, even down to the tenth generation."

Yet Ruth became the wife of Boaz. Like Rahab, she coveted the truth and found grace in the eyes of God. Her great-grandson was David.

Bathsheba. There's more. Matthew 1:6 mentions a fourth woman without naming her: "David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife." Who was it that had been the wife of Uriah? Bathsheba. Her story is not pretty either.

Bathsheba, according to II Samuel 11, was on a rooftop bathing herself when David noticed her. He had his servants invite Bathsheba to the palace so he could meet her, and he then began a secret relationship with her. But it didn't stay a secret very long.

When David learned that Bathsheba was pregnant, he tried to cover their sin by bringing Uriah, Bathsheba's husband,

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JESUS' FAMILY TREE

ABRAHAM
↓
ISAAC
↓
JACOB
↓
JUDAH – TAMAR
↓
PEREZ
↓
HEZRON
↓
RAM
↓
AMMINADAB
↓
NAHSHON
↓
RAHAB – SALMON
↓
BOAZ – RUTH
↓
OBED
↓
JESSE
↓
BATHSHEBA – DAVID
↓
SOLOMON — NATHAN
↓ (Joseph's Genealogy) — ↓ (Mary's Genealogy)
JOSEPH – MARY
↓
JESUS

"THE FAMILY TREE OF ROYALTY"
Matthew 1:1-17
2/9/92

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)

CONCLUSION:

"THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF DEITY"
Matthew 1:18-25
2/16/92

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)

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"
"Vincent" = "Conqueror"
"Doug" = "Out of the dark waters"
"Timothy" = "Honorable one"

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" means 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 salv.

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

Salv. is available for all - it is sufficient for all (Luke 2:10, ll - "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)

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 ith 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 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,a nd 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 <u>preeminence</u> or <u>authority</u>, 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 <u>Attributes</u> 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"; cp. 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 do (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?"

Manoah's barren wife was opened and she gave birth to Samson, who was to turn a lion inside out, kill a thousand men, and pull down a pagan temple. The birth of Samuel, the prophet and anointer of kings, to the barren Hannah, whose womb the Lord had shut, revealed divine providential power. Elizabeth was barren, but through the power of God she gave birth to John the Baptist, of whom Jesus said there had yet been no one greater "among those born of women" (Matt. 11:11). But the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus surpasses all of those.

Fantasy and mythology have counterfeited the virgin birth of Jesus Christ with a proliferation of false accounts intended to minimize His utterly unique birth.

For example, the Romans believed that Zeus impregnated Semele without contact and that she conceived Dionysus, lord of the earth. The Babylonians believed that Tammuz (see Ezek. 8:14) was conceived in the priestess Semiramis by a sunbeam. In an ancient Sumerian/Accadian story inscribed on a wall, Tukulti II (890-884 B.C.) told how the gods created him in the womb of his mother. It was even claimed that the goddess of procreation superintended the conception of King Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.). At the conception of Buddha, his mother supposedly saw a great white elephant enter her belly. Hinduism has claimed that the divine Vishnu, after reincarnations as a fish, tortoise, boar, and lion, descended into the womb of Devaki and was born as her son Krishna. There is even a legend that Alexander the Great was virgin born by the power of Zeus through a snake that impregnated his mother, Olympias. Satan has set up many more such myths to counterfeit the birth of Christ in order to make it seem either common or legendary.

Modern science even speaks of parthenogenesis, which comes from a Greek term meaning "virgin born." In the world of honey bees, unfertilized eggs develop into drones, or males. Artificial parthenogenesis has been successful with unfertilized eggs of silkworms. The eggs of sea urchins and marine worms have begun to develop when placed in various salt solutions. In 1939 and 1940, rabbits were produced (all female) through chemical and temperature influences on ova. Nothing like that has ever come close to accounting for human beings; all such parthenogenesis is impossible within the human race. Science, like mythology, has no explanation for the virgin birth of Christ. He was neither merely the son of a previously barren woman nor a freak of nature. By the clear testimony of Scripture, He was conceived by God and born of a virgin.

Nevertheless, religious polls taken over the past several generations reveal the impact of liberal theology in a marked and continuing decline in the percentage of professed Christians who believe in the virgin birth, and therefore in the deity, of Jesus Christ. One wonders why they want to be identified with a person who, if their judgment of Him were correct, had to have been either deceived or deceptive—since all four gospels explicitly teach that Jesus considered Himself to be more than a man. It is clear from the rest of the New Testament as well as from historical records that Jesus, His disciples, and all of the early church held Him to

be none other than the divine Son of God. Even His enemies knew He claimed such identity (John 5:18-47).

A popular religious personality said in an interview a few years ago that he could not in print or in public deny the virgin birth of Christ, but that neither could he preach it or teach it. "When I have something I can't comprehend," he explained, "I just don't deal with it." But to ignore the virgin birth is to ignore Christ's deity. And to ignore His deity is tantamount to denying it. Real incarnation demands a real virgin birth.

But such unbelief should not surprise us. Unbelief has been man's greatest problem since the Fall and has always been man's majority view. But "What then?" Paul asks. "If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar" (Rom. 3:3-4). Every faithful prophet, preacher, or teacher at some time has asked with Isaiah and Paul, "Lord, who has believed our report?" (Rom. 10:16; cf. Isa. 53:1). But popular opinion, even within the church, has not always been a reliable source of truth. When men pick and choose which parts of God's Word to believe and follow, they set themselves above His Word and therefore above Him (cf. Ps. 138:2).

Matthew's purpose in writing his gospel account was partly apologetic—not in the sense of making an apology for the gospel but in the more traditional sense of explaining and defending it against its many attacks and misrepresentations. Jesus' humanity was often maligned and His deity often denied. Possibly during His earthly ministry, and certainly after His death and resurrection, it is likely Jesus was slandered by the accusation that He was the illegitimate son of Mary by some unknown man, perhaps a Roman soldier garrisoned in Galilee. It was Jesus' claim of deity, however, that most incensed the Jewish leaders and brought them to demand His death. "For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God" (John 5:18).

It is surely no accident, therefore, that the beginning of Matthew's gospel, at the outset of the New Testament, is devoted to establishing both the regal humanity and the deity of Jesus Christ. 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. The essence and the power of the gospel is that God became man and that, by being both wholly God and wholly man, He was able to reconcile men to God. Jesus' virgin birth, His substitutionary atoning death, resurrection, ascension, and return are all integral aspects of His deity. They stand or fall together. If any of those teachings—all clearly taught in the New Testament—is rejected, the entire gospel is rejected. None makes sense, or could have any significance or power, apart from the others. If those things were not true, even Jesus' moral teachings would be suspect, because if He misrepresented who He was by preposterously claiming equality with God, how could anything else He said be trusted? Or if the gospel writers misrepre-

"THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF DEITY"
Matthew 1:18-25
2/16/92

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)

B. The name "**Emmanuel**" means: He is **<u>GOD</u>** (v. 22-23)

CONCLUSION: V. 24-25

"SOME WORSHIPPED; SOME WARRED"
(Two Reactions to the Birth of Christ)
Matthew 2:1-23
2/23/92

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 Met 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.

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,b ut 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.

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 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!

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 worship from angels! (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 foretell His birth (Mt. 1:20-24), announce His birth (Lk. 2:10-12), and sing praises at His birth (Lk. 2:13-14), but the Bible teaches that the angels worshipped Him at His birth (Heb. 1:6).

The Baby Jesus was honored and adored beyond that of any other child. He was glorified 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--as an infant--He was worshipped!

SEE: Matthew 2:11

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

Jesus, as an infant, was worthy of worship:

Because the Baby Was KING!

READ & comment on Matthew 2:1-12

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."

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."

NOTE: "They worshipped Him (not "Mary His mother")

"They presented unto Him gifts" - Gifts fit for a King!

It is unfortunate that the One most neglected on Christmas is Christ!

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

V. 3

Herod was troubled because his "job was on the line" if Jesus indeed was king!. 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 worship to the King; whereas v. 3 speaks of rebellious worry because of the King. The same King 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. 7

Why such a diligent inquiry? Herod wanted to know about how old Jesus would be.

V. 8

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

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."

Do you worship Jesus?

II. The King is OPPOSED by Wicked Herod (v. 12 - 23)

(Reaction #2 - The Wrath of King Herod)

He who is wicked is at war 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).

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.

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

Egypt - the place of Christ's childhood (2:15) -- to fulfill Hosea 11:1

Nazareth - the place of Christ's youth (2:23) -- to fulfill a common prophetic fact given by God to several prophets and passed on through time by word of mouth (an uninscripturated prophecy). This citation is also 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).

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?

"SOME WORSHIPPED; SOME WARRED"
(Two Reactions to the Birth of Christ)
Matthew 2:1-23
2/23/92

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!

CONCLUSION:

"REPENT YE!"
Matthew 3:1-12
3/8/92

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 Rolex 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 appeal 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.

There is no such thing as Vicarious fruit!

V. 9

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

Ex. Those who trust in St. Jude, St. Andrew, St. Peter, Mary etc.

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~~ am 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.

"REPENT YE!"
Matthew 3:1-12
3/8/92

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 2

***Realize what true repentance is!**

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

"CORONATION DAY"
(The King is Crowned)
(Matthew 3:13-17)
3/28/92

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.
He has done so by giving his: 1) Royal Genealogy (1)
2) Virgin Birth (1)
3) Worship Received (2)
4) Forerunners Announcement (3)

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 unworthiness 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:

1) Moses and the Seventy Elders (Num. 11:17, 25-26)
2) The Judges
   --Othniel (Judges 3:10)
   --Gideon (Jud. 6:34)
   --Jephthah (Jud. 11:29)
   --Samson (Jud. 13:25, 14:6, 19; 15:14)
3) King Saul (I Sam. 10:6, 10:10, 11:6)
4) King David (I Sam. 16:13, 14)
5) The messengers of Saul (I Sam. 19:20)
6) Elisha (II Kings 2:15)
7) Amasai (I Chron. 12:18)
8) Azariah (II Chron. 15:1)
9) Zechariah (II Chron. 24:20)

Some Old Testament saints, though not "baptized" with the Spirit, were "filled" with the Spirit for special acts of service.

(Note: This filling, like the New Testament filling describes the control of the Spirit.)

Example: Bezaleel for the building of the Tabernacle (Exod. 31:3, 35:31)

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 th Transfiguration (Mt. 17:3)l, 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"

"CORONATION DAY"
(The King is Crowned)
(Matthew 3:13-17)
3/28/92

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)

CONCLUSION:

CONQUERING TEMPTATION
MATTHEW 4:1-11
4/5/92

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)

A Good Testing of God Mal. 3:10

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. Gal. 6:7

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?

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!

"CONQUERING TEMPTATION"
Matthew 4:1-11
4/5/92

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

"BE A FISHERMAN!"
Matthew 4:12-25
5/31/92

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 light 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 dependance 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 sip 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)

Fishing for Men (4:18-22)

10

And walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." And they immediately left the nets, and followed Him. And going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. And they immediately left the boat and their father, and followed Him. (4:18-22)

The following widely told story is a sobering parable of what the church's concern for evangelism has often been like.

On a dangerous seacoast where shipwrecks were frequent, a crude little life-saving station was built. The building was just a hut, and there was only one boat, but the few devoted crewmen kept a constant watch over the sea. With no thought for themselves, they went out day or night, tirelessly searching for any who might need help. Many lives were saved by their devoted efforts. After a while the station became famous. Some of those who were saved, as well as others in the surrounding area, wanted to become a part of the work. They gave time and money for its support. New boats were bought, additional crews were trained, and the

station grew. Some of the members became unhappy that the building was so crude. They felt a larger, nicer place would be more appropriate as the first refuge of those saved from the sea. So they replaced the emergency cots with hospital beds and put better furniture in the enlarged building. Soon the station became a popular gathering place for its members to discuss the work and to visit with each other. They continued to remodel and decorate until the station more and more took on the look and character of a club. Fewer members were interested in going out on lifesaving missions, so they hired professional crews to do the work on their behalf. The lifesaving motif still prevailed on the club emblems and stationery, and there was a liturgical lifeboat in the room where the club held its initiations. One day a large ship was wrecked off the coast, and the hired crews brought in many boatloads of cold, wet, half-drowned people. They were dirty, bruised, and sick; and some had black or yellow skin. The beautiful new club was terribly messed up, and so the property committee immediately had a shower house built outside, where the shipwreck victims could be cleaned up before coming inside. At the next meeting there was a split in the club membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the club's lifesaving activities altogether, as being unpleasant and a hindrance to the normal social life of the club. Some members insisted on keeping lifesaving as their primary purpose and pointed out that, after all, they were still called a lifesaving station. But those members were voted down and told that if they wanted to save lives they could begin their own station down the coast somewhere. As the years went by, the new station gradually faced the same problems the other one had experienced. It, too, became a club, and its lifesaving work became less and less of a priority. The few members who remained dedicated to lifesaving began another station. History continued to repeat itself; and if you visit that coast today you will find a number of exclusive clubs along the shore. Shipwrecks are still frequent in those waters, but most of the people drown.

What a striking illustration of the history of the church. Yet the work of evangelism, of spiritual lifesaving, is nonetheless the purest, truest, noblest, and most essential work the church will ever do. The work of fishing men and women out of the sea of sin, the work of rescuing people from the breakers of hell, is the greatest work the church is called by God to do.

Rescuing men from sin is God's great concern. Evangelism has been called the sob of God. Concern for the lost caused Jesus to grieve over unbelieving Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling" (Matt. 23:37).

God sent His Son to earth—to preach, die, and be raised—for the very purpose of saving men from sin. The Father "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him" (John 3:16-17). The Son Himself came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). The Holy Spirit gives to those who believe "the washing of regeneration and renewing" (Titus 3:5). The whole

Trinity is at work in the ministry of saving mankind from sin. Evangelism is the great concern of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

God's concern for redeeming mankind did not, of course, begin when He sent His Son to earth. In the Garden of Eden He promised that one day sin would be destroyed, that Satan's very head would be bruised (Gen. 3:15). In His covenant with Abraham He promised that in him "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). In the covenant at Sinai God called Israel to "be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6), a kingdom of His witnesses to the world to draw all mankind to Himself.

God's people were to share His concern for the lost. Moses was so desperate for the salvation of his own rebellious people that he cried to God, "But now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from Thy book which Thou hast written!" (Ex. 32:32). The writer of Proverbs reminded Israel that "he who is wise wins souls" (Prov. 11:30). The Lord told Daniel, "Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever" (Dan. 12:3).

Evangelism was the great concern of the New Testament church. Immediately after Pentecost, the new believers were totally dedicated to God and to winning others to Him. As they studied at the apostles' feet, shared with each other, and praised God, they came to have "favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:42-47). When the first great persecution of the church in Jerusalem began under the direction of Saul, "those who had been scattered went about preaching the word" (Acts 8:1-4). They did not despair over their hardship but took it as an opportunity to expand the Lord's work.

After Saul himself was converted, his own great concern was evangelism—for building up the movement he had formerly tried to destroy. "I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish," he would one day write. "Thus, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:14-16). Though he was called to be God's special apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; Eph. 3:8), Paul had such an overwhelming desire for the salvation of his fellow Jews that he said, "I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:3). His "heart's desire and [his] prayer to God for them [was] for their salvation" (10:1). He wanted *everyone* to be saved, and was willing to "become all things to all men, that [he might] by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:22).

Evangelism has been the heartthrob of faithful Christians throughout the history of the church. John Knox pleaded with God, "Give me Scotland or I die." John Wesley considered the whole world his parish.

Like the Christian life in general, soul-winning involves a paradox. Jesus said, "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:25). In other words, in saving others we lose

will kindle that spark of obedience into a great flame of passion. This is the time of gracious evangelism, not of consuming judgment, as our Lord made clear in the parable of the tares (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43).

David Brainerd, the great missionary to the American Indians, who died while still in his twenties, said, "Oh, that I were a flame of fire in my Master's cause." His selfless obedience proved the sincerity of that desire, and God gave him a burning heart for lost souls that has few parallels in the history of the church. Henry Martyn, missionary to India and Persia, prayed that he might "burn out for God," and that is what God graciously allowed him to do.

Such burning desire comes only from the pilot light of obedience. Like David Brainerd, Robert Murray McCheyne died before he was thirty. Of him Courtland Myers wrote: "Everywhere he stepped Scotland shook. Whenever he opened his mouth a spiritual force swept in every direction. Thousands followed him to the feet of Christ." Visitors who came to see the church where McCheyne had preached were shown a table, chair, and open Bible. They were then told how that man of God spent hours with his head buried in the Bible, weeping for those to whom he would preach. Myers then comments, "With such a passion for souls, is it any wonder that the Holy Spirit gave McCheyne a magnetic personality which drew so many to the Savior?"

The hymn "Let the Lower Lights Be Burning" is based on a story told by D. L. Moody. A ship was coming into Cleveland harbor on Lake Erie on a stormy night. The harbor had two sets of lights to guide incoming vessels. One set was high on the bluff above the harbor and could be seen for many miles. The other set was down near the coastline and was used to guide the ships through the rocks as they came nearer to port. On that particular night the wind and rain had extinguished the lower lights, and the pilot suggested they stay out in the lake until daylight. The captain, however, was afraid of the ship's being destroyed by the storm and decided to risk making the harbor. But without the lower lights to guide it, the ship was wrecked on the rocks, and many of the men drowned. In applying that story to Christian witnessing, Moody said, "The upper lights in heaven are burning as brightly as ever they've burned. But what about the lower lights?"

The King's Divine Credentials (4:23-25)

11

And Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. And the news about Him went out into all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, taken with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them. And great multitudes followed Him from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan. (4:23-25)

One of the ways in which Jesus demonstrated His divine character and power was through miracles of healing, which served as messianic credentials. John was especially concerned with those credentials, and his gospel features them. He makes it clear that "many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30-31). Matthew also confirms that through His mighty works Jesus presented Himself as the Messiah, the great coming King.

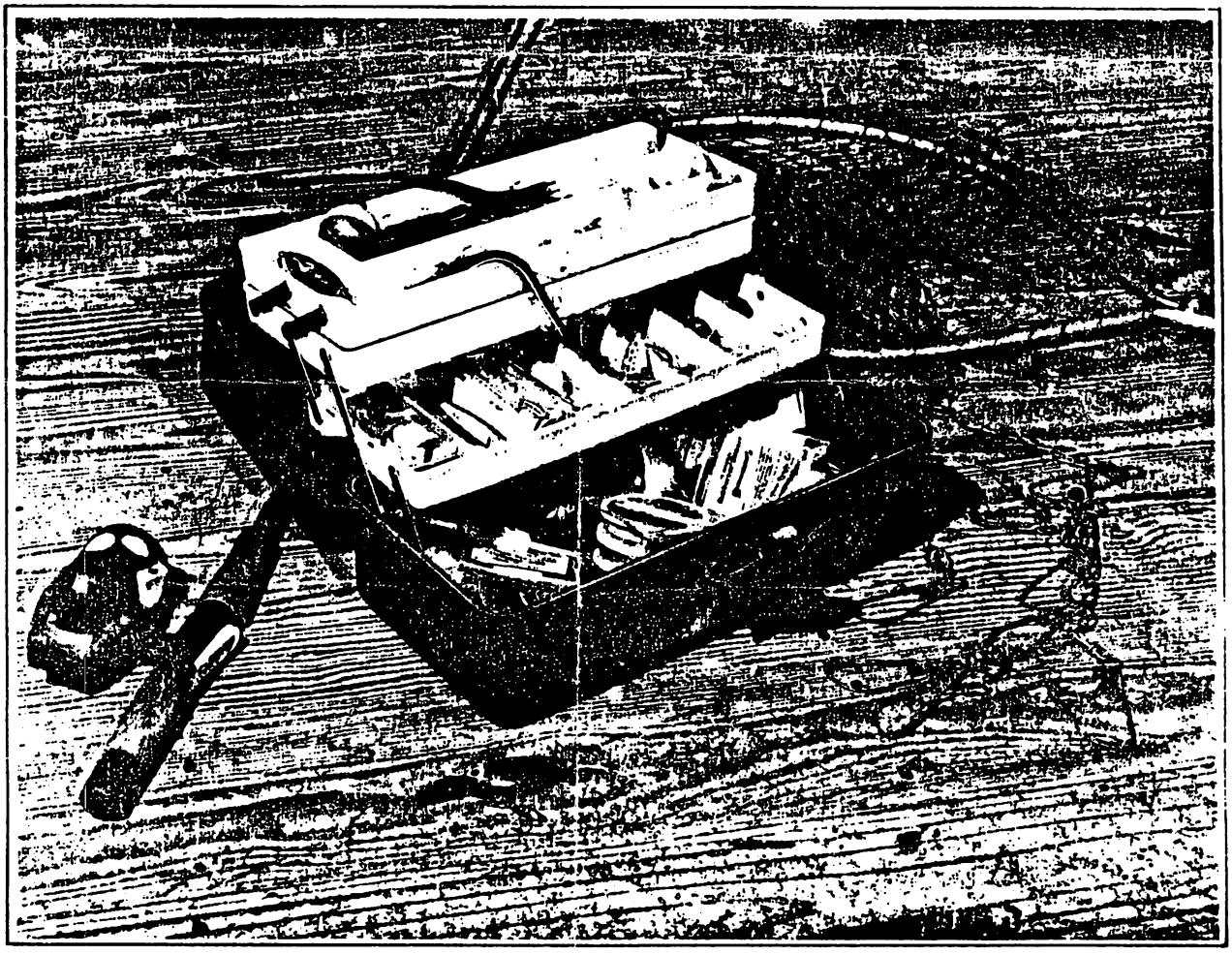
The primary purpose of all four gospel writers was to present Jesus as being more than a man. He was the very Son of God. Apart from that central truth

A PARABLE OF

The Fishless Fisherman

BY JOHN M. DRESCHER

Now it came to pass that a group existed who called themselves fishermen. And lo, there were many fish in the waters all around. In fact the whole area was surrounded by streams and lakes filled with fish. And the fish were hungry.



Week after week, month after month, and year after year these who called themselves fishermen met in meetings and talked about their call to fish, the abundance of fish, and how they might go about fishing. Year after year they carefully defined what fishing means, defended fishing as an occupation, and declared that fishing is always to be a primary task of fishermen.

Continually they searched for new and better methods of fishing and for new and better definitions of fishing. Further they said, "The fishing industry exists by fishing as fire exists by burning." They loved slogans such as "Fishing is the task of every fisherman's club." They sponsored special meetings called "Fishermen's Campaigns" and "The Month for Fishermen to Fish." They sponsored costly nationwide and worldwide congresses to discuss fishing and to promote fishing and hear about all the ways of fishing such as the new fishing equipment, fish calls, and whether any new bait was discovered.

These fishermen built large, beautiful buildings called "Fishing Headquarters." The plea was that everyone should be a fisherman and every fisherman should fish. One thing they didn't do, however, they didn't fish.

In addition to meeting regularly, they organized a board to send out fishermen to other places where there were many fish. All the fishermen seemed to agree that what is needed is a board which could challenge fishermen to be faithful in fishing. The board was formed by those who had the great vision and courage to speak about fishing, to define fishing, and to promote the idea of fishing in faraway streams and lakes where many other fish of different colors lived.

Also the board hired staffs and appointed committees and held many meetings to define fishing, to defend fishing, and to decide what new streams should be thought about. But the staff and committee members did not fish.

Large, elaborate, and expensive training centers were built whose original and primary purpose was to teach fishermen how to fish. Over the years courses were offered on the needs of fish, the nature of fish, where to find fish, the psychological reactions of fish, and how to approach and feed fish. Those who taught had doctorates in fishology. But the teachers did not fish. They only taught fishing. Year after year, after tedious training, many were graduated and were given fishing licenses. They were sent to do full-time fishing, some to distant waters which were filled with fish.

Some spent much study and travel to learn the history of fishing and to see faraway places where the founding fathers did great fishing in the centuries past. They lauded the faithful fishermen of years before who handed down the idea of fishing.

Further, the fishermen built large printing houses to publish fishing guides. Presses were kept busy day and night to produce materials solely devoted to fishing methods, equipment, and programs to arrange and to encourage meetings to talk about fishing. A speakers' bureau was also provided to schedule special speakers on the subject of fishing.

Many who felt the call to be fishermen responded. They were commissioned and sent to fish. But like the fishermen back home they never fished. Like the fishermen back home they engaged in all kinds of other occupations. They built power plants to pump water for fish and tractors to plow new waterways. They made all kinds of equipment to travel here and there to look at fish hatcheries. Some also said they wanted to be part of the fishing party, but they felt called to furnish fishing equipment. Others felt their job was to relate to the fish in a good way so the fish would know the difference between good and bad fishermen. Others felt that simply letting the fish know they were nice, land-loving neighbors and how loveing and kind they were was enough.

After one stirring meeting on "The Necessity for Fishing," one young fellow left the meeting and went fishing. The next day he reported he had caught two outstanding fish. He was honored for his excellent catch and scheduled to visit all the big meetings possible to tell how he did it. So he quit his fishing in order to have time to tell about the experience to the other fishermen. He was also placed on the Fishermen's General Board as a person having considerable experience.

Now it's true that many of the fishermen sacrificed and put up with all kinds of difficulties. Some lived near the water and bore the smell of dead fish every day. They received the ridicule of some who made fun of their fishermen's clubs and the fact that they claimed to be fishermen yet never fished. They wondered about those who felt it was of little use to attend the weekly meetings to talk about fishing. After all, were they not following the Master who said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men?"

Imagine how hurt some were when one day a person suggested that those who didn't catch fish were really not fishermen, no matter how much they claimed to be. Yet it did sound correct. Is a person a fisherman if year after year he never catches a fish? Is one following if he isn't fishing? ■

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twelve. But Jesus individually selected those who would become part of the first marvelous ministry of winning people to Himself. "He called His disciples to Him; and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles" (Luke 6:13). God always chooses His partners. He chose Noah and Abraham, Moses and David. He chose the prophets. He chose Israel herself to be a whole nation of partners, "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6). Jesus told His disciples, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit" (John 15:16; cf. 6:70; 13:18). Paul called Epaenetus "the first convert [lit., "firstfruit," *aparchē*] to Christ from Asia" (Rom. 16:5).

That calling to bear fruit in evangelism is extended to everyone who belongs to Jesus Christ. The called ones are themselves to become callers. Speaking of all Christians, Peter wrote, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). Christ mandates that all of His followers be **fishermen.** The command, **Follow Me** (in the Greek an adverb of place expressing a command), literally means "come here." The term *after* is used in the original to show the place they are to come: "Your place is following after Me!"

The disciples' obedience was instant: **And they immediately left the nets, and followed Him.** The sovereign authority of the Lord had spoken. **Followed** is from *akoloutheō,* which conveys the idea of following as a disciple who is committed to imitating the one he follows.

Many years ago an Italian recluse was found dead in his house. He had lived frugally all his life, but when friends were going through his house to sort out the few possessions he had accumulated they discovered 246 expensive violins crammed into his attic. Some even more valuable ones were in a bureau drawer in his bedroom. Virtually all of his money had been spent buying violins. Yet his misdirected devotion to the instruments had robbed the world of their beautiful sounds. Because he selfishly treasured those violins, the world never heard the music they were meant to play. It is even reported that the first violin the great Stradivarius ever made was not played until it was 147 years old!

Many Christians treat their faith like that man treated his violins. They hide their light; they squirrel away their great treasure. By not sharing their light and their treasure, many to whom they could have witnessed are left in spiritual darkness and poverty.

Some researchers estimate that as many as ninety-five percent of all Christians have never led another person to Jesus Christ. If that is true, ninety-five percent of the world's spiritual violins have never been played! True love of our riches in Christ leads us to shine and share, not to hide and hoard.

When D. L. Moody once visited an art gallery in Chicago he was especially impressed by a painting called "The Rock of Ages." The picture showed a person with both hands clinging to a cross firmly embedded in a rock. While the stormy sea smashed against the rock, he hung tightly to the cross. Years later Mr. Moody

saw a similar picture. This one also showed a person in a storm holding to a cross, but with one hand he was reaching out to someone who was about to drown. The great evangelist commented that, though the first painting was beautiful, the second was even lovelier.

Calling James and John

And going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. And they immediately left the boat and their father, and followed Him. (4:21-22)

When Jesus called **James** and **John** they were tough, crusty outdoorsmen—uncut jewels. They were **in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets,** a routine but important task in the fishing business. They had already been called to faith in the Savior (see John 1:35-51; 2:11); here **He called them** to the work of evangelism alongside Himself. And they **immediately left the boat and their father, and followed Him.**

These disciples had little education, little spiritual perception, and possibly little religious training of any sort. As their new Master began to teach them, even when He spoke in parables, they often lacked full comprehension of His meaning.

They were often self-centered and inhospitable. When the multitude who had walked a long way around the Sea of Galilee to be with Jesus became hungry, the disciples thought only of sending them away on their own to find food (Matt. 14:15). When some little children were brought to Jesus for blessing, the disciples rebuked those who brought them (19:13). Peter thought he would be extremely generous to forgive someone "up to seven times" (18:21). Even on the night of Jesus' betrayal, as their Lord agonized in the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter, James, and John could not stay awake with Him (26:40, 45). The disciples were selfish, proud, weak, and cowardly. They showed little potential even for dependability, much less for greatness. Yet Jesus chose them for disciples, even to be His inner circle of twelve. They were raw material that He would make into useful instruments.

All the disciples were probably not as rough and unpromising as the first and most dominant four Jesus called, but not one was chosen from among the Jewish religious leaders—the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, priests, or rabbis. It was no doubt partly that fact that caused those leaders to reject Jesus. They could not believe that anyone who Himself was not an official leader, and who chose no official leaders to be His personal students and co-workers, could possibly be the Messiah. It was beyond their comprehension that God's own Son would bypass the proper leaders of His chosen people when He came to establish His kingdom.

The only apostle who had been a Jewish religious leader was not among the original twelve, and he considered himself "one untimely born." He knew that his

"BE A FISHERMAN!"
Matthew 4:12-25
5/31/92

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)

CONCLUSION:

"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 <u>private</u> 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 <u>authority</u> 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 <u>mouth</u> and taught" - Jesus taught many lessons by example; here He teaches by <u>precept</u>. (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 "<u>True Righteousness</u>" (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)

some concepts taught cannot apply in the future kingdom - ex. Blessed are those Persecuted (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
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.

You 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 <u>sin</u> and /or the <u>effects of sin</u> (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 <u>build</u> 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 with Him ("joint heirs" - Rom. 8:17).

Key Context: SEE: Zeph. 1:18- 2:3 - The meek among Israel will be protected "hid" 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 (our congregation) 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 <u>first</u> . . . His righteousness"

No one receives God's imputed righteousness (salvation) unless they <u>really want it</u>.

"He has the most need for righteousness that least wants it" (Thomas Watson).

NOTE: Luke's parallel passage states: "Blessed are you who hunger <u>now</u>" (6:21). The time to hunger for God is <u>now</u>!

"For they shall be filled"

Filled with what?

Filled with that which they hungered and thirsted for -- namely, righteousness -- God's righteousness

For the christian, such a Filling would be of the Holy Spirit who gives righteousness (righteous Fruit)

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 <u>God</u>
A thirst for <u>God's House</u>
A thirst for <u>God's Word</u>

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 thing" - 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 more 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 not be quenched 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 meet with God (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

forsake evil things that are barriers to the kingdom. In poverty of spirit we turn away from self-seeking; in mourning we turn away from self-satisfaction; and in meekness we turn away from self-serving.

The first three beatitudes are also costly and painful. Becoming poor in spirit involves death to self. Mourning over sin involves facing up to our sinfulness. Becoming meek involves surrendering our power to God's control.

The fourth beatitude is more positive and is a consequence of the other three. When we put aside self, sins, and power and turn to the Lord, we are given a great desire for righteousness. The more we put aside what we have, the more we long for what God has.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones says, "This Beatitude again follows logically from the previous ones; it is a statement to which all the others lead. It is the logical conclusion to which they come, and it is something for which we should all be profoundly thankful and grateful to God. I do not know of a better test that anyone can apply to himself or herself in this whole matter of the Christian profession than a verse like this. If this verse is to you one of the most blessed statements of the whole of Scripture, you can be quite certain you are a Christian. If it is not, then you had better examine the foundations again" (*Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971], 1:73-74).

The person who has no hunger and thirst for righteousness has no part in God's kingdom. To *have* God's life within us through the new birth in Jesus Christ is to *desire* more of His likeness within us by growing in righteousness. This is readily clear from David's confession in Psalm 119:97, "O how I love Thy law." Paul echoes David's passion for righteousness in Romans 7:22, where he testifies, "I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man." The true believer desires to obey, even though he struggles with unredeemed flesh (cf. Rom. 8:23).

The Meaning of Spiritual Hunger

Most of us have never faced life-threatening hunger and thirst. We think of hunger as missing a meal or two in a row, and of thirst as having to wait an hour on a hot day to get a cold drink. But the **hunger and thirst** of which Jesus speaks here is of a much more intense sort.

During the liberation of Palestine in World War I, a combined force of British, Australian, and New Zealand soldiers was closely pursuing the Turks as they retreated from the desert. As the allied troops moved northward past Beersheba they began to outdistance their water-carrying camel train. When the water ran out, their mouths got dry, their heads ached, and they became dizzy and faint. Eyes became bloodshot, lips swelled and turned purple, and mirages became common. They knew that if they did not make the wells of Sheriah by nightfall, thousands of them would die—as hundreds already had done. Literally fighting for their lives, they managed to drive the Turks from Sheriah.

As water was distributed from the great stone cisterns, the more able-bodied were required to stand at attention and wait for the wounded and those who

would take guard duty to drink first. It was four hours before the last man had his drink. During that time the men stood no more than twenty feet from thousands of gallons of water, to drink of which had been their consuming passion for many agonizing days. It is said that one of the officers who was present reported, "I believe that we all learned our first real Bible lesson on the march from Beersheba to Sheriah Wells. If such were our thirst for God, for righteousness and for His will in our lives, a consuming, all-embracing, preoccupying desire, how rich in the fruit of the Spirit would we be?" (E.M. Blaiklock, "Water," *Eternity* (August 1966), p. 27).

That is the kind of hunger and thirst of which Jesus speaks in this beatitude. The strongest and deepest impulses in the natural realm are used to represent the depth of desire the called of God and redeemed have for righteousness. The present participle is used in each case and signifies continuous longing, continuous seeking. Those who truly come to Jesus Christ come hungering and thirsting for righteousness, and those who are in Him continue to know that deep longing for holiness.

The parallel passage in Luke says, "Blessed are you who hunger now" (6:21). Desire for righteousness is to characterize our life *now* and in the rest of our earthly existence.

When Moses was in the wilderness, God appeared to him in a burning bush. When he went back to Egypt to deliver his people, he saw God's might and power in the miracles and the ten plagues. He saw God part the Dead Sea and swallow up their Egyptian pursuers. He saw God's glory in the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire which led Israel in the wilderness. He built a Tabernacle for God and saw the Lord's glory shining over the Holy of Holies. Over and over Moses had sought and had seen God's glory. "Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend" (Ex. 33:11). But Moses was never satisfied and always wanted to see more. He continued to plead, "I pray Thee, show Thy glory" (v. 18).

Moses never had enough of the Lord. Yet from that dissatisfaction came satisfaction. Because of his continual longing for God, Moses found favor in His sight (v. 17), and God promised him, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you" (v. 19).

David declared, "O God, Thou art my God," but continued, "I shall seek Thee earnestly; my soul thirsts for Thee, my flesh yearns for Thee, in a dry and weary land where there is no water" (Ps. 63:1).

Paul had great visions of God and great revelations from God, yet he was not satisfied. He had given up his own righteousness "derived from the law" and was growing in "the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith." But still he longed to "know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" (Phil. 3:9-10). Peter expressed his own great desire and hunger when he counseled those to whom he wrote to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18).

John Darby wrote, "To be hungry is not enough; I must be really starving to know what is in God's heart toward me. When the prodigal son was hungry, he

"KEYS TO GOD'S BLESSING"
Matthew 5:1-12
Part I
6/7/92

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)

CONCLUSION:

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

The more callused our love becomes, the more vicious & violent our society becomes.

"A society that despises mercy is a society that glorifies brutality." (MacArthur, p. 188-189)

What is Mercy?

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)

Why are some People unmerciful?

*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) He Forgot How the LORD SHOWED HIM MERCY

*The unmerciful have higher demands for others than they have for themselves (Mt. 23:3-4) cp. v. 23 - the weightier matters of the Law. = Mercy

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*").

(1) --Religion is no substitute for being pure in heart.

(2) --Knowing Bible facts is no substitute for being pure in heart.

(3) 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 see God" - A promise of entering His holy presence and viewing His splendor and glory forever (SEE: Ps. 24:3-4)

Absolute pure in heart is the prerequisite for seeing God.
REASON: He is holy (Is. 6)

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.

VI. Blessed are those who
SEEK TO RECONCILE man to GOD and men to MEN

("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 real man to make peace.

"Peacemaker" = eirene - peace; poieo - to make

"Peacemaker" - Note: Jesus is not saying: "Blessed are the peaceful"

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. Nor "Political Correctness"

A true peacemaker: confronts problems and seeks to solve them.

Prop. → *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 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.

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

"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 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 lied 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

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***

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(***Be joyful***, not discouraged)

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2. ***"Be exceeding glad!"***

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(***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:

VIII. Bienaventurados aquellos que son
MALTRATADOS PORQUE HACEN EL BIEN
("Bienaventurados los que padecen de persecucion..." v. 10)

INTRODUCCION AL VERSO # 10

A. La RAZON VERDADERA por la Persecucion (v. 10-11)
(**Date cuenta** de porque seras maltratado)

1."Por causa de la justicia" (v. 10)
2."Por Mi (Jesus) causa" (v. 11)

B. Los TIPOS VARIADOS de Persecucion (v. 11)
(**Alistate** por los diferentes tipos de opresion)

1.Puedes ser objeto del insulto
2.Puedes ser objeto de ser herido
3.Puedes ser objeto de mentiras

C. La ACTITUD OPTIMISTA de los que son Perseguidos (v. 12)
(**Regocijate**, no estes triste)

1."Gozaos"
2."Alegraos"

D. El RESULTADO de los que son Perseguidos
(Espera, porque algo grandioso te espera)

1.Un Reino Eterno (v. 10)
2.Una Gran Recompensa (v. 12)

E. La DULCE CONSOLACION de los que son Perseguidos
(Animate porque no estas solo/a)

CONCLUSION:

a wire just before the meeting, informing him that a submarine had torpedoed the ship, and everyone on board had drowned. Barker knew that all on board were believers, and the knowledge that his family was enjoying the bliss of heaven enabled him to live above his circumstances in spite of his overwhelming grief.[959]

U Thant was once Secretary General of the United Nations. While speaking in 1965 before sixty-seven distinguished scholars and statesmen from nineteen countries of the world, who were convened to talk about the requirements for world peace, he asked these questions:

What element is lacking so that with all our skill and all our knowledge we still find ourselves in the dark valley of discord and enmity? What is it that inhibits us from going forward together to enjoy the fruits of human endeavor and to reap the harvest of human experience? Why is it that, for all our professed ideals, our hopes, and our skills, peace on earth is still a distant objective seen only dimly through the storms and turmoils of our present difficulties?"[960]

Perfection

The closest to perfection a person ever comes is when he fills out a job application form.[961]

Persecution

The way of this world is to praise dead saints and persecute living ones.[962]

On one occasion, following unspeakable sufferings in a filthy prison, missionary Adoniram Judson appeared before the king of Burma and asked permission to go to a certain city to preach.

"I am willing for a dozen preachers to go, but not you," was the king's answer. "Not with those hands! My people are not such fools as to take notice of your preaching, but they will take notice of those scarred hands."[963]

One of the most inspiring examples of courage in the history of the church was the martyrdom of Polycarp, who was burned at the stake for his faith. The aged Polycarp had been arrested by the Roman authori-

ties and brought to the arena for execution in front of the cheering crowd. The proconsul pressed him hard and said, "Swear, and I will release you. Revile Christ." Polycarp replied, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never did me wrong; and how can I now blaspheme my King that has saved me?" (Cited in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, chapter 15.)[964]

During the Watergate scandal, some people regarded it as a compliment to be on Nixon's "enemies list." They took it as a credit to them that people in the administration opposed them.

In the same way, if you have enemies because of your righteousness, it will be a credit to you. You should be glad that you have that kind of enemies, and that they are persecuting you, because it means that you are not doing what *they* do and instead are doing what unrighteous men hate.[965]

Perseverance

Two frogs fell into a can of cream,
Or so I've heard it told.
The sides of the can were shiny and steep,
The cream was deep and cold.
"Oh, what's the use?" croaked number one.
"Tis fate, no help's around.
Good-bye, my friend!
Good-bye, sad world!"
And weeping still, he drowned.

But number two, of sterner stuff,
Dog-paddled in surprise.
The while he wiped his creamy face,
And dried his creamy eyes.
"I'll swim awhile at least," he said,
Or so I've heard he said;
"It really wouldn't help the world,
If one more frog were dead."
An hour or two he kicked and swam,
Not once he stopped to mutter,
But kicked and kicked and swam and kicked,
Then hopped out, via butter![966]

Sometime go out and watch a stonecutter hammering away at a rock. He might hit the rock a hundred times without so much as a

crack showing in it. Then, su
rock splits in two. Was it the
immediate sense, for that on
if it were not for all that had g

In the movie *Chariots of F*
sprinter, had just suffered hi
alone, pouting in the bleache
him, he bellowed, "If I can't
replied, "If you don't run, yo
the 1924 Olympic Gold Meda

By perseverance the snail r

"It is better to limp in the
(John Calvin, *Institutes*, 6:3).[9

William Carey, when asked
work of translating the Bible i
am not a genius, just a plodde
labor, he translated all or por
languages and dialects of India

Many years ago in England
lisp. While growing up, he wa
they rejected him because "we
House of Commons, and they
chairs and echoes.

One day he became prime
country to victory in a worldv
Churchill, whose iron will to p
defend their land and eventual

The following is attributed
the heavyweight boxing title
teenth century:

"Fight one more round. Wh

crass to serve God for the sake of rewards. But that is one of the motives that God Himself gives for serving Him. We first of all serve and obey Christ because we love Him, just as on earth He loved and obeyed the Father because He loved Him. But it was also because of "the joy set before Him" that Christ Himself "endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2). It is neither selfish nor unspiritual to do the Lord's work for a motive that He Himself gives and has followed.

Second, we are to rejoice because the world **persecuted the prophets who were before** us in the same way that it persecutes us. When we suffer for Christ's sake, we are in the best possible company. To be afflicted for righteousness's sake is to stand in the ranks of the prophets. Persecution is a mark of our faithfulness just as it was a mark of the prophets' faithfulness. When we suffer for Christ's sake we know beyond a doubt that we belong to God, because we are experiencing the same reaction from the world that the prophets experienced.

When we suffer for our Lord we join with the prophets and the other saints of old who "experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground" (Heb. 11:36-38). Though the world is not worthy of their company, every persecuted believer is. To be persecuted verifies that we belong to the line of the righteous.

Our assurance of salvation does not come from knowing we made a decision somewhere in the past. Rather, our assurance that the decision was a true decision for Jesus Christ is found in the life of righteousness that results in suffering for the sake of Christ. Many will claim to have preached Christ, cast out demons, and done mighty works for His sake, but will be refused heaven (Matt. 7:21-23). But none who have suffered righteously for Him will be left out.

The world cannot handle the righteous life that characterizes kingdom living. It is not understandable and acceptable to them, and they cannot stomach it even in others. Poverty of spirit runs counter to the pride of the unbelieving heart. The repentant, contrite disposition that mourns over sin is never appreciated by the callous, indifferent, unsympathetic world. The meek and quiet spirit that takes wrong and does not strike back is regarded as pusillanimous, and it rasps against the militant, vengeful spirit characteristic of the world. To long after righteousness is repugnant to those whose fleshly cravings are rebuked by it, as is a merciful spirit to those whose hearts are hard and cruel. Purity of heart is a painful light that exposes hypocrisy and corruption, and peacemaking is a virtue praised by the contentious, self-seeking world in words but not in heart.

John Chrysostom, a godly leader in the fourth-century church preached so strongly against sin that he offended the unscrupulous Empress Eudoxia as well as many church officials. When summoned before Emperor Arcadius, Chrysostom was threatened with banishment if he did not cease his uncompromising preaching. His response was, "Sire, you cannot banish me, for the world is my Father's house." "Then I will slay you," Arcadius said. "Nay, but you cannot, for my

life is hid with Christ in God," came the answer. "Your treasures will be confiscated" was the next threat, to which John replied, "Sire, that cannot be, either. My treasures are in heaven, where none can break through and steal." "Then I will drive you from man, and you will have no friends left!" was the final, desperate warning. "That you cannot do, either," answered John, "for I have a Friend in heaven who has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.'" Chrysostom was indeed banished, first to Armenia and then farther away to Pityus on the Back Sea, to which he never arrived because he died on the way. But neither his banishment nor his death disproved or diminished his claims. The things that he valued most highly not even an emperor could take from him.

"KEYS TO GOD'S BLESSING"
Matthew 5:1-12
Part I
6/7/92

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)

CONCLUSION:

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:

"BE SALT! BE LIGHT!"
Matthew 5:13-16
8/8/92

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 pungency 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!

ex. virginity

Don't throw away your:

--moral purity ex movies; TV
--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.

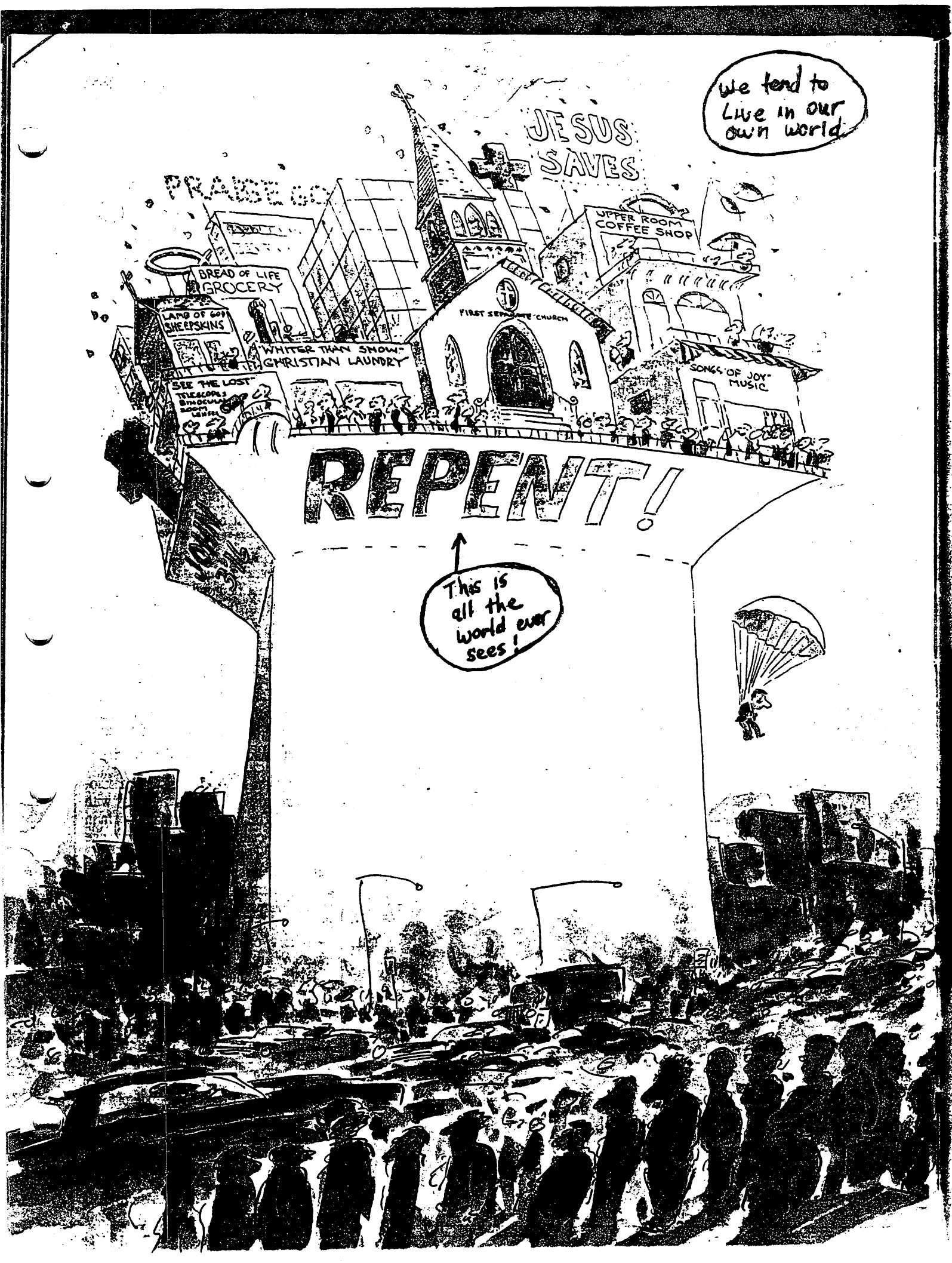
"Glorify" - to cause to shine or glow. Does your life cause men to praise and esteem God?

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)


We tend to Live in our own world
JESUS SAVES
UPPER ROOM COFFEE SHOP
BREAD OF LIFE GROCERY
LAND OF GOD SHEEPSKINS
"WHITER THAN SNOW" CHRISTIAN LAUNDRY
FIRST SEPARATE CHURCH
SONGS OF JOY MUSIC
SEE THE LOST
REPENT!
This is all the world ever sees!

see Personal Evang. File

ESCAPING THE CHRISTIAN GHETTO

Have we forgotten our purpose and abandoned the unsaved?

by Jan Johnson

I was growing impatient with the students in my personal evangelism class at church. They kept saying, "I don't know any non-Christians to witness to." Then I realized that I didn't either. Like my students, I had allowed my deep attachments and love for the family of God to isolate me from unbelievers. I had unconsciously joined the "Christian ghetto."

As Christians we feel most comfortable with other believers. But today, that comfort has evolved into a subculture consisting of Christian T-shirts and Yellow Pages, helping us keep our contact with unbelievers to a minimum. One pastor joked, "If you want to find people with non-Christian contacts, grab those new Christians before they dry up like the rest of us!"

We read only Christian books, watch only Christian movies, attend only Christian activities, and then forget how to talk to non-Christians. We submerge ourselves in a cloistered Christianity that is unable to relate to the world.

Jesus, however, was a mixer. From the wedding feast at Cana to Matthew's dinner party, Jesus ate with rip-off-artist tax collectors and low-life sinners, earning a reputation as "a glutton and a drunkard" (Luke 7:34). Today, Jesus would probably be the first to accept an invitation to an office Christmas party. And like him, we need to be missionaries, tolerating the undesirable parts of our culture to evangelize others.

Afraid to Climb Out

Christians are not evangelizing because they know so few non-Christians and are afraid to try. Furthermore, they don't know where to begin.

William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, saw a vision. Dark clouds and lightning hovered over a billowing, stormy ocean filled with thousands of people screaming for help, struggling for safety. A huge rock rose up out of the ocean into the clouds.

Around the rock stretched a platform filled with people. A few of them tried to help the drowning ones, using ropes, ladders, and boats. But most of the people on the platform went about their business, oblivious to those in the sea — even their drowning friends.

Although they heard the cries, the platform people spent their time tending their flower gardens, raising their families, and begging God for assurance that they would one day reach security at the top of the mountain.

Like the platform people, Christians have forgotten their purpose, afraid to obey the command to make disciples, afraid that to obey that command means associating with and befriending non-Christians.

A church enthusiastically voted to start evangelistic home Bible studies. Christians could bring non-Christian friends to an informal setting. But when the pastor started training the people, one member said, "I don't know any non-Christians." The others agreed, and another commented, "It's too hard to be friends with non-Christians." Finally, one asked, "Could you, Pastor, find non-Christians and bring them to the group?"

They were excited about evangelism, but refused to leave their insulated Christian world.

Some Christians fear that associating with unbelievers will drag them down spiritually. They are so afraid the world will taint them that they never taint the world. Instead, Christians need to take advantage of opportunities to permeate their culture.

As the University of California at Los Angeles grew, a church found itself right next door. Rather than move, the church started a foundation affiliated with three theological graduate schools and brought in several scholars to teach classes. These classes attracted both UCLA students and Christian college students.

The foundation developed a relationship with UCLA, and the university later hired one of the foundation's scholars as an adjunct associate professor of history in New Testament studies. His classes are among the first to fill up. Instead of fleeing UCLA, the church is permeating it.

Many believers are "rabbit hole" Christians. In the morning they pop out of their safe Christian homes, hold their breath at work, scurry home to their families and then off to their Bible studies, and finally end the day praying for the unbelievers they safely avoided all day.

They fear what Peter said to flaunt, with gentleness and respect: their Christlike behavior (1 Peter 3:14,15). We're to show non-Christians how believers live and be prepared to tell them why.

Linda felt uneasy about her new job until she discovered that one of the other clerks was also a Christian. They sat together during lunch and played their Christian music to witness to coworkers. They felt safe with each other. After a few weeks their supervisor reprimanded them for their "offensive music" and cliquish attitudes. Rather than recognize their improper behavior, the two women felt "persecuted for the sake of righteousness."

Other Christians use spiritual gifts to

Jan Johnson is a free-lance writer in Inglewood, Calif.

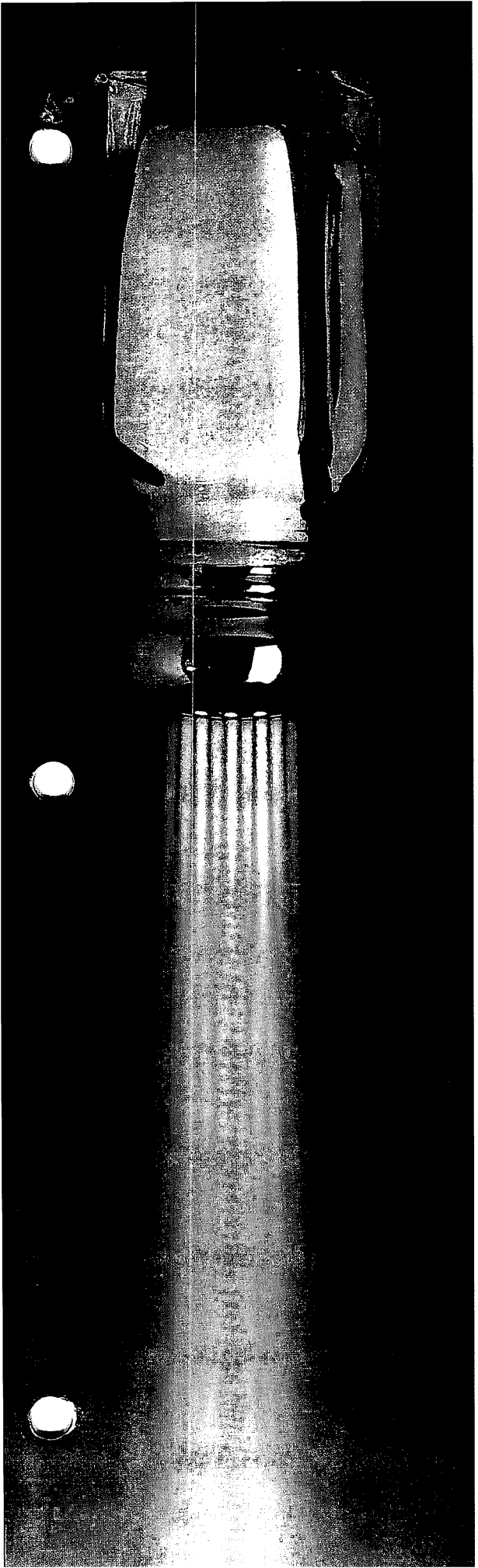


Photo used by permission of Trinity College, Deerfield, IL

Season Your World

by Woodrow Kroll

The last two decades have shown how much the world needs the salt and light of Christians.

I was born in the 1940s and remember fondly the innocence of my youth. The 1950s was perhaps the most carefree decade in modern history. I spent my boyhood in that decade.

We began each day in school by reading the Bible, saying the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag and praying to God. Life was considered extremely precious in those days—the Hippocratic oath was upheld. Doctors were battling polio, and Jonas Salk became a hero when he developed a vaccine for it.

How things have changed in my lifetime! Instead of preserving life, some doctors have discovered a lucrative gold mine in killing children in the womb. Kids aren't taking Bibles to school anymore; they are taking guns. Metal detectors used to be a novelty; now they are as common as an exit door.

It's no secret that violent crime, drive-by shootings, aggravated assault and rape have skyrocketed in the last two decades. Our society is disintegrating before our eyes. We act more like animals than animals do. Only a fool thinks that increased technology, leisure and education have done anything but produce well-educated, high-tech thugs with time on their hands.

Perhaps it's time we reevaluated one aspect of Christ's call to His followers. Maybe we should see the seasoning of our society as a missionary calling, just as much as taking the Gospel to a pagan society. After all, most "pagan" societies aren't as pagan as we Westerners have become.

The first century church was engaged in a seasoning ministry, a call to be salt and light in their community. The Jerusalem Christians were hauled into court and commanded not to teach in the name of Jesus. But they filled the city with the story of salvation in Jesus' name. When

reprimanded, Peter said, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29, NKJV).

You may be called to be a behind-the-lines missionary as a seasoner. Let's see how Christ calls us to a ministry of seasoning.

Called to be salt

Matthew 5 contains Jesus' Beatitudes. These blessings were pronounced on people who possess various attitudes, such as meekness or a thirst for righteousness. They conclude with a blessing on those who are persecuted and falsely perjured for the sake of Christ. That sets the tone for what Jesus next teaches us—that we have a specific calling as behind-the-lines missionaries.

"You are the salt of the earth," Jesus said (Matt. 5:13). On the surface, that seems like a strange thing to say to faithful disciples. But it wasn't.

In the ancient Near East, salt was used in a variety of ways. Its characteristics—pungency, flavor, preservative power—made it a striking metaphor. It's likely that this last quality—the potency of salt as a preservative, even an antiseptic—is what Jesus had in mind when He told His disciples to be the salt of the earth. As an antiseptic preservative, salt retards decay and keeps food from spoiling. It maintains all the beneficial qualities while keeping in check the harmful qualities.

Immediately after calling His disciples to a ministry as salt, Jesus called them to a ministry of light.

In this same way, God calls us to combat the deterioration of our society. That's as much a ministry as building up society, but it's far less likely to be appreciated.

Our society needs more salt. Maybe you're called to be active in the war against moral disintegration in your home country. If so, your call is to be active in seasoning your society rather than evangelizing another.

If the missionary enterprise around the world is to be healthy, the countries that have been missionary launching pads must be equally healthy. Presently, the United States, Canada, Great Britain and other nations that have been great sending nations are so morally bankrupt they have become mission fields instead.

If God has called you to a ministry of writing letters to your congressman or protesting a porn shop in your neighborhood, don't be hesitant. If God has impressed you to become part of the pro-life movement, see your participation as being seasoning to a rotting world. You may be a behind-the-lines missionary, but when the lines are drawn, you could be surprised how close you are to the front. *(continued on page 6)*

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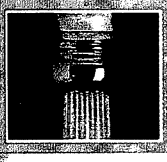
2  **Season Your World** *Woodrow Kroll*

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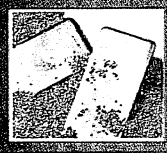
14  **The Promise of a Prize** *Elisabeth Elliot*

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Tonya Fredstrom ..... Executive Editor
Elizabeth Erlandson ..... Managing Editor
Rachel Derowitsch ..... Associate Editor
Herbert Epp ..... Contributing Editor
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Kim Johnson ..... Design Supervisor
Patrick Osborne ..... Art Director

Back to the Bible
P.O. Box 82808, Lincoln, NE 68501 or
Box 10, Winnipeg, MB R3C 2G2

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BRITISH OFFICE CELEBRATES 40th ANNIVERSARY



In 1993, the British office began to work with the Voice of the Gospel *radio in Warsaw, Poland. In April this year, David Oram signed the legal document establishing the Polish office as part of the Good News Broadcasting Association in England.*

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Back to the Bible's ministry in Great Britain. In April 1954, a half-hour program was released one evening each week on the medium waveband from Radio Luxembourg, a commercial station.

Gilbert Vinden, an architect and a missionary to China for 30 years, was asked to handle the trickle of mail that came in as a result of the program. He agreed to help, responding from his home in London to the dozen or so letters that were sent each month. Gradually, the volume of letters increased, and in 1958, the British office was established as a registered organization.

The work grew rapidly when Trans World Radio began transmitting the program from Monte Carlo, and today the program is aired on five stations and released 16 times each week. Sixteen people are employed in the radio and literature ministry.

The British office of Back to the Bible recently took a bold step of faith by "adopting" *Voice of the Gospel*, a radio ministry in Poland. The office in Britain is following the example of the international headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska, by extending its outreach throughout the world.



"The future looks bright. The British and Polish offices of Back to the Bible express their deep gratitude to our friends at Lincoln for their vision 40 years ago," said David Oram, chief executive for the office in Great Britain. "'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.'" ❧

(continued from page 3)

Called to be light

Immediately after calling His disciples to a ministry as salt, Jesus called them to a ministry of light. "You are the light of the world" (v. 14).

Salt preserves society so light can shine in it without hindrance. Both are necessary. Nobody is saved by salt alone, but a society that won't tolerate salt won't turn to the light. Behind-the-lines missionaries must be both.

In the Bible, light indicates the true knowledge of God (Matt. 6:22–23). It symbolizes the best in learning. When your friends and neighbors turn to Jesus, a light is turned on in their life. Light and life go together (John 1:4). When you let the light of Jesus Christ shine in your life, your friends see the Light, Jesus Christ.

Jesus said we should not put a basket over our light (Matt. 5:15–16), that we should not do things as missionaries that dim our witness behind the lines. When we do, we not only dim our light, we weaken the effect of our seasoning as well. We become part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

Ask God what kind of ministry He has for you. Perhaps it's taking an active part in seasoning your society to strengthen it for the missionary enterprise around the world. Your participation on a local school board may open the door for the Light to shine again in public education. Taking part in a life chain may communicate to your government that there's something rotten in this world (abortion) and you want to bring your salt to bear on it.

Behind-the-lines missionaries are just as important as front-line missionaries, and the front keeps coming closer to our door. If we aren't active in a ministry of seasoning and evangelism, we soon may discover the enemy at our door.

Be salt and light in a nation that needs your ministry. Be a missionary to your society. ❧



Woodrow Kroll is the General Director and Bible Teacher for Back to the Bible. This article was adapted from his new book The Home Front Handbook: How to Be a Behind-the-lines Missionary *(0895-7). It is available for $1.25/$1.55 Can.*

"Make a DIFFERENCE in the World!"

Matthew 5:13-16
July 11, 2004

INTRODUCTION:

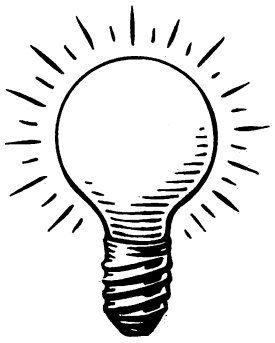
***Make an impact on this world! BE SALT! BE LIGHT!**



How?

I. **Don't lose your <u>savor</u>!**
(The world needs to <u>taste</u> the <u>pungency</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:

TITLE: CONFRONTING WORLDLINESS
TEXT: JAMES 4:1-10

INTRO: "What do you consider a good rule of life?" someone asked Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman. He replied, "This rule governs my life — anything that dims my vision of Christ or takes away my taste for Bible study or cramps my prayer life, or makes Christian work more difficult, is wrong for me and I must as a Christian turn away from it."

Good conclusion ⇒

PROP: YOU NEED TO CONFRONT THE WORLDLINESS THAT IS IN YOUR LIFE!

3 Facts about Worldliness:

I. SELFISH PLEASURE IS THE CAUSE OF WORLDLINESS (v. 1-3)

Two Evidences of selfish pleasure:

A. CONFLICT (v. 1-2)

1. Internal Conflict (with yourself)

"Among you" = in (ἐν) you)personally)

I Pet. 2:11 - "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;"

It is inner conflicts (feelings of tension and frustration) that cause outer conflicts.

"In your members" = inside your body parts

These conflicts come from a self-centered, pleasure-seeking old Nature (Rom. 7:14-25; 8:6-7).

"Lusts" = pleasures; we get our English word "hedonism" from Greek. Hedonism is the doctrine that pleasure is the "sole or chief good in life."

The world does all it can to wet your appetite for seeking selfish pleasure. (ex. Beautiful Beer advertisements)

Cp. "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" - II Tim. 3:4

"That war" - describes a constant military campaign. These pleasures are described as alien soldiers that demand gratification and scheme as to how to get it. Our selfish pleasures like soldiers scheme and make plans to enter into conflict with anyone else who thwarts (stops) the fulfillment of those desires.

APPLI: Do you know why you are mad and defensive when someone points out sin in your life? It is because you are letting your fleshly appetites say: "No! Stop this person from keeping from us what we want!"

ill. of a dog that will snap at you if you play

"BE SALT! BE LIGHT!"
Matthew 5:13-16
8/8/92

INTRODUCTION:

***Make an impact on this world!**

How?

I. Don't lose your savor!
(The world needs to taste the pungency of Christianity)

II. Don't hide your light!
(The world needs to see the brilliancy of Christianity)

CONCLUSION:

"SEA SAL! SEA LUZ!"
Mateo 5:13-16
8 de Agosto de 1992

INTRODUCCION:

***Haga un impacto en este mundo!**

Como?

I. **No pierda su <u>sabor</u>!**
(El mundo necesita <u>saborear</u> la <u>pureza</u> del Cristianismo)

II. **No esconda su <u>luz</u>!**
(El mundo necesita <u>ver</u> el <u>brillo</u> del Cristianismo)

CONCLUSION:

"JESUS UPHOLDS THE BIBLE"
Matthew 5:17-20
8/23/92

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]
- 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.

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.

He is either Liar
Lunatic
Lord

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 (οὐ 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 IMPORTANT (v. 19-20)

V. 19

"Therefore" - Just as everything will be fulfilled, everything should 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 teach men so" - Both those who violate God's principles and those who teach 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 saved yet allowed disobedience in their lives while on earth.

--In heaven there will be different ranks of people (Christians are judged to determine reward - I Cor. 3, II Cor. 5)

"He shall be called" - By whom? By God. 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. } ill.

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 <u>never conflict</u> 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 <u>exceed</u> that of the Scribes and Pharisees, it must <u>not</u> be the following kind:

1) Not a <u>hypocritical</u> righteousness - a phony act to please men (Mt. 23)

2) Not a <u>self-invented</u> 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: <u>Mk. 7:1-9</u>, Mt. 15:1-9)

3) Not a <u>self-achieved</u> righteousness (works religion)

   <u>God's righteousness</u> is imputed to our spiritually bankrupt account by Christ (II Cor. 5:21)

CONCLUSION:

"JESUS UPHOLDS THE BIBLE"

Matthew 5:17-20

8/23/92

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 <u>FULFILLED</u> (17-18)

II. **All of God's Word**
IS <u>IMPORTANT</u> (v. 19-20)

CONCLUSION:

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II. All of God's Word
IS <u>IMPORTANT</u> (v. 19-20)

CONCLUSION:

"The Sure, Authoritative Word of God"

Matthew 5:17-20
5/1/05

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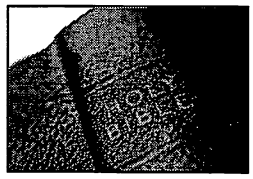
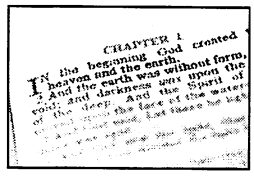


There are 2 aspects to Christ's fulfillment of the O.T. -

1. He "fulfilled all <u>righteousness</u>" (Mt. 3:15) [precept]

2. He fulfilled and will fulfill all <u>promises</u> and <u>predictions</u> [prophecy]

II. All of God's Word IS <u>IMPORTANT</u> (v. 19-20)



"JESUS MANTIENE LA BIBLIA"
Mateo 5:17-20
23 de Agosto de 1992

INTRODUCCION

Al estar serio acerca de Jesus es astar serio acerca de la Biblia - porque Jesus mantuvo las Escrituras como permanentes, relevantes, y como autoridad absoluta.

En el Sermon de la montana, Jesucristo enseno dos verdades vitales acerca de las Escrituras:

I. TODA LA PALABRA DE DIOS SERA <u>CUMPLIDA</u> (17-18)

II. TODA LA PALABRA DE DIOS ES <u>IMPORTANTE</u> (v. 19-20)

CONCLUSION:

"A MURDERER AT HEART"
(The Seriousness of Anger)
Matthew 5:21-26
9/6/92

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 anger in my life? Two key steps:

I. See it for what it is -- Murder! (v. 21-22)

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

Ex. "Root of bitterness"

"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.

"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"n - 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)

"A MURDERER AT HEART"
(The Seriousness of Anger)
Matthew 5:21-26
9/6/92

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. 211-22)

II. Settle differences now! (v. 23-26)

A. Solving differences is a prerequisite to worship and service to God (v. 23-24)

B. Solving differences now is the secret to avoiding bigger problems later (v. 25-26)

CONCLUSION:

In verse 22 Jesus gives three examples that show the divine definition of murder: being **angry** with another person, saying **Raca** to him, and calling him a **fool.**

THE EVIL AND DANGER OF ANGER

Everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court. (5:22*a*)

We know from other Scripture, and from Jesus' own life, that He does not prohibit every form of anger. It was in righteous anger that He cleansed the Temple of those who defiled it (John 2:14-17; Matt. 21:12-13). Paul tells us to "be angry, and yet do not sin" (Eph. 4:26). Although the principle is often abused and misapplied, it is possible to have righteous anger. Faithfulness to Christ will sometimes demand it.

In our day of peace and harmony at any cost, of positive thinking, and of infusing godly love with human sentimentality, we often need to show more anger against certain things. There are things in our country, our communities, our schools, and even in our churches about which we have no excuse for *not* being angry, vocally angry. Many of the trends in our society, many of the philosophies and standards to which our children are exposed, and some of the unbiblical philosophies and standards within evangelicalism need to be challenged with righteous indignation, because they attack the kingdom and glory of God. God Himself is "angry with the wicked every day" (Ps. 7:11, KJV).

But Jesus is not talking about anger over God's being dishonored, but sinful selfish anger, anger against a **brother,** whoever that might be, because he has done something against us, or simply irritates and displeases us. *Orgizō* (to be angry) has to do with brooding, simmering anger that is nurtured and not allowed to die. It is seen in the holding of a grudge, in the smoldering bitterness that refuses to forgive. It is the anger that cherishes resentment and does not want reconciliation. The writer of Hebrews identifies its depth and intensity as a "root of bitterness" (Heb. 12:15).

Such anger, Jesus says, is a form of murder. The person who harbors anger **shall be guilty before the court.** To be guilty before the civil court should have been to be guilty of murder and deserving of the death penalty. Anger merits execution, because the fruit of anger is murder.

THE EVIL AND DANGER OF SLANDER

And whoever shall say to his brother, "Raca," shall be guilty before the supreme court. (5:22*b*)

Raca was an epithet commonly used in Jesus' day that has no exact modern

equivalent. Therefore in most Bible versions, as here, it is simply transliterated. A term of malicious abuse, derision, and slander, it has been variously rendered as brainless idiot, worthless fellow, silly fool, empty head, blockhead, and the like. It was a word of arrogant contempt. David spoke of persons who use such slander as those who "sharpen their tongues as a serpent; poison of a viper is under their lips" (Ps. 140:3). It was the type of word that would have been used by the soldiers who mocked Jesus as they placed the crown of thorns on His head and led Him out to be crucified (Matt. 27:29-31).

A Jewish legend tells of a young rabbi named Simon Ben Eleazar who had just come from a session with his famous teacher. The young man felt especially proud about how he handled himself before the teacher. As he basked in his feelings of erudition, wisdom, and holiness, he passed a man who was especially unattractive. When the man greeted Simon, the rabbi responded, "You Raca! How ugly you are. Are all men of your town as ugly as you?" "That I do not know," the man answered, "but go and tell the Maker who created me how ugly is the creature He has made."

To slander a creature made in God's image is to slander God Himself and is equivalent to murdering that person. Contempt, says Jesus, is murder of the heart. The contemptuous person **shall be guilty before the supreme court,** the Sanhedrin, the council of the seventy who tried the most serious offenses and pronounced the severest penalties, including death by stoning (see Acts 6:12—7:60).

THE EVIL AND DANGER OF CONDEMNING CHARACTER

And whoever shall say, "You fool," shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. (5:22*c*)

Mōros (**fool**) means "stupid" or "dull" and is the term from which we get moron. It was sometimes used in secular Greek literature of an obstinate, godless person. It was also possibly related to the Hebrew *mārâ,* which means "to rebel against." To call someone **You fool** was to accuse them of being both stupid and godless.

The three illustrations in this verse show increasing degrees of seriousness. To be angry is the basic evil behind murder; to slander a person with a term such as *Raca* is even more serious, because it gives expression to that anger; and to condemn a person's character by calling him a **fool** is more slanderous still.

The Psalms twice tell us that "the fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Ps. 14:1; 53:1; cf. 10:4). The book of Proverbs is filled with references and warnings to fools. On the road to Emmaus Jesus used a similar, but less severe, term when He called the two disciples "foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!" (Luke 24:25).

Because of the testimony of God's Word, we know that fools of the worst

and Pharisees (v. 20). As the chosen custodians of God's Word (Rom. 3:2) the Jews, above all people, should have known that God commands heart-righteousness, not just external, legalistic behavior. But because most of them had come to converse in Aramaic rather than Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, and because the rabbis had created a vast collection of traditions, which they taught in place of the Scripture itself, the Jews of Jesus' day were ignorant of much of the great revelation God had given them. Rabbinic interpretation of Scripture also obscured the divinely intended meaning.

As already pointed out, the traditional command **you shall not commit murder** was scriptural, being a rendering of Exodus 20:13. But the traditional Jewish penalty, **whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court,** fell short of the biblical standard in several ways. In the first place it fell short because it did not prescribe the scriptural penalty of death (Gen. 9:6; Num. 35:30-31; etc.). The traditional penalty for murder was liability before a civil court, which apparently used its own judgment as to punishment. In the second place, and more important, God's holy character was not even taken into consideration. Nothing was said of disobedience to His law, of desecrating His image in which man is made, or of His role in determining and dispensing judgment. In the third place nothing was said about the inner attitude, the heart offense of the murderer.

The rabbis, scribes, and Pharisees had confined murder to being merely a civil issue and had confined its prosecution to a human court. They had also confined its evil to the physical act. In doing so, they flagrantly disregarded what their own Scriptures taught. Long before the time of Christ, David had acknowledged, "Behold, Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part Thou wilt make me know wisdom" (Ps. 51:6; cf. 15:2). The Lord said to Samuel, "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).

In saying, **But I say to you,** Jesus was not contrasting His teaching with that of the Old Testament (cf. Matt. 5:17-19) but with that of rabbinic tradition. He was saying, in effect, "Let me tell what the Scriptures themselves say, what God's truth is on the matter. 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 in the hands. It starts with evil thoughts, regardless of whether or not those thoughts are brought to consummation in action."

Here Jesus begins to specifically point up the inadequacy of the righteousness in which the scribes, Pharisees, and many others trusted. Because their view of righteousness was external, their view of themselves was complimentary. But Jesus shatters that complacent self-righteousness by beginning with the accusation that a person is guilty of murder even if he is angry with, hates, curses, or maligns another person. In a statement that may have shocked His hearers more than anything He had yet said, Jesus declares that a person guilty of anger is guilty of murder and deserves a murderer's punishment.

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 murderous spirit than a multiple killer. Many people, in the deepest feelings of their hearts, have anger and hatred to such a degree that their true desire is for the hated person to be dead. The fact that fear, cowardice, or lack of opportunity does not permit them to take that person's life does not diminish their guilt before God. In fact, as the Lord makes plain in the following three illustrations of heart-murder, those who consciously desire the death of another person are not free from guilt.

All anger is incipient murder. "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer" (1 John 3:15)—making all of us guilty, because who has never hated another person? In light of the context John used the term *brother* in the sense of a fellow believer. But Jesus' emphasis was wider than that. Most of those who heard the Sermon on the Mount made no pretense of belief in Christ, and He used **brother** in the broad ethnic sense of meaning any other Jewish person in that culture.

Jesus strips away every vestige of self-righteousness. Not only did He sweep aside all the rabbinical rubbish of tradition, but He also swept aside the self-justification that is common to all of us. His indictment is total.

In the spring of 1931 one of the most notorious criminals of that day was captured. Known as Two-gun Crowley, he had brutally murdered a great many people, including at least one policeman. It is said that when he finally was captured in his girl friend's apartment after a gun battle, the police found a blood-spattered note on him that read, "Under my coat is a weary heart, but a kind one, one that would do nobody any harm." Even the worst of men try to exonerate themselves. Such obvious self-deceit as that of Crowley's seems absurd, yet that is exactly the attitude the natural man has of himself. "I may have done some bad things," he thinks, "but down deep I'm not really bad."

In essence, that was the self-righteous attitude of the scribes and Pharisees, as it is of many people today. Comparing ourselves to a bloodthirsty criminal makes us seem very good in our own minds. Like the Pharisee in the Temple, we feel proud that we are "not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers" (Luke 18:11). What Jesus says in the present passage is that we *are* just like those other people. Even if we do not take someone else's life, even if we never physically assault another person, we are guilty of murder.

Sociologists and psychologists report that hatred brings a person closer to murder than does any other emotion. And hatred is but an extension of anger. Anger leads to hatred, which leads to murder—in the heart if not in the act. Anger and hatred are so deadly that they can even turn to destroy the person who harbors them.

Jesus' main point here, and through verse 48, is that even the best of people, in their hearts, are sinful and so are in the same boat with the worst of people. Not to consider the state of our heart is not to consider that which the Lord holds to be the all-important measure of true guilt.

known murders are committed in the United States every year—averaging nearly seventy a day. The unknown murders no doubt would increase those figures considerably. Murders have become so commonplace that, unless they are bizarre or multiple or involve a famous person, they make no more than local news. If we were to add suicides (self-murder) and abortions (prebirth murder) the numbers would be staggering.

The first of six illustrations of heart-righteousness that Jesus gives in 5:21-48 deals with the sin of murder: **You have heard that the ancients were told, "You shall not commit murder."** As discussed in the previous chapter, **the ancients** refers to the rabbis and scribes of old who had devised the many traditions with which Judaism had become encumbered and which had virtually replaced the authority of the Scriptures. In the first two illustrations the ancient teachings to which Jesus refers are traditional interpretations of scriptural commands.

The murder of Abel was a terrible act, which Cain knew violated divine law (Gen. 4:9, 13). But the first specific prohibition of murder is found later in Genesis: "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man" (9:6). Here the penalty for murder and the reason for its seriousness are given. The penalty was death for the killer, and the reason for such severe punishment was that man is made in God's image. To take the life of a fellow human being is to assault the sacredness of the image of God.

The specific commandment to which Jesus here refers is from the Decalogue, which every Jew knew. The command "You shall not murder" (Ex. 20:13) does not prohibit every form of killing a human being. The term used has to do with criminal killing, and from many accounts and teachings in Scripture it is clear that capital punishment, just warfare, accidental homicide, and self-defense are excluded. The commandment is against the intentional killing of another human being for purely personal reasons, whatever those reasons might be.

Just as Satan is the father of lies and of those who reject and rebel against God, he is also the original murderer (John 8:44). Men are themselves accountable for murders they commit, just as they are accountable for every other sin; but every sin, including every murder, is inspired by the would-be murderer of God.

Even so, we cannot blame Satan for our sins, because fallen human nature shares the presence of evil that Satan personifies. Jesus said it is out of a person's own heart that "come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders" (Matt. 15:19). We do not sin simply because of Satan or because of social deprivation, stressful situations, bad influences, or any other external cause. Those things may tempt us to sin and make sinning easier, but when we commit sin—or even intend to commit sin—it is because we decide to sin. Sin is an act of the will. When in their rejection of God men "did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God,

insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful" (Rom. 1:28-31).

"There are six things which the Lord hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers" (Prov. 6:16-19). Murder is a despicable manifestation of a fleshly heart. The seriousness of the offense is seen in one of the last declarations in God's Word: "Outside [of heaven] are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying" (Rev. 22:15).

The Old and New Testaments are filled with the names of murderers. In the Old are Cain, Lamech, Pharaoh, Abimelech, Joab, the Amalekites, David, Absalom, Zimri, Jezebel, Haziel, Jehu, Athaliah, Joash, Manasseh, and many others. The New Testament list includes Herod, Judas, the high priests, Barabbas, Herodias and her daughter, and others. Biblical history, like human history in general, is filled with murderers.

Jesus' hearers were aware of the prevalence and seriousness of this sin. No doubt most of them were in full agreement with capital punishment for the crime and were convinced that they were innocent of that particular evil.

But now Jesus attacks such self-confidence by charging that no one is truly innocent of murder, because the first step in murder is anger. The anger that lies behind murder—anger which many people think is not really a sin—is one of the worst of sins. To one degree or another, it makes all men would-be murderers.

The Lord's teaching about murder, whether the act is committed outwardly or not, affects our view of ourselves, our worship of God, and our relation to others.

The Effect on Our View of Ourselves

You have heard that the ancients were told, "You shall not commit murder" and "Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court." But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, "Raca," shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, "You fool," shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. (5:21-22)

The first effect of Jesus' words is to shatter the illusion of self-righteousness. Like most people throughout history, the scribes and Pharisees thought that if there was any sin of which they were clearly not guilty it was murder. Whatever else they may have done, at least they had never committed murder.

According to rabbinic tradition, and to the beliefs of most cultures and religions, murder is strictly limited to the act of physically taking another person's life. Jesus had already warned that God's righteousness surpasses that of the scribes

"AN ADULTERER AT HEART"
Matthew 5:27-30
9/13/92

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 agaian, 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) **<u>Turn off</u> 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 <u>idle</u>; 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 <u>not sex objects</u> but <u>people with an eternal soul</u> who need Christ**

It is vain to lust after external flesh.

4) **<u>Read God's Word</u> every day to purify your mind**

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.

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)

7) **Seek to satisfy your spouse's sexual desires so he/she will not be driven to "look" elsewhere** (I Cor. 7:3, 5; Prov. 5:18-19)

Mt. 5:30

True Story of
A Man who cut off
His Arm to Save His Life

Subj: **guy cutting off his arm**[redacted]
Date: 5/8/2003 11:08:34 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: FBCSawyer
To: FBCSawyer

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. (May 8) - Hopelessly pinned by a boulder that had rolled onto his arm, Aron Ralston says he finally took a dull pocketknife to his forearm after spending three days in a remote Utah canyon - but he couldn't cut the skin.

In his first meeting with reporters, the 27-year-old Ralston calmly described his desperate attempts to free himself from the boulder and how he eventually did what for many would be unthinkable: cutting off his arm to save his life.

"I'm not sure how I handled it," the mechanical engineer-turned-adventurer said Thursday, the stump of his right arm in a sling. "I felt pain and I coped with it. I moved on."

Ralston, an avid outdoorsman who has climbed some of Colorado's highest peaks, spent five days trapped in the 3-foot-wide canyon. He said he felt alternately at peace as well as depressed at the prospect of dying, figuring his body might be washed away in a flash flood before anyone had a chance to find it.

He joked that he often thought of drinking a margarita as he took turns standing or sitting down in his climbing harness to rest.

On the fourth day, a day after his first attempt to cut his arm, Ralston went through the motions of applying a tourniquet, laid out bike shorts to absorb the blood and got his gear ready for a quick getaway. He worked out how to get through the bone with his "multi-tool"-type knife, made duller by futile attempts to chip away at the rock.

"Basically, I got my surgical table ready," he said.

On the fifth day, he summoned up all his technique and nerve:

"I was able to first snap the radius and then within another few minutes snap the ulna at the wrist and from there, I had the knife out and applied the tourniquet and went to task. It was a process that took about an hour," he said.

Slim and pale with short reddish-brown hair, Ralston made frequent references to prayer and spirituality during his news conference. He said he felt a surge of energy on the fifth day, which happened to be the National Day of Prayer.

"I may never fully understand the spiritual aspects of what I experienced, but I will try," he said. "The source of the power I felt was the thoughts and prayers of many people, most of whom I will never know."

Ralston's ordeal began April 26, during what was supposed to be a day trip near Canyonlands National Park, Ralston became pinned as he scrambled over three boulders wedged into a narrow canyon. One of the boulders, weighing an estimated 800 pounds, rolled as he climbed over it, trapping his right arm against a cliff face.

He tried chipping away with the knife at the boulder and the cliff, and tried to rig a way to lift the boulder off himself with climbing gear. He decided to sacrifice his arm to save his life after going through most of his three liters of water and his food - two burritos and some crumbs clinging to candy bar wrappers.

Even after his excruciating operation, what Ralston had to do to survive required skills beyond the abilities of most. On May 1, he crawled through a narrow, winding canyon, rappelled down a 60-foot cliff and walked some six miles down the canyon.

By the time he encountered hikers and then rescuers, Ralston was just two miles from the nearest road. He was dehydrated and bloody, but OK.

For reasons he wouldn't explain, Ralston withheld some details of his story. A publicist told reporters there would be no follow-up interviews soon and no interviews whatsoever with the doctors who treated him.

Ralston gave a partial answer to one frequently asked question:
What kind of knife did he use?

He described it as a cheap imitation of the Leatherman brand multi-tool, a folding device that typically has knife blades, pliers, screwdrivers and other gadgets. He didn't give the brand, calling it "what you'd get if you bought a $15 flashlight and got a free multi-use tool."

Ralston, who quit his engineering job to focus on mountain climbing last year, was expected to return to his parents' home in Denver by the end of the weekend.

"AN ADULTERER AT HEART"
Matthew 5:27-30
9/13/92

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)

CONCLUSION:

"THE DIVORCE DILEMMA"
Matthew 5:31-32
9/20/92

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 <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"

SEE: last paragraph p. 23 <u>Divorce</u> paper

Don't even think about divorce!

"THE DIVORCE DILEMMA"
Matthew 5:31-32
9/20/92

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)

CONCLUSION: *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)

An important fact to consider is that the clause, "except it be for fornication," is only found in Matthew. Ironically, Mark 10:11-12 and Luke 16:18 omit this clause even though their account is in the exact same context as Matthew 19. Why is this clause only in Matthew? What is the significance of "except it be for fornication" found in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9? What was Christ referring to?

> Christ was referring to the Jewish marriage custom of His day. Marriage was begun by drawing a legal contract between the father of a man and the father of a woman, pledging them to each other. This marriage contract was called a betrothal. The couple were called husband and wife by virtue of that marriage contract. The marriage itself was not completed until at least twelve months after the betrothal contract was drawn up. But they were still referred to as husband and wife. Such was the relationship between Joseph and Mary when the angel announced that Mary would conceive a child. The twelve-month waiting period was deemed necessary because of the low state of morals in that day. That period gave sufficient time to reveal whether the woman was pregnant when the contract was drawn up. The interval also allowed time to see if she would become pregnant by an unfaithful act after being joined by contract to her husband. If the wife proved to be immoral, <u>the marriage need not be completed</u>; the contract could be broken by a divorce.[22]

The period of betrothal (or the modern-day term engagement) was a very sacred one to the Jew and was considered as a marriage, outside of consumation (sexual intercourse) or living together (Genesis 29:21; Deuteronomy 22:23-30).

> If one who was betrothed to a wife found in the betrothal period that she was guilty of fornication--that is, she was an immoral woman--the marriage need not be consummated; but it had to be dissolved by a divorce. Since the marriage had not been completed, the man was free to marry without becoming an adulterer.[23]

be forgiven and put under the blood of Christ. By God's grace, just as the Apostle Paul was forgiven, you can be, too. No sin is too great for God's unlimited mercy. There will still be scars and after-effects of sin because it is a Biblical principle that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galations 6:7). But God desires to remove your sin as far "as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12).

If men (Christians) would learn to obey God, there would be no divorce. If men would learn to love, there would be no divorce. If men would learn how to forgive, there would be no divorce. If we as redeemed, though fallen, mankind who have been undeservedly made "joint-heirs" with Jesus Christ would learn that the love, mercy, and grace of God are an example for us to follow, we would not have the problem of divorce. As nothing can separate us from our Groom (Jesus Christ), so nothing can separate us from our spouse. "Marriage is like a padlock without a key." It lasts a lifetime, as the words of the wedding vow ring: "As long as they both shall live."

"A PROMISE IS A PROMISE"

Matthew 5:33-37

9/27/92

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); Jephthah (Jud. 11:30-31); Saul (I Sam. 14:24); and Herod (Mt. 14:7).

✳ 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 MADE IN GOD'S PRESENCE (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 - Gen. 14:22-24, 21:23-24, 24:1-4, 10; Ps. 132:2)
Abraham David

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 "nothing" (v. 16) - no big deal, no need to worry about fulfilling them.

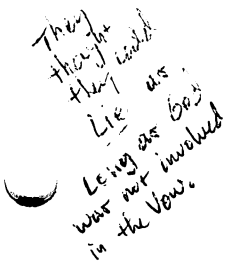
Jesus' point: Since God is in Heaven and on earth, the owner of Zion and the controller of man's very life and existence, to profane any vow, is to profane God Himself.

God sits in Heaven (Is. 66:1); He rests His feet on earth (Is. 66:1; Acts 7:49); He owns Jerusalem (Ps. 48:2), and He alone controls 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 is 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).

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 SHOULD BE STRAIGHT-FORWARD AND SINCERE (v. 37)

"Your communication" refers to your words (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. "the 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!

"UNA PROMESA ES UNA PROMESA"

Mateo 5:33-37

27 de Septiembre de 1992

INTRODUCCION:

***Sea un hombre/una mujer de su palabra! Dese cuenta de lo sagrado que es cada una de sus promesas!**

I. Todas las promesas son sagradas; asi que
TODAS LAS PROMESAS <u>DEBEN DE SER CUMPLIDAS</u> (V. 33)

II. Todas las promesas son sagradas; porque
TODAS LAS PROMESAS SON <u>HECHAS EN LA PRESENCIA DE DIOS</u>
(V. 34-36)

III. Todas las promesas son sagradas; asi que
TODAS LAS PROMESAS <u>DEBEN DE SER DIRECTAS Y SINCERAS</u> (V. 37)

CONCLUSION:

"A PROMISE IS A PROMISE"

Matthew 5:33-37

9/27/92

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)

CONCLUSION:

"CIVIL RIGHTS!"

Matthew 5:38-42
October 4, 1992

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 (v. 17-18)

   Rather than seeking to justify evil for evil -

   a. Seek to show sincere goodness toward your enemies (v. 17b)

   b. Seek to live peaceably with your enemies (v. 18)

2. Someone who "Pays back" evil with evil is
   TAKING GOD'S PREROGATIVES in their own hands (v. 19)

3. Someone who "pays back" evil with evil is
   Not practicing the LAW OF LOVE (v. 20-21)

"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. ex. Little children "That's my Toy! Smack!"

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 face 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 wan a "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 SECURITY (v. 40)

(Sometimes I must suffer the loss of my right to necessities)

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 LIBERTY (v. 41)

(Sometimes I must suffer the loss of my right to freedom)

"*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 force a civilian to carry his pack for a Roman mile, 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 PROPERTY (v. 42)

(Sometimes I must suffer the loss of my right to possessions)

This statement implies that the person has a real need.

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

Hymn - "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.

ROMANS 12:17-21
11/4/90

INTRODUCTION:

Satan is influencing (especially via music) our society toward "war" and "rebellion"

The believer who lives for God will eventually have enemies. Friction will inevitably come as you go across the grain of the world.

--Jesus had enemies

--Paul had enemies

--Stephen had enemies (Acts 7)

"Jesus warned His disciples that their worst enemies might be those of their own household" (Matt. 10:36) (Wiersbe, p. 556)

Make sure, however, that if you have enemies it is because of the "offense of the cross" (Gal. 5:11; 6:12-15) and not because you are an offensive Christian.

***Paying back evil with evil is wrong on three counts:**

I. Someone who "pays back" evil with evil is Saying that <u>SIN JUSTIFIES SIN</u> (v. 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."

In NYC, however, it goes: "You tip me, I still stab you."

"Recompense" = to pay back, give back, return.

"To no man" - regardless of who they are, or what they have done.

"Evil <u>for</u> evil" - the word "for" ("anti") means "in the place of."

We are not to return evil to <u>replace</u> 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."

However, no doctor would fight poison with poison! Or disease with disease. That is not a cure.

[NOTE: a vaccine when you are well is given so that you will build up antibodies; no one gives a vaccine to someone who has the virus already. You give an anti-biotic - the opposite of the virus.]

Rather than seeking to justify evil for evil:

A. Seek to show SINCERE GOODNESS toward your enemies (v. 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."

"Provide things honest" -

"Provide" = to plan in advance; to think previously as to what you will do for those who did you wrong.

"Honest" = ethical goodness; intrinsic genuine goodness with no cover up.

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 (v. 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:

1) your spouse
2) your employer
3) your neighbors
4) your in-laws and relatives
5) those who "hate your guts"

Some might say: "I can be nice to some enemies, some of the time; but certainly God does not expect me to be nice to all enemies, all of the time, does he?"

ANSWER: There are no exceptions.

Note - "no man" (v. 17a); "all men" (v. 17b); "all men" (v. 18). This includes saved and lost (cp. I Th. 5:15)
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."

II. **Someone who "pays back" evil with evil is Taking God's PREROGATIVES in their own hands (v. 19)**

"Dearly beloved" - It is God who loves us; therefore, He will see that we are vindicated. Because God loves me, He will fight my battles. He will right all wrongs done to His beloved.

"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.

Some wrong thing that doing evil toward others is justified because of what they did to you.

"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!

"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

(Cp. the LORD's future defense of Israel - Isa. 49:25-26)

Remember, if God commands us not to "get even," then just the thought or desire to "get even" is wrong (sinful).

III. **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]).

According to verse 19, to leave the retribution up to God requires faith. Faith in the fact that God will make right all wrongs.

According to verse 20, to return blessing to those who gave you misery, requires love. A love for their soul and their relationship to God.

* Jesus taught against retaliation (SEE Mt. 5:38-48)

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."

"Will they take advantage of us? Will they hate us more?"

Only the Lord knows. Our task is not to protect ourselves but to obey the Lord and leave the results to Him." (Wiersbe, p. 556).

What if they don't change at all? What if our efforts of love don't convert them? In such cases, "we have still experienced the love of God in our own hearts and have grown in grace" (Wiersbe, p. 556).

V. 21

How do you "win a fight" as a Christian?

"Be not overcome of evil" = do not be conquered by evil.

The implication is that evil--if returned for evil--makes you the loser, the victim, the casualty.

Sin conquers you every time you choose to lower yourself and yield to it. (Rom. 6:16).

"Overcome evil with good" - the secret to conquering evil (on a personal level) is with good.

Showers of goodness quench the flames of evil. This is lifestyle of one living on a higher plane.

"Overcome evil with good" - the way to fight fire is not with more fire.

You don't quench fire with fire. But with the opposite of fire.

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.

CONCLUSION:

Doing good to those who do evil to you does not come natural.

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.

"CIVIL RIGHTS!"

Matthew 5:38-42
October 4, 1992

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>)

CONCLUSION:

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
10/11/92

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 RADICALLY DIFFERENT Than How We Are Treated (v. 44)

(The Method 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 cannot be "feeling" orientated because it is impossible to feel good about those who practice evil and set themselves against you.

This love is "will" (decision) orientated. It is a decision of the will. 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 choose 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 God loves them (Jn. 3:16)

2) You realize that what they do to you, they do out of spiritual blindness

"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)

Love's question is never who to love—because we are to love everyone—but only how to love most helpfully. We are not to love merely in terms of feeling but in terms of service. God's love embraces the entire world (John 3:16), and He loved each of us even while we were still sinners and His enemies (Rom. 5:8-10). Those who refuse to trust in God are His enemies; but He is not theirs. In the same way, we are not to be enemies of those who may be enemies to us. From their perspective, we are their enemies; but from our perspective, they should be our neighbors.

In 1567 King Philip II of Spain appointed the Duke of Alba as governor of the lower part of the nation. The Duke was a bitter enemy of the newly-emerging Protestant Reformation. His rule was called the reign of terror, and his council was called the Bloody Council, because it had ordered the slaughter of so many Protestants. It is reported that one man who was sentenced to die for his biblical faith managed to escape during the dead of winter. As he was being pursued by a lone soldier, the man came to a lake whose ice was thin and cracking. Somehow he managed to get safely across the ice, but as soon as he reached the other side he heard his pursuer screaming. The soldier had fallen through the ice and was about to drown. At the risk of being captured, tortured, and eventually killed—or of being drowned himself—the man went back across the lake and rescued his enemy, because the love of Christ constrained him to do it. He knew he had no other choice if he was to be faithful to His Lord (Elon Foster, *New Cyclopedia of Prose Illustrations: Second Series* [New York: T. Y. Crowell, 1877], p. 296).

The Scottish Reformer George Wishart, a contemporary and friend of John Knox, was sentenced to die as a heretic. Because the executioner knew of Wishart's selfless ministering to hundreds of people who were dying of the plague, he hesitated carrying out the sentence. When Wishart saw the expression of remorse on the executioner's face, he went over and kissed him on the cheek, saying, "Sir, may that be a token that I forgive you" (John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs,* ed. W. Grinton Berry [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978], p. 252).

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.

PRAY FOR YOUR PERSECUTORS

and pray for those who persecute you. (5:44*b*)

All men live with some sense of sin and guilt. And guilt produces fear, which in its ultimate form is fear of death and of what is beyond death. In various ways, therefore, most people have devised religious beliefs, rituals, and practices

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); "*Do 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 <u>HEAVENLY FATHER</u> (v. 45)
(The <u>Model</u> of how to treat an enemy)

"So that ye may be the children of your Father" -

*NOTE: the phrase "<u>your</u> <u>Father</u>" shows that the people whom Jesus is addressing already had a <u>relationship</u> 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 <u>not</u> to us attaining a <u>relationship</u> with God by works, but to us attaining a <u>character</u> 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 HIGHER STANDARD Than the WORLD (v. 46-48)
(The Measuring Stick 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:

Their Attitude toward You	Your Attitude toward Them	Your Reward
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.

"Como Tratar a un Enemigo"

Mateo 5:43-48

11 de Octubre de 1992

INTRODUCCION: V. 43

***Debemos de saber como responder a nuestros enemigos.**

Como debo de responder?

I. **Nuestra respuesta debe de ser <u>RADICALMENTE DIFERENTE</u> de como somos tratados. (v. 44)**
(El <u>Metodo</u> de como tratar a un enemigo)

II. **Nuestra respuesta debe de ser como la de <u>NUESTRO PADER CELESTIAL</u> (V. 45)**
(El <u>Modelo</u> de como tratar a un enemigo)

III. **Nuestra respuesta debe de ser de mas <u>ALTO NIVEL</u> que la del <u>Mundo</u> (V. 46-48)**
(La <u>Medida</u> de como tratar a un enemigo)

CONCLUSION:_____

"How to Treat an Enemy"

Matthew 5:43-48
10/11/92

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 our to treat an enemy)

CONCLUSION:

"BE REAL"

(Beware of Fake Religion)
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18
10/18/92

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. <u>Give</u> without hypocrisy (6:1-4)
2. <u>Pray</u> without hypocrisy (6:5-6)

& 3. <u>Fast</u> 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 <u>giving</u> (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 <u>righteousness</u>; 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).

"Let your light so shine before men..."

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 <u>publicly</u> when they could have done it <u>privately</u>, 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 <u>religiosity</u>.

"***No reward***" - Why not? Because God rewards <u>motives</u> 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 (work & deeds) 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

"Some Pitfalls of Public Prayer"
"The Dangers & Pitfalls of Public Group Prayer"

NORTH AMERICAN URBAN MINISTRIES CONFERENCE

PERSONAL NOTES STAN HARRIS
5/14/96

Matthew 6:5-7

I. Those who supposedly lead in Prayer do not Pray

"When you Pray" - not if your pray (He assumes that we will pray)

What do they do?

A. They Preach

Don't preach when you are asked to lead in Prayer.
Luke 20:47 "For a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation."
Don't cover everything from the Teens

B. They Show their ableness in Prayer (spiritual acrobat.

Vain Repetitions = repeated empty words
"Much Speaking" -

C. They try to get an "Amen" from the audience, rather than an "answer" from God.

D. They recite a conglomeration of other peoples prayers

We add fancy phrases we have heard others say; ~~but~~ ~~but~~
"Don't let me say anything I shouldn't say"
"Hide me behind the cross"
"If we have offended you in any way etc."

It has become a show, a badge of Spirituality

God never hears what comes from your lips, He only hears what comes from your heart

Your Church people will pray just like you do.

I. They misguide young Christians & make them think

Mt 23:14 "For a Pretense make long Prayers"

A Young Convert - "Oh that's How we should pray"

II. Those who follow in Prayer don't follow

A. They Day Dream

(In A

B. They encourage a Hypocritical leader to be more Hypocritical with their AMENS

Don't pray for a response from people but from God.

Some people lead in Prayer for 20 minutes & can't or won't pray in Private for 5 minutes.

C. They engage in a multitude of activities

1. Combing Hair 2. Putting Lip Stick on
3 Spanking Children (twisting Arm) 4. Unmarried People touch each other
5. Moving Around 6. Singing Groups getting into Position

Jesus went to a solitary Place.

D. They waste valuable Time that is supposedly Prayer Time Mt. 18:19

III. Prayers that would be answered go unanswered.

Luke 18:10- The Pharisee

He prayed with Himself (Not to God)
He prayed insincerely. (Boasted Hypocritically)
He prayed but didn't Ask for Anything. ex. The Find. Pastor thanks God it

James - "You have not He you ask not, you ask

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!

"SEA REAL"

(Cuidado con las Religiones Falsas)
Mateo 6:1-6, 16-18
18 de Octubre de 1992

INTRODUCCIÓN:

***Sea Real!** Cuidado con las religiones falsas!

Jesús nos advierte de los peligros de ser falsos en 3 actividades espirituales.

I. Cuidado con <u>dar</u> con hipocresía (v. 1-4)

II. Cuidado con <u>orar</u> con hipocresía (v. 5-6)

III. Cuidado con <u>ayunar</u> con hipocresía (v. 16-18)

Conclusión:_____

"BE REAL"

(Beware of Fake Religion)
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18
10/18/92

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)

CONCLUSION:

"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)

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."

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***"

- "Give" - recognizes ownership (God owns everything)
- "us" - reveals unselfishness (my family, my church, my nation, friends)
- "this day" - shows us to rely daily.
- "daily bread" - requests our needs not greeds.

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. → "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread"

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.

"God's eye is on the sparrow"

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. Read Dt. 8: 6-18

*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. 1:9 - 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 → Dependance

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 not 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 no desire to be in a place where even the possibility 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. Ps 1:1

   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"*** -- "the evil" in Greek. A reference to "the evil one" - Satan. Jesus prayed that we would be kept from the 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.

Ps 19:13 - "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright; and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."
* If we would pray this daily we would not see christians -
- Marrying an unsaved person
- getting involved sexually w/ someone other than our spouse
- making a bad decision that could ruin the rest of our lives.

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 <u>PRAISE</u>! (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 <u>Kingdom</u> belongs to God alone
(Man's kingdoms will all end and give way to His kingdom)

--The <u>power</u> (might) belongs to God alone
(Any might, strength, fortitude, ability, etc., that any being [human or angelic] has, has come from the <u>Almighty</u>!)

--The <u>glory</u> (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!

"THE PATTERN FOR PRAYER"



Matthew 6:7-15

INTRODUCTION:

***Let Jesus teach you about prayer.**

I. Don't pray . . . this way (6:5-8)

A. Don't pray to impress _____ (v. 5-6)

B. Don't pray to impress _____ (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 _____ (v. 9-10) [Adoration]

1. God's _____ (His Name)
   (v. 9 - *"Hallowed be Thy Name"*)

2. God's _____ (His Kingdom)
   (v. 10 - *"Thy Kingdom come"*)

3. God's _____ (His will)
   (v. 10b - *"Thy will be done"*)

B. Pray for God to meet our _____ (v. 11-15) [Petition]

1. God's _____
   (Pray about the _____ of our _____)
   "Give us this day our daily bread" (v. 11)

2. God's _____
   (Pray about the _____ of our _____)
   "Forgive us our debts" (v. 12)

3. God's _____
   (Pray about the _____ or our _____)
   "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil"

CONCLUSION: God's _____
("Thine is the Kingdom. . . power. . . glory. . . forever, Amen.") Verse 13b

"THE PATTERN FOR PRAYER"

Matthew 6:7-15
10/25/92

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Follow Christ's model, example, outline, or pattern of prayer:

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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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CONCLUSION: God's Praise ("*Thine is the Kingdom. . . power. . . glory. . . forever, Amen.*") Verse 13b

"El MODELO PARA ORAR"

Mateo 6:7-15

25 de Octubre de 1992

INTRODUCCIÓN:

***Deja que Jesús te enseñe a orar.**

I. No ores...de esta manera (6:5-8)

A. No ores para impresionar al hombre (v. 5-6)

B. No ores para impresionar a DIOS (v. 7-8)

II. Ora de esta manera (6:9-15)
Sigue el modelo, ejemplo, o forma de orar:

A. Ora para que DIOS sea glorificado (v. 9-10) [Adoración]

1. La Pre-eminencia de DIOS (Su Nombre)
(v. 9 - "Santificado sea Tu Nombre")

2. El Programa de DIOS (Su Reino)
(v. 10 - "Venga Tu Reino")

3. El Plan de DIOS (Su Voluntad)
(v. 10b - "Sea hecha Tu Voluntad")

B. Ora para que DIOS satisfaga tus necesidades (v. 11-15) [Petición]

1. La Provisión de DIOS (Ora para las necesidades del presente)
"Danos hoy nuestro pan cotidiano" (v. 11)

2. El Perdón de DIOS (Ora para los fracasos del pasado)
"Perdónanos nuestras deudas" (v. 12)

3. La Protección de DIOS (Ora para los peligros del futuro)
"Y nos metas en tentacion mas libranos del mal" (v. 13a)

CONCLUSIÓN: La Alabación a DIOS
("Porque tuyo es el poder, y la gloria,por todos los siglos Amén")
(v. 13b)

$ TREASURES $??

Matthew 6:19-24

11/7/92

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). Ex. The Ant (Prov. 6)

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.

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 - "*Sell 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??

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)

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)

Thieves

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

LASTS

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."

FOOL

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.

cont'

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."

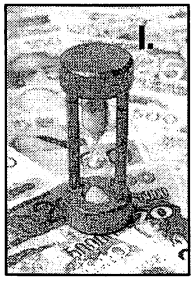
$ TREASURES $??



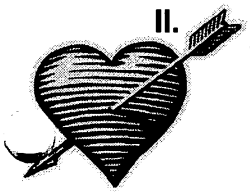
Matthew 6:19-24
11/30/03

INTRODUCTION:

***What treasures do you value?**



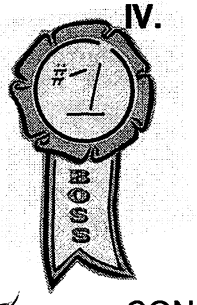
I. The TREASURES You Value Reveal HOW <u>WISE</u> YOU ARE (v. 19-20)



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:

$ TREASURES $??

Matthew 6:19-24

11/7/92

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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:

"DON'T WORRY - BELIEVE!"

MATTHEW 6:25-34

11/22/92

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 phobia	fear of open or public places	
Aichmo phobia	fear of sharp or pointed objects	
Algo phobia	fear of pain	
Anthropo phobia	fear of men or a particular man	
Astra phobia	fear of thunder, lightnings, or storms	
Claustro phobia	fear of closed places	
Erentho phobia	fear of blushing	
Gyne phobia	fear of women or a particular woman	
Hemato phobia	fear of blood	
Hydro phobia	fear of water	
Mono phobia	fear of solitude	
Necro phobia	fear of dead bodies	
Nycto phobia	fear of darkness (night)	
Ochlo phobia	fear of crowds	
Patho phobia	fear of disease or some particular	disease
Pyro phobia	fear of fire	
Thansto phobia	fear of death	
Toxi phobia	fear of poisons (or of being poisoned)	
Zoo phobia	fear 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

Many insecure Teens today

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~~"

"DON'T WORRY - BELIEVE!"

MATTHEW 6:25-34

11/22/92

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 fails to believe that God is in control of things (v. 28-30)**

V. **Worry is characteristic of the unsaved, not the child of God (v. 31-32a)**

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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 <u>say</u> (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, <u>CLEAN UP YOUR OWN ACT</u>

While it is easy to "see" (v. 3) and "say" (v. 4), it is not so easy to <u>do</u>! (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 <u>see clearly</u>***" - 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!

"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:

"OUR FATHER GIVES"

Matthew 7:7-12

12/6/92

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 give 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 "*asketh, seeketh, knocketh*" (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 GOOD (v. 9-11)
(God answers prayer with goodness)

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 they treat us (good for good, evil for evil)

> Note: that Jesus does not say "*Do to others what they do to you*" (cp. Mt. 5:46)
>
> He is not teaching Lex Talionis - "*eye for eye*"k
>
> But rather, "*Do to others what you wish (desire) that they would do to you. "Treat them like you want to be treated*"

--We should not treat people the way they think they should be treated

--We should not treat people the way we think they should be treated

Rather, we should treat people the way we want 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 lost (unsaved what would you want someone to do for you?

Go and do likewise!

If you were lonely, what would you want someone to do for you?

Go and do likewise!

If you were financially struggling, what would you want someone to do for you?

Go and do likewise!

If you were living in a convalescent home, 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."

"OUR FATHER GIVES"

Matthew 7:7-12
12/6/92

INTRODUCTION:

***Pray! Your Father in Heaven gives!**

How does God give?

I. God's Giving is GUARANTEED (v. 7)
(God answers prayer with certainty)

II. God's Giving is GENEROUS (v. 8)
(God answers prayer with impartiality)

III. God's Giving is GOOD (v. 9-11)
(God answers prayer with goodness)

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."

"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:
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"RELIGIOUS DECEPTION"

Matthew 7:13-23
12/13/92

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?

The Lord Jesus warns us to: ***Beware of religious deception!**

(POPULARITY)

I. Don't be deceived by RELIGIOUS ACCEPTANCE (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 "black 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. Don't be deceived by RELIGIOUS APPEARANCE (v. 15-20)

(Pretense)

(The right way bears good fruit)

--Jesus contrasts 2 fruits

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 not 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 inward is what is most important! "*The Lord looketh on the heart*" - 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 inside (v. 15) will evidence (manifest) itself by the fruit that grows on the outside (v. 16-20)

The word "*fruit(s)*" occurs 7 times in vv. 16-20.

"***Ye shall know them***" - i.e. you will recognize them; you will "see right through" the facade.

Fruit does not grow from thorn bushes or thistles.

"***Every 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 fruit***" - morally evil fruit (wicked works)

Warnings to Pastors
and those who would presume to speak for God

Jer.14:14 Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.
15 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed.
16 And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them, them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedness upon them.

Jer.23:16 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD.

21 I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.

25 I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.
26 How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart;
27 Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal.
28 The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD.
29 Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?
30 Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.
31 Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith.
32 Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.

36 And the burden of the LORD shall ye mention no more: for every man's word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the LORD of hosts our God.

Ezek.34:1 ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
2 Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?
3 Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock.

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. Don't 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:

"RELIGIOUS DECEPTION"

Matthew 7:13-23
12/13/92

INTRODUCTION:

Do you have a religion, or righteousness?

The Lord Jesus warns us to: ***Beware of religious deception!**

I. Don't be deceived by <u>RELIGIOUS ACCEPTANCE</u> (v. 13-14) POPULARITY
(The right way is <u>straight</u> and <u>narrow</u>)

--Jesus contrasts <u>2 roads</u>

II. Don't be deceived by <u>RELIGIOUS APPEARANCE</u> (v. 15-20) PRETENSE
(The right way bears <u>good fruit</u>)

--Jesus contrasts <u>2 fruits</u>

III. Don't be deceived by <u>RELIGIOUS PERFORMANCE</u>
(The right way does <u>God's will</u>)

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(The right way does <u>God's will</u>)

--Jesus contrasts <u>2 professions</u>

CONCLUSION:

"BEACH OR BEDROCK: Upon What is Your Life Built?"

Matthew 7:24-29

12/20/92

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.

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

"***Therefore***" - Jesus draws to a conclusion the Sermon on the Mount. He climaxes His teaching in Chapter 5, 6, 7 with a strong appeal to obedience! (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 is foreign to effecting changes in people's lifestyles.

The context indicates that Christ is illustrating the difference between true believers (hear and do) and false believers (hear and do not do).

"The houses represent profession; the foundations represent the basis of their profession. Some build on hypocrisy; others build on the genuine obedience of faith" (Toussaint, Behold the King, 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"

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.

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, 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.*"

"GREAT FAITH"

Matthew 8:1-17
12/27/92

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).

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 Corona, NY! (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,b ut 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)

CONCLUSION:

"GREAT FAITH"

Matthew 8:1-17
12/27/92

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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CONCLUSION:

"THEY JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND"

(The Misunderstood Messiah)
Part I
Matthew 8:18-27
1/3/93

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)

CONCLUSION:

"THEY JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND"

(The Misunderstood Messiah)
Part I
Matthew 8:18-27
1/3/93

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 <u>BENEFITS</u> OF KNOWING HIS <u>POWER</u> (8:28-<u>34</u>)

IV. They didn't understand
THE <u>REALITY</u> OF RECEIVING HIS <u>PARDON</u> (9:1-8)

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 <u>their</u> faith***" The faith of the four men and the faith of the <u>paralytic</u>

"***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!

"***<u>Thy</u> sins***" - His own personal sins (no one but we ourselves can be blamed for our sins)

"***Thy <u>sins</u>***" - 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 <u>except God alone</u> (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:

"ELLOS NO ENTIENDEN"

(El Mesías que fue Malentendido)
1ra Parte
Mateo 8:18-27
3ro de Enero de 1993

INTRODUCCIÓN:

***No malentiendas a Jesús!**

Hay cuatro ejemplos de personas que no entendieron a Jesús, lo que Él vino a hacer, y lo que se necesita para Seguirlo:

I. Ellos no entendieron
LO QUE UNO DEBE DE COMETERSE PARA SEGUIR SUS PASOS (8:18-22)

II. Ellos no entendieron
LA SEGURIDAD AL TENER SU PRESENCIA (8:23-27)

III. Ellos no entendieron
LOS BENEFICIOS AL SABER SU PODER (8:28-34)

IV. Ellos no entendieron
LA REALIDAD DE RECIBIR SU PERDÓN (9:1-8)

CONCLUSIÓN:

"THEY JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND"

(The Misunderstood Messiah)
Part II
Matthew 8:18-27
1/3/93

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)

CONCLUSION:

Jesus, A Friend of Sinners

Matthew 9:9-13
1/17/93

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 spiritual 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 not to:

a. Merely gain friends

A true friend will tell the most important news he has ever heard - the gospel.

b. Become a social worker

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 eternal needs of their souls.

Some might thing, "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 loving motive we could ever have.

D. **A merciful attitude** - "I will have mercy" (v. 13a)

"Mercy" - is to extend to others the same treatment God showed to you. Showing mercy requires humility and love.

Humility - "I am no better than you." You will never lead anyone to Christ if you preach down to them with a "holier than thou" attitude.

Love - "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"

Jesus, A Friend of Sinners

Matthew 9:9-13
1/17/93

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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"THE MIS-MATCH"

(Man's Ways and Christ's Ways Don't Match!)

Matthew 9:14-17

1/31/93

INTRODUCTION: V. 14

Examples of mis-matches (things that are not suited for each other) - oil & water
- mis-matched socks
- stripes w/ Plaid

(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 incompatible for Christ to be a part of man-made, legalistic, religious tradition (v. 16-17)

A. Don't patch 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 *cloth* 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 pour 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 *wineskins* 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 new!*"

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 not 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 new or old wine, depending on the context. It is most consistent that Jesus created new 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 Scriptural teaching (Prov. 20:1 - "*Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.*"

2) It is addictive and destructive (Prov. 23:29-35)

3) It is symbolic of worldliness (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 wiser 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 MIS-MATCH"

(Man's Ways and Christ's Ways Don't Match!)

Matthew 9:14-17

1/31/93

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 inconsistent for Christ to be present & His children to live lives of misery. (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)
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CONCLUSION:

"THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND"

Matthew 9:18-35

2/7/93

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, still touches lives today! And those He touches, He transforms!

POEM: (the violin story) "*The Touch of the Master's Hand*"

"THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND"

Matthew 9:18-35

2/7/93

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)

CONCLUSION:

"THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND"

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2/7/93

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V. Jesus touched the lives of the <u>HOPELESS</u>
(v. 35, cp. v. 36)

CONCLUSION:

Master of all things. He said, *"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."* (Matthew 28:18)

A new life, a better life, a more meaningful life can be yours if you will surrender your life to Him. *"All things work together for good to them that love God."* (Romans 8:28) Jesus said, *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."* (John 10:10)

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. (Acts 16:31)



'Twas battered and scarred,
and the auctioneer
Thought it scarcely
worth his while
To waste much time on the old

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violin,

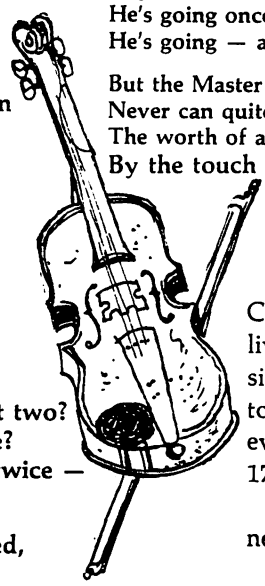


But held it up with a smile.
"What am I bid, good folks?" he cried.
"Who'll start the bidding for me?
A dollar, a dollar — now two, only two —
Two dollars, and who'll make it three?"

"Three dollars once, three dollars twice,
Going for three"
— but no!
From the room far back a gray-haired man
Came forward and picked up the bow;
Then wiping the dust from the old violin,
And tightening up all the strings,
He played a melody pure and sweet,
As sweet as an angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,
With a voice that was quiet and low,
Said: "What am I bid for the old violin?"
And he held it up with the bow.
"A thousand dollars — and who'll make it two?
Two thousand — and who'll make it three?
Three thousand once and three thousand twice —
And going and gone!" said he.

The people cheered, but some of them cried,
"We do not quite understand.
What changed its worth?" The man replied:



And many a man with life out of tune,
And battered and torn with sin,
Is auctioned cheap to a thoughtless crowd,
Much like the old violin.
A "mess of pottage," a glass of wine,
A game — and he travels on,
He's going once, and going twice,
He's going — and almost gone!

But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd
Never can quite understand
The worth of a soul and the change that's wrought
By the touch of the Master's hand.

— Myra Brooks Welch

The Master, of course, is Jesus Christ. The Bible tells of the many lives He changed. He healed the sick (Luke 5:17-26); He gave sight to the blind (Mark 8:22-26); He even raised the dead (Luke 7:11-17; John 11:1-44).

He has the power to give you a new and better life. He is still the

The Touch Of The Master's Hand

"A HEART FOR THE MULTITUDES"

("The Harvest is Plenteous")

Matthew 9:35-38
2/14/93

INTRODUCTION: V. 35

Today is Valentine's Day, but 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 <u>Reasons</u> for Christ's Compassion (v. 36b) ("*because they fainted, and were scattered abroad*")

A. He saw <u>hopeless</u> people with no <u>strength</u> ("*fainted*")

"***Fainted***" = to be spiritually weary.

*People are weary of <u>religion</u>.

Israel as a people were harassed and bewildered by those who should have taught them (SEE Ezek. 34:1ff)

*People are weary of <u>sin</u> and its effects. (cp. Heb. 12:3)

IV. The endless line

A. The world population in 1981 was 4½ billion.[3]

B. By counting 500 souls an hour, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every week of the year, it would take over 1,030 years to count all the people now alive in the world.

C. If all of the world would line up single file with 12" of standing room each, the line would be over 852,273 miles long. Enough to reach from here to the moon and back almost 2 times.

1. The distance from the earth to the moon is 238,857 miles.[18]
2. There are 5,280 feet in a mile.[19]

D. Standing shoulder to shoulder on the equator with 12" of standing room each they would circle the globe more than 34 times.

1. The equator is an imaginary great circle on the earth's surface, everywhere equally distant from the two poles, dividing the earth's surface into the Northern and Southern Hemisphere.[20]
2. The equatorial circumference of the earth is 24,901.55 miles.[21]

E. The magnitude of a billion

1. Illustrated by time
   a. If you had a million seconds it would be 12 Days.
   b. If you had a billion seconds it would be 32 Years.
2. If each soldier carried a 50 pound pack of dollar bills, it would take 42,500 men to carry a billion dollars.[22]
3. If you covered a sidewalk 8½ ft. wide with dollar bills, it would make a sidewalk 2,442 miles long, or from Washington, D.C. to San Francisco, California.[22]

V. Other Issues

A. Literacy

1. There are an estimated 23 million functional illiterates in the U.S.[23] can't read or write 1 out of 10
2. There are 100 million new readers every year.[24]

B. Malnutrition: 1 billion people suffer from chronic malnutrition.[25]

C. Children: At least 1½ billion of the world's more than four billion people are children under the age of 10.[26]

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*" - v. 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 at the time of Christ (this equals the present population of the USA alone, which is presently 248 million in 1993, but expected to go up to 274 million by 2,000).

By 1650 - 500 million
By 1800 - 1 billion
By 1930 - 2 billion
By 1960 - 3 billion
By 1975 - 4 billion
By 1981 - 4 1/2 billion
By 1991 - 5 1/2 billion
(actually 5,422,908,000)
By 2000 - 6 1/4 - 6 1/2 billion

Today we have 22 times as many people to reach as when Christ said that the harvest was plenteous! (cp. Lk. 10:2)

Approximately 100 million souls are added to the world's population every year.

New York state alone has 18,044,505 people, as of 1990 statistics

(For information contact the NY Census Bureau - 212/264-4730)

In 1800 - 3% of the world lived in cities

In 1900 - 13% of the world lived in cities

In 2000 - 87% of the world will live in cities

Big cities like Mexico City, Yokohama Tokyo; Saopaulo, Brazil; Calcutta, Indian; and the New York Metropolitan area need the Gospel!

You who live in NYC are in one of the biggest mission fields in the world!

Approximately 150,000 people die every day in our world. 15 people every 10 seconds go into eternity.

Almost 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 <u>sent</u>* (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 the FBI's Personal Evangelism Course!

(No one in FBC will be able to offer God the excuse, "I didn't know how to witness" - because you had the opportunity to learn.)

No weeping = no reaping (Psalm 126:6)

Compassion is the key to pulling men out of the fire (Jude 22-23).

--"Compassion making a difference" - lit. have compassion (pity) on those who are wavering or doubting.

SEE: Luke 19:41ff

Is there no cause to weep?

The Soul Winner's Prayer

Lord, give to me Thy love for souls,
For lost and wand'ring sheep,
That I may see the multitudes
And weep as Thou didst weep.

Help me to see the tragic plight
Of souls far off in sin:
Help me to love, to pray, to go
To bring the wand'ring in.

From off the altar of Thy heart
Take Thou some flaming coals,
Then touch my life and give me, Lord,
A heart that's hot for souls.

O Fire of Love, O Flame Divine,
Make Thy abode in me;
Burn in my heart, burn evermore,
Till I burn out for Thee.

Eugene M. Harrison

If we want an increase of Christ, there must first be a decrease of self.

"A HEART FOR THE MULTITUDES"

("The Harvest is Plenteous")
Matthew 9:35-38
2/14/93

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A. He saw hopeless people with no strength
("fainted")

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A. He shared His burden (v. 37)

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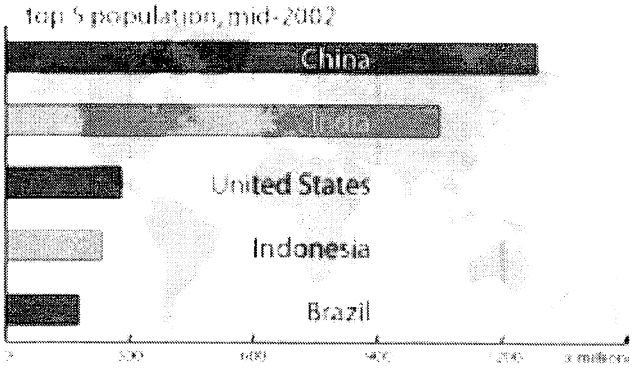
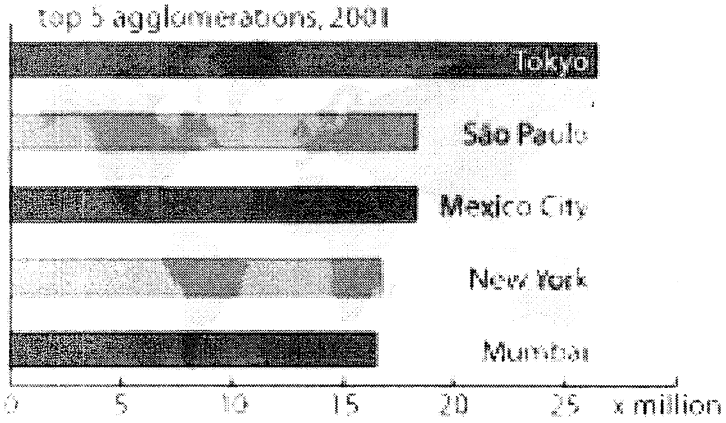
CONCLUSION:

Monthly World population figures:

07/01/03	6,302,486,693
08/01/03	6,308,703,241
09/01/03	6,314,919,789
10/01/03	6,320,935,803
11/01/03	6,327,152,352
12/01/03	6,333,168,366
01/01/04	6,339,384,914
02/01/04	6,345,601,463
03/01/04	6,351,416,943
04/01/04	6,357,633,491
05/01/04	6,363,649,506
06/01/04	6,369,866,054
07/01/04	6,375,882,069





World Vital Events Per Time Unit: 2004

(Figures may not add to totals due to rounding)

Time unit	Births	Deaths	Natural increase
Year	128,970,393	56,202,306	72,768,087
Month	10,747,533	4,683,526	6,064,007
Day	352,378	153,558	198,820
Hour	14,682	6,398	8,284
Minute	245	107	138
Second	4.1	1.8	2.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, International Data Base

Total Midyear Population for the World: 1950-2050

Year	Population	Average annual growth rate (%)	Average annual population change
1950	2,555,360,972	1.47	37,785,986
1951	2,593,146,958	1.61	42,060,389
1952	2,635,207,347	1.71	45,337,232
1953	2,680,544,579	1.77	47,971,823
1954	2,728,516,402	1.87	51,451,629
1955	2,779,968,031	1.89	52,959,308
1956	2,832,927,339	1.95	55,827,050
1957	2,888,754,389	1.94	56,506,563
1958	2,945,260,952	1.76	52,335,100
1959	2,997,596,052	1.39	42,073,278
1960	3,039,669,330	1.33	40,792,172
1961	3,080,461,502	1.80	56,094,590
1962	3,136,556,092	2.19	69,516,194
1963	3,206,072,286	2.19	71,119,813
1964	3,277,192,099	2.08	69,031,982
1965	3,346,224,081	2.08	70,238,858
1966	3,416,462,939	2.02	69,755,364
1967	3,486,218,303	2.04	71,882,406
1968	3,558,100,709	2.08	74,679,905
1969	3,632,780,614	2.05	75,286,491
1970	3,708,067,105	2.07	77,587,001
1971	3,785,654,106	2.01	76,694,660
1972	3,862,348,766	1.95	76,183,283
1973	3,938,532,049	1.90	75,547,134
1974	4,014,079,183	1.81	73,265,577
1975	4,087,344,760	1.74	71,797,582
1976	4,159,142,342	1.72	72,213,985
1977	4,231,356,327	1.69	72,172,286
1978	4,303,528,613	1.73	75,085,409
1979	4,378,614,022	1.71	75,655,181
1980	4,454,269,203	1.69	75,864,564

1981	4,530,133,767	1.75	80,105,008
1982	4,610,238,775	1.73	80,253,764
1983	4,690,492,539	1.68	79,312,007
1984	4,769,804,546	1.68	80,596,505
1985	4,850,401,051	1.68	82,324,417
1986	4,932,725,468	1.71	85,142,812
1987	5,017,868,280	1.69	85,667,332
1988	5,103,535,612	1.66	85,671,996
1989	5,189,207,608	1.66	86,677,681
1990	5,275,885,289	1.58	83,940,351
1991	5,359,825,640	1.55	83,939,711
1992	5,443,765,351	1.48	81,404,054
1993	5,525,169,405	1.44	80,191,434
1994	5,605,360,839	1.43	80,626,257
1995	5,685,987,096	1.38	79,173,661
1996	5,765,160,757	1.37	79,745,131
1997	5,844,905,888	1.34	78,784,175
1998	5,923,690,063	1.31	78,308,546
1999	6,001,998,609	1.27	77,008,373
2000	6,079,006,982	1.23	75,318,861
2001	6,154,325,843	1.20	74,315,460
2002	6,228,641,303	1.18	73,845,390
2003	6,302,486,693	1.16	73,395,376
2004	6,375,882,069	1.14	72,898,133
2005	6,448,780,202	1.12	72,714,711
2006	6,521,494,913	1.11	72,772,754
2007	6,594,267,667	1.10	72,776,911
2008	6,667,044,578	1.08	72,703,236
2009	6,739,747,814	1.07	72,485,099
2010	6,812,232,913	1.06	72,447,829
2011	6,884,680,742	1.05	72,509,964
2012	6,957,190,706	1.03	72,261,423
2013	7,029,452,129	1.02	71,803,520
2014	7,101,255,649	1.00	71,144,072
2015	7,172,399,721	0.98	70,443,548
2016	7,242,843,269	0.96	69,755,219
2017	7,312,598,488	0.94	68,928,253

2018	7,381,526,741	0.92	67,997,557
2019	7,449,524,298	0.89	66,966,195
2020	7,516,490,493	0.87	65,973,432
2021	7,582,463,925	0.85	65,024,404
2022	7,647,488,329	0.83	63,958,545
2023	7,711,446,874	0.81	62,831,316
2024	7,774,278,190	0.79	61,670,133
2025	7,835,948,323	0.77	60,634,107
2026	7,896,582,430	0.75	59,738,215
2027	7,956,320,645	0.74	58,800,509
2028	8,015,121,154	0.72	57,842,466
2029	8,072,963,620	0.70	56,862,516
2030	8,129,826,136	0.69	55,988,383
2031	8,185,814,519	0.67	55,209,498
2032	8,241,024,017	0.66	54,325,204
2033	8,295,349,221	0.64	53,388,484
2034	8,348,737,705	0.63	52,432,568
2035	8,401,170,273	0.61	51,582,599
2036	8,452,752,872	0.60	50,825,199
2037	8,503,578,071	0.59	49,945,328
2038	8,553,523,399	0.57	49,018,566
2039	8,602,541,965	0.56	48,111,036
2040	8,650,653,001	0.55	47,314,021
2041	8,697,967,022	0.53	46,592,583
2042	8,744,559,605	0.52	45,712,304
2043	8,790,271,909	0.51	44,766,065
2044	8,835,037,974	0.50	43,861,193
2045	8,878,899,167	0.48	43,037,087
2046	8,921,936,254	0.47	42,237,824
2047	8,964,174,078	0.46	41,228,872
2048	9,005,402,950	0.44	40,089,886
2049	9,045,492,836	0.43	39,002,569
2050	9,084,495,405		

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, International Data Base. Note: Data updated 7-17-2003 (Release notes).

" The Harvest is Plenteous "

("A HEART FOR THE MULTITUDES ")
Matthew 9:35-38
1/18/04



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)

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("Then saith He. . . the harvest truly is plenteous. . . pray ye")

A. He shared His burden (v. 37)

B. He urged for prayer (v. 38)

CONCLUSION:

harvest

"UN CORAZÓN PARA LAS MULTITUDES"
("La Mies es mucha")
Mateo 9:35-38
14 de Febrero de 1993

INTRODUCCIÓN: V. 35

*Cristo tenía compasión por los que estaban perdidos.
(El sintió sus angustias, a El le importó, y El quiere que a tí te importe)

I. La Ocasión para la compasión de Cristo (v. 36a)
("Y al ver las multitudes")

A. El vió las necesidades de la gente

B. El vió la necesidad de laboradores (v. 37-38)

II. La Razón para la Compasión de Cristo (v. 36b)

A. El vió gente sin esperanza sin fuerza
("estaban desamparadas")

B. El vió gente que necesitaban ayuda que no tenían protección
("y dispersas")

III. La Respuesta de la Compasión de Cristo (v. 37-38)
("Entonces dijo a sus discípulos..la mies es mucha..rogad pues")

A. El compartió Su trabajo (v. 37)

B. El rogó para que oraran. (v. 38)

CONCLUSIÓN:

"A HEART FOR THE MULTITUDES"

("The Harvest is Plenteous")
Matthew 9:35-38
2/14/93

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CONCLUSION:

"THE DISCIPLES' COMMISSION"

Matthew 10:1-17

2/28/93

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.

"***He 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. 18:101-11)
2) **Obedient Andrew**
3) **Ordinary James**
4) **Tender-hearted, loyal John**
5) **Inquisitive Philip** (a "show me" attitude - Jn. 14:6-8)
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 <u>sincere</u> burden (v. 1)
- a <u>great</u> burden (v. 2a)
- a <u>continual</u> burden (v. 2b)
- a <u>compassionate</u> burden (v. 3-5)

Peter acknowledged that the Gospel was to go to the Jew first (see: Acts 3:24-<u>26</u>).

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 <u>no excuse</u> 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*")

There is no greater place for Americans to reach Jews for Jesus than in NYC!

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:

"THE DISCIPLES' COMMISSION"

Matthew 10:1-17

2/28/93

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)

CONCLUSION:





MEMORANDUM

From: **The Prince of Darkness**
To: *Demons on duty to sabotage those bigmouthed evangelists*

Fellow Former-Angels:

One of our best weapons could be destroyed. I command and demand that you intensify your efforts to disseminate "our kind of knowledge" with the brilliantly infernal idea that **Jesus is not for Jews.**

Some humans will say that's a lie, but if we keep repeating it softly and ever more sweetly, sooner or later they'll believe it.... You must understand the strategic importance of keeping those pesky Jews away from Jesus. It accomplishes diabolical objectives too numerous and complex for demons of your rank to fully comprehend, but the following is all that's necessary for you to know....

I hate humans, and I have an especially exquisite hatred for those despicable Jews. I hate how God has protected Jews throughout the ages—I hate them for existing as proof of His stupid, weak mercy and His ugly grace. And if you know what's what, you'll hate them, too. The very fact that the Enemy chose these people as His special emissaries is our signal to attack and keep on attacking them—make every single one of them suffer, like we did with Job.

Further, I want to humiliate the Enemy by defeating His ridiculous plans for these people. Let's taunt Him with the fact that they're not even interested in His offer of spineless salvation for themselves, much less in bringing it to the rest of humanity. That oughtta get Him where it hurts.

Plan "A" was a frontal assault. We almost had complete success with Pharaoh and Haman, but we really took our best shot with that Hitler fellow. It's true that Adolf let us down by not completely wiping out the Jews, but I don't think it was his fault. We couldn't give him more steam to power his Nazi machine when he needed it the most. The Enemy seems to have some kind of supernatural force field around Jews. Just when it seems like He's not going to meddle, He prevents us from total victory and the final solution. There's not much we can do about it, but we can keep this Hitler thing working for us in plan "B."

Our propaganda forces have already done a terrific job of convincing the Jews that there's some connection between Jesus and the Holocaust. It sounds incredible, but they don't know enough about Jesus to realize He never would have condoned the kind of Jew-hate we love to incite. Some of them haven't figured out that the Enemy chose to send His Son to earth as a Jew! No human

TURN OVER

likes to admit it's wrong, so Jews are happy to go on believing Jesus isn't the Messiah. Clouding the whole issue with the Holocaust was my stroke of genius. It helps the Jews view anything having to do with Jesus with fear and suspicion.

Some of our more creative boys have taken this a brilliant step further. They've succeeded in making Christians feel guilty for the Holocaust. Oh, it sends shivers of delight up my spine to think of it! You see, humans are starting to see the ugliness of prejudice. They like to think that somehow they're better than that, so now they're looking for ways to soothe each other's feelings and show how open-minded they are. This means we've got a wonderful new breed of Christians who actually think they are doing the Jews a favor by not telling them about Jesus! Pardon me while I laugh for a while, enjoying "our kind of truth."

But wait, it gets better. We even have some influential pastors who are admonishing hundreds and thousands of the Enemy's own people to keep silent about Jesus! They not only preach that the Jews don't need Jesus, they pass along the "suggestion" we planted: that telling Jews about Christ is insensitive and "unchristian"...and the best part is, those Christians think it's all their own idea! I love it! I love it! Most Christians don't want to face the rejection and hostility that telling about Jesus often brings. It suits them just fine to believe that telling Jews about Jesus is insensitive and disrespectful. *Let* them be nice to the Jews, let them respect the Jews—so long as they're respecting them straight to Hell! That's the very best kind of Holocaust—a sacrifice offered to me!

Once we convince everyone that Jesus is not for Jews, we'll easily do away with evangelism altogether. After all, if Jesus is not for the Jews, then He is for nobody. But first we have to take care of the Jews. After that, it won't take much to persuade all those church-going people to "respect" Buddhists and Muslims. Soon it'll be considered narrow-minded and archaic to bother *anyone* about Jesus and the Christians will be left preaching only to themselves. They'll be about as useful to the Enemy as an ingrown toenail!

In "light" of all this, I want you to bust your burnt bottoms making sure every human in your sphere of influence swallows the line that Jesus is not for Jews. Sugarcoat it any way you have to, but remember, this directive comes straight from the bottom. Don't disappoint me—or else!



His Infernal Majesty

"THE DISCIPLES' COMMISSION"

Matthew 10:1-17

2/28/93

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V. Use Discretion When Ministering to People (v. 16)

VI. Expect Opposition (v. 17)

CONCLUSION:

"PERSECUTION IN THE LAST DAYS"

(How to Handle Unjust Opposition)
Matthew 10:16-25
3/7/93

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 Troubled Society** (v. 1)
   "*Perilous times*" = grievous times

2. **Selfishness** (v. 2)
   a. "*Lovers of their own selves*" = self-lovers; humanism
   b. "*Covetous*" = money lovers

3. **Arrogance** (v. 2)
   a. "*Boasters*" - to brag about self-superiority
   b. "*Proud*" - haughty; to look down on others

4. **Blasphemy** (v. 2)
   Abusive speech toward Jesus Christ (Ex: rebels, liberal theologians, and cults)

5. **Disregard for Authority** (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. **Without Natural Affection** (astorgoi)
   Modern examples:
   --No family loyalty
   --Divorce
   --Abortion

7. **Liars**
   a. "*Trucebreakers* - refuse to be bound by agreements
   b. "*False accusers*" - devilish slander

8. **Wild, Rowdy, and Lawless**
   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. **Inconsiderate**
   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. **Egocentric**
   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

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!**

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)

"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 <u>for</u> Christ (in His favor) or <u>against</u> 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.

II. So that His POWER would enable them in times of weakness (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.

III. So that His FELLOWSHIP (closeness) would sustain them in times of betrayal (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).

IV. So that His <u>DELIVERANCE</u> would reward them at the time of the end (v. 22b)

"He that endureth" - he who "<u>remains</u> faithful <u>under</u>" 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: <u>not giving up</u> the faith which has been once and for all given to the saints, and <u>not giving in</u> 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.

V. So that His GUIDANCE would re-direct them in times of witnessing (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 8:1-4).

"***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.*"

VI. So that His EXAMPLE would encourage them in times of unjust treatment (v. 24-25)

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 be used in another location (v. 23)

6. Accept it - if they persecuted Jesus, they will persecute you! (v. 24-26)

"PERSECUTION IN THE LAST DAYS"

(How to Handle Unjust Opposition)
Matthew 10:16-25
3/7/93

INTRODUCTION: V. 16-17

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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)**

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VI. So that His <u>EXAMPLE</u> would encourage them in times of unjust treatment (v. 24-25)

CONCLUSION:

tion to move—forward into the Mexican interior to meet whatever might come their way.

As part of our commitment as Christ's disciples, we must purposefully destroy all avenues of retreat. We must resolve that whatever price is required for being his follower, we will pay it.[212]

In the 1976 Summer Olympics, Shun Fujimoto competed in the team gymnastics competition for Japan. In a quest for the gold medal, Fujimoto suffered a broken right knee in the floor exercise. But his injury did not stop him, for during the next week he competed in his strongest event, the rings. His routine was excellent, but he astounded everyone by squarely dismounting with a triple somersault twist on a broken right knee. When asked concerning his feat, he said, "Yes, the pain shot through me like a knife. It brought tears to my eyes. But now I have a gold medal and the pain is gone."[213]

Henry Thoreau, that rugged New England individualist of the nineteenth century, once went to jail rather than pay his poll tax to a state that supported slavery. Thoreau's good friend Ralph Waldo Emerson hurried to visit him in jail and, peering through the bars, exclaimed: "Why, Henry, what are you doing in there?"

The uncowed Thoreau replied, "Nay, Ralph, the question is, what are you doing out there?"[214]

The story is told that when James Calvert went out as a missionary to the cannibals of the Fiji Islands, the captain of the ship that had carried him there sought to turn him back by saying, "You will lose your life and the lives of those with you if you go among such savages." Calvert's reply well demonstrates the cost of commitment: "We died before we came here."[215]

A mission society is reported to have written to David Livingstone: "Have you found a good road to where you are? If so, we want to send other men to join you." Livingstone replied: "If you have men who will come only if they know there is a good road, I don't want them. I want men who will come if there is no road at all."[216]

Robert Chapman of Barnstaple, a great friend of the late George Muller of Bristol, was once asked, "Would you not advise young Christians to do something for the Lord?" "No," was the reply, "I should advise them to do everything for the Lord."[217]

Commitment, Communist

"If you ask me what is the distinguishing mark of the Communist, what is it that Communists most outstandingly have in common, I would not say, as some might expect, their ability to hate . . . , I would say beyond any shadow of doubt it is their idealism, their zeal, dedication, devotion to their cause and willingness to sacrifice" (Douglas Hyde, former head of the Communist Party of Great Britain, before his conversion to Catholicism).[218]

Commitment, Cost of

A hen and a pig approached a church and read the advertised sermon topic: "What can we do to help the poor?" Immediately the hen suggested they feed them bacon and eggs. The pig thought for a moment and said, "There is only one thing wrong with feeding bacon and eggs to the poor. For you it requires only a contribution, but for me it requires total commitment!"[219]

An elderly Christian man in Communist-controlled Budapest remarked when asked about the effects of persecution and discrimination on the lives of Christians: "It is like the deep, fast-flowing Danube River. The banks of the river were artificially narrowed throughout the city of Budapest. As a result the river's fast waters dug deeper and deeper into the river bottom."

Believers under restrictions and persecution have limited freedom and few political options, but their narrowed lives have found great depth by going deeper in Christ.[220]

Committees

A secretary burst into the office of a Detroit executive on May 21, 1927, and cried, "Mr. Murphy, a man has just flown from New York to Paris all by himself." When her employer continued to work calmly,

The Father's work in our lives is to find a branch that is beginning to bear fruit, beginning to produce the likeness of Christ, and then to cut it back. He trims off the troublesome shoots, so that we may bear more fruit.[1539]

John 19:30

Michelangelo was a genius. He excelled as a sculptor, designer, painter, and architect. His statues of Moses and David, to name but a few, are widely recognized and appreciated. What many people do not know is that in Florence, Italy, an entire hall is filled with his "unfinished" sculptural works. As great as this artist was, he left much unfinished.

Jesus Christ left no unfinished works.[1540]

Acts 8:1

Acts 8:1 represents an important principle of thermodynamics: "The greater the heat, the greater the expansion."[1541]

Acts 19:2

The story has been told of a group of colonists who left Virginia in the late 1700s and started across the mountains to the land that lay far to the west. As the story goes, they were forced to interrupt their journey for some reason, perhaps fear of Indians, or the death of a horse, or the breakdown of a wagon. For whatever reason, they spent twenty years in the mountains, during which time they saw no other white men.

Finally, another group of travelers made its way through the region and came upon these isolated settlers. Naturally, there was much conversation about the outside world. The travelers asked the mountaineers what they thought about "the Republic" and the policies of "Congress."

The isolated ones answered, "We have not heard anything of a Congress or a Republic." Then they went on to explain that they thought of themselves as loyal subjects of the British king. When told all about the nation's independence and how it came about, they entered into an understanding of their new status, and became "American citizens" in that hour by *knowledge*, as they had been for some time in *fact*.

Even many Christians, as in Paul's day in Ephesus, are not fully knowledgeable about the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:2).[1542]

Romans 6:6

How can sin be rendered powerless, as Paul says in Romans 6:6? Consider the effect of gravity on a book. Gravity would cause an unsupported book to fall, but gravity can be rendered "powerless" against the book by simply placing a table under it. As long as the table is under the book, gravity cannot cause it to fall. Of course gravity has not really lost its power nor is it no longer present. It is just that the table is "stronger" than gravity's effect on the book.

For the Christian, the Holy Spirit is like that table and our sin nature is like gravity's pull. As long as we allow the Holy Spirit to hold us up, which places our dependence on his power to give us victory over sin, our sinful impulses have no power to pull us down.[1543]

Romans 6:12–14

A little girl was learning to ride a bicycle. She did quite well until it was time to stop. The only way she could ever stop was by running into something. She was constantly picking herself out of bushes and off the sidewalk. The problem was that although she knew that the bike had a coaster brake, she wasn't using it.

The question implied in Romans 6:12–14 is: What good is it to be set free from sin by Jesus Christ and have every opportunity of walking in holiness and righteousness if—at the moment of choice—we ignore these things and go right on letting sin rule us?[1544]

Romans 6:16

Well before Paul was born, there had been a Roman law stating that no freeborn man could be enslaved. Therefore, a man could literally sell himself into slavery, collect the proceeds, then have a friend come and attest to his status as a freeborn man, and he would have to be released at once. This caused havoc with the Roman economy, which was well oiled by its slave labor. Therefore, just before Paul's day, a new law was enacted whereby any man who sold himself into slavery could no longer claim free status later. The law could no longer help him. It was therefore clear to Paul's readers in Rome that "to whom you present yourselves as slaves for obedience, his slave you are." (From *Tyndale Bulletin* 32 (1981):87.)[1545]

What was a poor, harassed Roman Governor, with all the powers of life and death, torture and the stake at his disposal, to do with people like that?

—Selected

4314 Eusebius: "Nothing To Lose"

When the Emperor Valens sent messengers to lure Eusebius into heresy by fair words and glowing promises, the saint answered them: "Alas, sirs, these speeches are fit to catch children; but we, who are taught and nourished by the Sacred Scriptures, are ready to suffer a thousand deaths, rather than permit one tittle of the Scriptures to be altered."

Then the emperor threatened to take by force all his goods, to torture him, banish him, and even kill him. Answered the courageous Christian:

"He needs not fear confiscation, who has nothing to lose; nor banishment, to whom heaven is his country; nor torments, when his body can be destroyed at one blow; nor death, which is the only way to set him at liberty from sin and sorrow."

—Tonne

4315 Nero And Bible Characters

Curiously, a number of men on Nero's inside circle were related to characters mentioned in the New Testament. Seneca—Nero's tutor, advisor, and speech writer—was the younger brother of Gallio, who found Paul "not guilty of wrong or wicked lewdness." Pallas, one of the real rulers of the Empire, was brother of Felix, the Governor of Judea, before whom Paul pled his case. And Vitellius, the senator who arranged with the Senate to legalize the marriage between Agrippina and Claudius, was a former governor of Syria. Indeed, he dismissed Pontius Pilate!

—Charles Ludwig

4316 Carnage Went On

Millions of Christians were put to death in the Dark Ages by Rome in her effort to keep unity. In Spain alone between 300,000 and 400,000 died in the Spanish Inquisition.

4317 "Nevertheless"

The old Reformed churches of Europe, and some of their successors in this country, with scriptural and historical appropriateness chose for their motto a phrase referring to the burning bush—"Nevertheless, it was not consumed" (Exod. 3:2). That is the sentence with which you must conclude every chapter of the history of the church. After every fire of false teaching, of schism, of persecution, of corruption and apostasy, that is the record: "Nevertheless, it was not consumed."

—C. E. Macartney

4318 Wearing Out The Hammers

The French reformer, Theodore Beza, made a famous retort to King Henry of Navarre. "Sire, it is truly the lot of the Church of God, for which I speak, to endure blows and not to strike them. But may it please you to remember that it is an anvil which has worn out many hammers."

—Selected

4319 Primer Still There

One of the most blood-thirsty leaders in the French Revolution was a ferocious character by the name of Carrier. He was largely responsible for the horrifying drowning at Nantes. One day he told a peasant of Brittany, the district noted for its strong faith:

"We are going to tear down your belfries and churches." "That could be," replied the Breton, "but you will have to leave the stars, and while that primer is left, we shall teach our children to spell from it the name of God."

4320 Wesley's Expectation Of Persecution

John Wesley was riding along a road one day when it dawned on him that three whole days had passed in which he had suffered no persecution. Not a brick or an egg had been thrown at him for three days.

Alarmed, he stopped his horse, and exclaimed, "Can it be that I have sinned, and am backslidden?"

Slipping from his horse, Wesley went down on his knees and began interceding with God to show him where, if any, there had been a fault.

A rough fellow, on the other side of the hedge, hearing the prayer, looked across and recognized the preacher. "I'll fix that Methodist preacher," he said, picking up a brick and tossing it over at him. It missed its mark, and fell harmlessly beside John. Whereupon Wesley leaped to his feet joyfully exclaiming, "Thank God, it's all right. I still have His presence."

—J. G. Morrison

4321 Like Being Whipped With Roses

In 1651 in Massachusetts, Rev. Obadiah Holmes, because he held a prayer meeting in his home, was ordered to be whipped by Governor Endicot. So severe was the whipping that for days he could lie only by resting on the tips of his elbows and his knees and yet when the last lash had fallen, he looked at his tormentors and through bloodstained lips cried, "Gentlemen, you have whipped me with roses!"

4322 Stalin's Religious Strategy

Only once did Stalin ever relax his unrelenting opposition to Christianity, and then only when circumstances forced him to do so.

When Hitler invaded Russia on June 22, 1941, he already had trained Orthodox priests standing ready to take over and operate the churches throughout the newly acquired territory. In addition, he broadcast in the Russian language that religion would soon be completely free throughout the Soviet Union. What a caricature of the truth: Adolf Hitler, Liberator of Religion! At this moment 1,300 German pastors were behind bars in his own Reich.

When Stalin learned that his people were going over to the enemy, he became frightened and began to give a larger measure of freedom to the Russian churches. He sent his emissaries into the Russian mines, internment camps, and the frozen reaches of Siberia to ferret out almost-forgotten Orthodox priests and bring them back to newly opened churches. It might have fared well with Stalin and his government had not the Metropolitan Nikolai come forward and urged the Russian people to rally to the motherland's defense and rout Nazi invaders.

—*Christianity Today*

4323 Modern Day Agony

Christians in modern-day Chad, Africa, were being persecuted for refusing to participate in old tribal initiation rites they say are pagan. Reliable sources reported the torture deaths of pastors, evangelists, and other church leaders who declined to commit acts counter to their faith: drinking chicken blood offered to idols, handling fetishes, and the like. The accounts told of persons buried alive with just part of a leg left above ground or—for slower death—with only the head exposed, a terrifying warning to others who resist.

The persecution originated when President Francois N'garta Tombalbaye launched a cultural revolution assertedly to rid the nation and its four million inhabitants of unwanted foreign influences and to establish an identity with the country's past. But church leaders reportedly met and agreed to oppose the rites, and some church groups say they would not readmit members who take part. The evangelical churches in Chad

arranged to hold a conference to decide the matter. The rhinoceros said that the use of teeth in war was barbarous and horrible, and ought strictly to be prohibited by general consent. Horns, which were mainly defensive weapons, would, of course, have to be tolerated. The buffalo, stag, and porcupine said they would vote with the rhino; but the lion and the tiger took a different view. They defended teeth, and even claws, as honourable weapons.

Then the bear spoke. He proposed that both teeth and horns should be banned. It would be quite enough if animals would be allowed to give each other a good hug when they quarreled. No one could object to that. It was so fraternal, and would be a great step toward peace. However, all the other animals were offended with the bear, and they fell into a perfect panic.

4308 The Peace Symbol

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Peace Symbol was well-known. Defenders of this symbol cited its origin in England in 1958 when it was used for the Aldermaston Peace Walk, taking the two signals in the semaphore code for the letters N and D to signify "Nuclear Disarmament."

To detractors, however, it looked like the cross broken and reversed. If so, this was the symbol used as far back as the Middle Ages by godless forces. It would therefore be a sacrilegious symbol.

4309 Epigram

●In an address to the United States Senate in 1919, President Woodrow Wilson said, "The League of Nations is the only hope of mankind." How futile and tragic such hope proved to be!

●At the U.N. Security Council Soviet Ambassador Yakov Malik declared: "We are firmly in favor of all — I repeat all states and peoples in the Near East being ensured peace, security and the inviolability of their borders. The Soviet Union is ready to take part in the correspondent guarantees."

●John Foster Dulies: The world will never have lasting peace so long as men reserve for war the finest human qualities. Peace, no less than war, requires idealism and self-sacrifice and a righteous and dynamic faith.

●General Douglas MacArthur said, "Men since the beginning of time have sought peace... military alliances, balances of power, leagues of nations, all in turn failed, leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war. The utter destructiveness of war now blots out this alternative."

●Bill Vaughan: It wasn't too long ago that you could finance a pretty good war for what six months of peace costs today.

—*Bell Syndicate*

See also: Treaties.

PERSECUTION

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

—*II Tim. 3:12*

4310 What Have You Suffered?

We do not know who it was who had this dream, quoted in the *Presbyterian Survey*. But the unknown dreamer could be any one of us, could it not?

I saw in a dream that I was in the Celestial City—though when and how I got there I could not tell. I was one of a great multitude which no man could number, from all countries and peoples and times and ages. Somehow I found that the saint who stood next to me had been in Heaven more than 1,860 years.

"Who are you?" I said to him. (We both spoke the same language of heavenly Canaan, so that I understood him and he me.)

"I," said he, "was a Roman Christian; I lived in the days of the Apostle Paul, I was one of those who died in Nero's persecutions. I was covered with pitch and fastened to a stake and set on fire to light up Nero's gardens."

"How awful!" I exclaimed.

"No," he said, "I was glad to do something for Jesus. He died on the cross for me."

The man on the other side then spoke: "I have been in Heaven only a few hundred years. I came from an island in the South Seas—Erromanga. John Williams, a missionary, came and told me about Jesus, and I too learned to love Him. My fellow-countrymen killed the missionary, and they caught and bound me. I was beaten until I fainted and they thought I was dead, but I revived. Then next day they knocked me on the head, cooked and ate me."

"How terrible!" I said.

"No," he answered, "I was glad to die as a Christian. You see the missionaries had told me that Jesus was scourged and crowned with thorns for me."

Then they both turned to me and said, "What did you suffer for Him? Or did you sell what you had for the money which sent men like John Williams to tell the heathen about Jesus?"

And I was speechless. And while they both were looking at me with sorrowful eyes, I awoke, and it was a dream! But I lay on my soft bed awake for hours, thinking of the money I had wasted on my own pleasures; or my extra clothing, and costly car, and many luxuries; and I realized that I did not know what the words of Jesus meant: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Mark 8:34).

4311 Only The Exceptions Healthy

In describing the Nicene Council, Vance Havner said that not more than a dozen of the 318 delegates had not lost an eye or a hand or did not limp upon a leg shrunk in its sinews by the burning iron of torture.

—*Bible Expositor*

4312 Diocletian's Hasty Medal

Many Roman Emperors tried to destroy Christianity. One of them, Diocletian, was particularly violent in his hatred of the Bible and Christianity. He killed so many Christians, with such outrageous cruelties, and destroyed so many Bibles, that many Christians "went underground" and hid themselves from his wrath. When it seemed to Diocletian that he had made an end of them, he had a medal coined with this motto on it: "The Christian religion is destroyed, and the worship of the (Roman) gods is restored."

—*Christian Victory*

4313 Poor Governor Pliny!

Pliny, Roman Governor in Asia Minor in the early Second Century, was so puzzled about the Christians brought before him for trial that he wrote his famous letter to the Emperor Trajan asking for his advice. This was the kind of thing he found himself up against:

A certain unknown Christian was brought before him, and Pliny, finding little fault in him, proceeded to threaten him. *"I will banish thee,"* he said.

"Thou canst not," was the reply, "for all the world is my Father's house."

"Then I will slay thee," said the Governor.

"Thou canst not," answered the Christian, "for my life is hid with Christ in God."

"I will take away they possessions," continued Pliny.

"Thou canst not, for my treasure is in heaven."

"I will drive thee away from man and thou shalt have no friend left," was the final threat.

And the calm reply once more was, "Thou canst not, for I have an unseen Friend from Whom thou art not able to separate me."

"DON'T FEAR MAN, BUT GOD!"

Matthew 10:26-33
3/14/93

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*" -

Online Bible

***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> of 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)

Jill. The Trade Center Tract.

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.*"

Preached by AN Angel →

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.*"

LAST

This week's shooting at the Brooklyn Family Court 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.*")

Abhor Sin (in their lives) Exod. 20:20

--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 <u>removal</u> from the presence of God. To perish; to give over 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 "*<u>eternal</u> destruction*" (II Th. 1:9)

"***the <u>soul</u>***" - the word is often used synonymously with "<u>spirit</u>" (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 <u>"Lake of Fire"</u> (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 <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)

"***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 knows you (v. 30)

"The average hair count on the human head is said to be about 140,000." (MacARthur, p. 223)

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 values 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 EMBARRASS You --If you deny Christ because of fear, He will deny you! (v. 32-33)

Paul confessed, "*For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ*" (Rom. 1:16)

"***Confess me***" - to say the same thing 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:

"DON'T FEAR MAN, BUT GOD!"

Matthew 10:26-33
3/14/93

INTRODUCTION:

***Don't fear man, but God!**

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Because man does not control your eternal destiny - God does! (v. 28)

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CONCLUSION:

"On his numerous missionary journeys, the apostle Paul showed a greater accomplishment in distances traveled than any known general of the Roman army, official of the Roman Empire, or trader of his time" (*Encyclopedia Britannica Macropaedia*, 1974 edition, volume 4, p. 504).[955]

Peace

There is a painting titled "Peace." It depicts waves crashing against the jagged rocks. It portrays the violence of a crushing storm. It seems anything but peaceful. But down in a small corner of the painting, tucked away in the rocks, is a little bird sitting on her nest totally oblivious to the raging storm all about. That is peace.[956]

Picture a massive hurricane raging over the ocean. On the surface of the sea the violent winds whip the water into giant waves and create a scene of havoc and chaos. Yet, a mere twenty-five feet below the surface, the waters are clear and calm. The fish there go on living their lives totally unaware of the thunderous tumult just above them.

When there is "depth," there is peace. So it is in the Christian life.[957]

A hurricane is a storm with cyclonic winds that exceed 74 m.p.h. Rain, thunder, and lightning usually accompany the winds. Hurricanes can be very fierce storms with relentless pounding winds that continue hour after hour. But a very fascinating thing about a hurricane is its "eye"—a place of perfect calm in its center. Though the winds blow and rage all around it, there are none in the eye.

So with us in the storms of life. With the Lord as our center, there is calm and peace, even in the darkest of life's storms.[958]

Eric Barker was a missionary from Great Britain who had spent over fifty years in Portugal preaching the gospel, often under adverse conditions. During World War II, the situation became so critical that he took the advice to send his wife and eight children to England for safety. His sister and her three children were also evacuated on the same ship. Barker remained behind to conclude some mission matters. The Sunday after Barker's loved ones had left, he stood before the congregation and said, "I've just received word that all my family have arrived safely home." He then proceeded with the service as usual. Later, the full meaning of his words became known to his people. He had been handed

a wire just before the meeting, informing him that a submarine had torpedoed the ship, and everyone on board had drowned. Barker knew that all on board were believers, and the knowledge that his family was enjoying the bliss of heaven enabled him to live above his circumstances in spite of his overwhelming grief.[959]

U Thant was once Secretary General of the United Nations. While speaking in 1965 before sixty-seven distinguished scholars and statesmen from nineteen countries of the world, who were convened to talk about the requirements for world peace, he asked these questions:

What element is lacking so that with all our skill and all our knowledge we still find ourselves in the dark valley of discord and enmity? What is it that inhibits us from going forward together to enjoy the fruits of human endeavor and to reap the harvest of human experience? Why is it that, for all our professed ideals, our hopes, and our skills, peace on earth is still a distant objective seen only dimly through the storms and turmoils of our present difficulties?"[960]

Perfection

The closest to perfection a person ever comes is when he fills out a job application form.[961]

Persecution

The way of this world is to praise dead saints and persecute living ones.[962]

On one occasion, following unspeakable sufferings in a filthy prison, missionary Adoniram Judson appeared before the king of Burma and asked permission to go to a certain city to preach.

"I am willing for a dozen preachers to go, but not you," was the king's answer. "Not with those hands! My people are not such fools as to take notice of your preaching, but they will take notice of those scarred hands."[963]

One of the most inspiring examples of courage in the history of the church was the martyrdom of Polycarp, who was burned at the stake for his faith. The aged Polycarp had been arrested by the Roman authori-

ties and brought to the arena for execution in front of the cheering crowd. The proconsul pressed him hard and said, "Swear, and I will release you. Revile Christ." Polycarp replied, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never did me wrong; and how can I now blaspheme my King that has saved me?" (Cited in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, chapter 15.)[964]

During the Watergate scandal, some people regarded it as a compliment to be on Nixon's "enemies list." They took it as a credit to them that people in the administration opposed them.

In the same way, if you have enemies because of your righteousness, it will be a credit to you. You should be glad that you have that kind of enemies, and that they are persecuting you, because it means that you are not doing what *they* do and instead are doing what unrighteous men hate.[965]

Perseverance

Two frogs fell into a can of cream,
Or so I've heard it told.
The sides of the can were shiny and steep,
The cream was deep and cold.
"Oh, what's the use?" croaked number one.
"Tis fate, no help's around.
Good-bye, my friend!
Good-bye, sad world!"
And weeping still, he drowned.

But number two, of sterner stuff,
Dog-paddled in surprise.
The while he wiped his creamy face,
And dried his creamy eyes.
"I'll swim awhile at least," he said,
Or so I've heard he said;
"It really wouldn't help the world,
If one more frog were dead."
An hour or two he kicked and swam,
Not once he stopped to mutter,
But kicked and kicked and swam and kicked,
Then hopped out, via butter![966]

Sometime go out and watch a stonecutter hammering away at a rock. He might hit the rock a hundred times without so much as a

crack showing in it. Then, suddenly, at the hundred and first blow the rock splits in two. Was it the one blow that split the rock? Only in an immediate sense, for that one blow would have accomplished nothing if it were not for all that had gone before.[967]

In the movie *Chariots of Fire*, young Harold Abrahams, a champion sprinter, had just suffered his first-ever defeat. After the race he sat alone, pouting in the bleachers. When his girlfriend tried to encourage him, he bellowed, "If I can't win, I won't run!" To which she wisely replied, "If you don't run, you can't win." Abrahams went on to win the 1924 Olympic Gold Medal in the hundred-meter run.[968]

By perseverance the snail reached the ark.[969]

"It is better to limp in the way, than to run with swiftness out of it" (John Calvin, *Institutes*, 6:3).[970]

William Carey, when asked about his great accomplishments in his work of translating the Bible into Indian languages and dialects, said: "I am not a genius, just a plodder." But what a plodder! In forty years of labor, he translated all or portions of the Bible into thirty-four of the languages and dialects of India.[971]

Many years ago in England there was a small boy who talked with a lisp. While growing up, he was never a scholar. When war came along, they rejected him because "we need *men*." He once rose to address the House of Commons, and they all walked out. He often spoke to empty chairs and echoes.

One day he became prime minister of Great Britain and led his country to victory in a worldwide conflict. That man was Sir Winston Churchill, whose iron will to persevere rallied all of his countrymen to defend their land and eventually win the war.[972]

The following is attributed to "Gentleman Jim" Corbett, who held the heavyweight boxing title for five years at the end of the nineteenth century:

"Fight one more round. When your feet are so tired that you have to

Deuteronomy 1:21

21 Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up [and] possess [it], as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged.

Deuteronomy 20:3

3 And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them;

Deuteronomy 31:6

6 Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he [it is] that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Deuteronomy 31:8

8 And the LORD, he [it is] that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

Joshua 8:1

1. And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land:

Joshua 10:25

25 And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.

Judges 4:18

18 And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle.

Judges 6:10

10 And I said unto you, I [am] the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

Judges 6:23

23 And the LORD said unto him, Peace [be] unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.

Ruth 3:11

11 And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou [art] a virtuous woman.

1 Samuel 4:20

20 And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard [it].

1 Samuel 12:20

20 And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart;

1 Samuel 22:23

23 Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou [shalt be] in safeguard.

1 Samuel 23:17 Jonathon to David

17 And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth.

2 Samuel 9:7

7 And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

2 Samuel 13:28

28 Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant.

1 Kings 17:13

13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go [and] do as thou

hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring [it] unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

✳ **2 Kings 6:16**

16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that [be] with us [are] more than they that [be] with them.

2 Kings 17:34

34 Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel;

2 Kings 25:24

24 And Gedaliah sware to them, and to their men, and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon; and it shall be well with you.

✳ **1 Chronicles 28:20**

20 And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do [it]: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, [even] my God, [will be] with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD.

2 Chronicles 20:17

17 Ye shall not [need] to fight in this [battle]: set yourselves, stand ye [still], and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD [will be] with you.

Psalms 55:19

19 God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.

Psalms 64:4

4 That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.

Isaiah 7:4

4 And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.

Isaiah 35:4

4 Say to them [that are] of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come [with] vengeance, [even] God [with] a recompence; he will come and save you.

Isaiah 41:13

13 For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.
14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, [and] ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah 43:1

1. But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called [thee] by thy name; thou [art] mine.

Isaiah 43:5

5 Fear not: for I [am] with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;

Isaiah 44:2

2 Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, [which] will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.

Isaiah 54:4

4 Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

Jeremiah 40:9

9 And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan sware unto them and to their men, saying, Fear not to serve the Chaldeans: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you.

Jeremiah 46:27

27 But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel: for, behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and be in rest and at ease, and none shall make [him] afraid.

Lamentations 3:57

57 Thou drewest near in the day [that] I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not.

Daniel 10:12

12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

Daniel 10:19

19 And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace [be] unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.

Joel 2:21

21 Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things.

Zechariah 8:13

13 And it shall come to pass, [that] as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, [but] let your hands be strong.

Malachi 3:5

5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in [his] wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger [from his right], and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

Matthew 1:20

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife:

for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 10:28

28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Matthew 28:5

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

Luke 1:13

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

Luke 1:30

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

Luke 2:10

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

Luke 5:10

10 And so [was] also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

Luke 8:50

50 But when Jesus heard [it], he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

Luke 12:7

7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Luke 12:32

32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Luke 18:4

THE COST OF COMMITMENT

(What It Costs to be a Committed Christian)

Matthew 10:34-42

3/28/93

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 RESIST you
Because of your commitment to Christ (v. 34-36)

V. 34

"To send" - Does not describe purpose but result. 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 not 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 instigator 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 <u>love</u> (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 <u>love</u> 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 "*<u>first love</u>*"

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 live 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 even the 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.

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(What It Costs to be a Committed Christian)

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3/28/93

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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)

CONCLUSION:

Here Pastor, I thought you might be interested in this.

* Mt. 10:38 Clonted

Cp. Mt. 16:24

CROSS BEARING

("Pick up his cross and Follow me")

1321

Wednesday, December 17, 1997 • D

The Cross Room

The young man was at the end of his rope. Seeing no way out, he dropped to his knees in prayer. "Lord, I can't go on," he said. "I have too heavy a cross to bear." The Lord replied, "My son, if you can't bear its weight, just place your cross inside this room. Then, open that other door, and pick out any cross you wish."

The man was filled with relief. "Thank you, Lord," he sighed, and he did as he was told. Upon entering the other door, he saw many crosses, some so large the tops were not visible. Then, he spotted a tiny cross leaning against a far wall. "I'd like that one, Lord," he whispered. And the Lord replied, "My son, that is the cross you just brought in."

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Ann Landers column

THE COST OF COMMITMENT

(What It Costs to be a Committed Christian)

Matthew 10:34-42

3/28/93

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 loyalty (v. 38)

C. The test of life (v. 39)

III. Some will RECEIVE you
Because of your commitment to Christ (v. 40-42)

CONCLUSION:

"WRONG EXPECTATIONS"

Matthew 11:1-19
4/4/93

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). ex. Chicken w/ Broccoli

"*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 JESUS (v. 2-6)

(John questioned: *"Is this the real Messiah?"*)

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 kingdom 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 allow me to be so unjustly treated?

3) If Jesus is the Messiah, why doesn't He come and rescue me?

   NOTE: God's will may be that we glorify 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 out 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 in 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 JOHN THE BAPTIST (v. 7-15)

(The crowd questioned: "*Is this real greatness?*")

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 fundamentalist 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 "*more than a prophet.*" Reason: John was a **fulfillment** 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? (YES, 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 "*forceful*".

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 forcefully make every effort 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 JOHN AND JESUS (v. 16-19)

(The religious leaders questioned: "*Is this real spirituality?*")

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!

"WRONG EXPECTATIONS"

Matthew 11:1-19
4/4/93

INTRODUCTION:

***Beware of wrong expectations in the Christian life.**

Three examples of mis-expectations:

I. John the Baptist's Wrong Expectation of JESUS (v. 2-6)
(John questioned: *"Is this the real Messiah?"*)

II. The People's Wrong Expectation of JOHN THE BAPTIST (v. 7-15)
(The crowd questioned: *"Is this real greatness?"*)

III. The Unbeliever's Wrong Expectation of JOHN AND JESUS (v. 16-19)
(The religious leaders questioned: *"Is this real spirituality?"*)

CONCLUSION:

"WASTED PRIVILEGES"

(Blown Opportunities)
Matthew 11:20-27
4/18/93

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 people of three ancient cities in northern Galilee had the greatest opportunity as they saw 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 unresponsive 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 ignored 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).

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 majority of His miracles were done in Northern Palestine. He did many, many miracles there.

"***Because they repented not***" - The Lord's strong condemnation of these cities is because they had not 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 (Rom. 1:19-20). 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.

***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*")

V. 21

"***Woe***" - a word that describes pity or sorrow because of the Judgment to come (cp. Rev. 18:10).

Chorzin and Bethsaida were just north of the Sea of Galilee. The Galilean region was where Christ ministered most.

"***Tyre and Sidon***" - two cities on the Mediterranean coastline of Phoenicia (Syria).

"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 Chrorazine 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 refused to believe it (EX: the gospel-hardened southern USA; rebellious children in Christian schools; apathetic church members in Bible-preaching churches).

The sin of Chorazine 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 hand (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 e 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 int he 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.

"***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 preserves nations!

Prov. 14:34 - "*Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people*"

Nations decay, rot, fall, and crumble because of sin! 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 not to determine who is lost or saved, but to:

1. Demonstrate the justice of the condemnation of all who appear ("*every mouth will be stopped*" - Rom. 3:19)

2. Determine the degree 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
Luke 12:47-48
Luke 20:47

The people of Sodom, through 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 greater the privilege, the greater the responsibility; and the greater the light, the greater the punishment for not receiving it" (MacArthur, p. 264).

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).

II. INTELLECTUAL ARROGANCE (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 meaning 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" - Not 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 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 truth in their smartness (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).

"Revealed" - to uncover, to unveil, to make manifest

"Thou 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, not 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 Soon 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)

The problem = people in the USA are ignoring their opportunities.

Apathy and lukewarmness abounds.

We at FBC are tremendously privileged! We must not forfeit such opportunity.

Redeem the time! Buy up the opportunities!

"PRIVILEGIOS GASTADOS"

(Oportunidades malgastadas)
Mateo 11:20-27
18 de Abril de 1993

INTRODDUCCIÓN:

***No malgastes los privilegios y oportunidades espirituales que tienes hoy!**

Dos razones porque la genteno se <u>arrepiente</u> cuando hay una gran oportunidad para que DIOS haga una gran obra en sus vidas:

I. **<u>APATÍA</u> SIN RESPUESTA (V. 20-24)**
(Unos piensan: "Todo está bien como esta ahora")

II. **<u>ARROGANCIA</u> INTELECTUAL (v. 25-27)**
Unos piensan: "Soy demasiado 'inteligente' para DIOS")

CONCLUSIÓN:

"WASTED PRIVILEGES"

(Blown Opportunities)
Matthew 11:20-27
4/18/93

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*")

CONCLUSION:

"REFRESHING REST"

Matthew 11:28-30
4/25/93

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 COME 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 "come" (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 not 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 Me"

We "come" by faith (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 a 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 in "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 YOKE UP 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 gives us rest. When we take His yoke and learn, we find rest, that deeper rest of surrender and obedience. The first is "peace with God" (Rom. 5:1); the second is "the peace of God" (Phil. 4:6-8).

You never serve, learn, go through trials, toil, raise children, work a job, etc. alone when you are in the yoke with Christ!

V. 30

"My yoke is easy"-

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.

"REFRESHING REST"

Matthew 11:28-30
4/25/93

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)

CONCLUSION:

large cemetery that field is, for at the foot of every stalk of corn is a tiny grave. Jesus said, 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.' " (Jn 12:24)

—Walter L. Wilson

5213 Yoke's Heavier End

John T. Faris tells the story of a man who was carrying a heavy basket. His son offered to help him. The father cut a large stick and placed it through the handle of the basket so that the end toward himself was very short, while the end toward the boy was three or four times as long. Each took hold of his end of the stick, and the basket was lifted and carried easily

The son was bearing the burden with the father. But he found his work easy and light because his father assumed the heavier end of the load. So it is when we live for Jesus Christ. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me . . . for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:29-30).

—Ray O. Jones

5214 Helping Grandfather With Oar

The French painter Emile Ranouf in his painting "A Helping Hand" depicted an old fisherman seated in a boat, with a little girl beside him, perhaps his granddaughter, both their hands on a huge oar. He is looking down at her fondly and admiringly. Apparently he has told her that she may assist him in rowing the boat. In her desire to help she feels as though she is doing a great share of the task. However, it is easy to see that it is his strong, muscular arm which is actually propelling the boat through the waves.

—Martin M. Hyzer

5215 The Unclaimed Box

A brief news item told how an express package from England came to a South African town. The man to whom the box was consigned refuse to pay the delivery charges, and for about fourteen years the box was used as a footstool in the express office. The consignee died, and later the box was put up at auction with other unclaimed articles. Out of curiousity a man bid it in at a low price. When he opened it he was greatly surprised to find several thousand pounds of sterling in English banknotes. Because the consignee had refused to pay comparatively trifling delivery charges, he had missed a considerable fortune.

—Erville E. Sowards

5216 A Frank Musical Appraisal

One of Rossini's pupils composed a funeral march commemorating the death of Ludwig von Beethoven. He took it to his master who listened attentively to the uninspired work falteringly played by the amateur. "The circumstances would have been more favorable," remarked Rossini, "if YOU had died, and Beethoven had composed the march."

5217 Mary Is Second

Marriage was certainly not in David Livingstone's plans when he applied for missionary service. He answered a question about marriage by writing: "I should prefer going out unmarried, that I might be without that care which the concerns of a family necessarily induce, and give myself wholly to the work." That was before he met Mary Moffat. The day came when he asked Mary to become Mrs. Livingstone.

Mary was soon to learn that her fiance had his Lord in first place in his life and he urged her to do the same. He wrote: "And now, my dearest, farewell. May God bless you! Let your affection be towards Him much more than towards me. Whatever friendship we feel towards each other, let us always look to Jesus as our common friend and guide, and may He shield you with his everlasting arms from every evil!"

5218 Venetian Loyalty

In Venice there was a law forbidding the erection of monuments in the public streets to people who had sacrificed anything for the good of the State. The reason for this was that all Venetians were supposed to be filled with loyalty, and that, therefore, the erection of such monuments was a reflection on others who were equally ready to sacrifice themselves for the good of the State should opportunity arise.

On the other hand, it was held that treason and disloyalty must prove so rare that only to the infamous was publicity to be given. "Tomes of infamy" were therefore erected in public places to record the deeds of betrayers and dishonest citizens. And the smallness of the number testify that the Venetians' claim of the loyalty of their citizens was no idle boast.

—James Burns

5219 Epigram

●Jim Elliot, martyr: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose."

●There has never yet been a man in our history who led a life of ease whose name is worth remembering.

—Theodore Roosevelt

●The wise man does not expose himself needlessly to danger, since there are few things for which he cares sufficiently; but he is willing, in great crises, to give even his life—knowing that under certain conditions it is not worthwhile to live.

—Aristotle

See also: Dedication. Persecution. Troubles. Matt. 19:29.

SALVATION

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

—Rev. 7:9,10

5220 Richest Man Asks Wisest Man

The richest man in the world, Croesus, once asked the wisest man in the world, Thales, What is God?" The philosopher asked for a day in which to deliberate, and then for another, and then for another, and another, and another—and at length confessed that he was not able to answer, that the longer he deliberated, the more difficult it was for him to frame an answer.

The fiery Tertullian, the early Church Father, eagerly seized upon this incident and said it was an example of the world's ignorance of God outside of Christ. "There," he exclaimed, "is the wisest man in the world, and he cannot tell you who God is. But the most ignorant mechanic among the Christians knows God, and is able to make him known unto others."

5221 Friendly Chief Fell In Between

Colonel Byrd, of Virginia, fell into the hands of the Cherokees, and was condemned to death. In the tribe was a chief who had before been his friend. At the approach of the executioners, the Indian threw himself upon the intended victim, saying, "This man is my friend; before you can get at him, you must kill me." This saved him.

5222 Peace Child

In a book entitled *Peace Child*, Don Richardson records the moving account of how the Sawi people of Irian Jaya came to understand salvation through Jesus Christ. For many months he and his family sought for some way to communicate the gospel to this tribe. Then they discovered the key for which they had been praying. All demonstrations of kindness expressed by the Sawi were regarded with suspicion except one act. If a father gave

As the orchestra and chorus burst forth with full power into the passage, "And there was light," a cresendo of applause broke out.

Moved by this response, the elderly musician struggled to his feet. Summoning all his strength, he raised his trembling arms upward, crying, "No, No! Not from me, but from thence—from Heaven above comes all!" Although he fell back exhausted in his chair and had to be carried from the hall, the old master had make his point in a dramatic and unforgettable manner.

—*Our Daily Bread*

1872 Hallelujah Chorus' Custom

On March 23, 1743, when "The Messiah" was first performed in London, the king was present in the great audience. It is reported that all were so deeply moved by the "Hallelujah Chorus" that with the impressive words, "For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth," the whole audience, including the king sprang to its feet, and remained standing through the entire chorus. From that time to this it has always been the custom to stand during the chorus whenever it is performed. With spontaneous joy the soul stands to salute Him who "cometh in the name of the Lord." He is "King of kings, and Lord of lords" and to Him we pledge allegiance.

—*Today*

1873 Faraday's Adoration

Michael Faraday, who died in 1867, was one of the most brilliant scientists of modern times. He was a pioneer in electrical discoveries.

Faraday received practically no education, but in the bookbindery where he found work, he also found a few volumes of science. He read and studied these, and then embarked on the experiments that were to become his religious convictions, so that we are not surprised at these words he uttered with his dying breath:

"I bow before Him who is the Lord of all."

—Selected

1874 New Voices At Madison Square Garden

Gil Dodds is the minister's boy who came out of Nebraska to step off the fastest mile ever run on an indoor track. Time 4.10.6. At the end of a race the crowd wondered when he picked up a microphone to acknowledge their applause and said: "I thank the Lord for guiding me through the race, and seeing fit to let me win. I thank Him always for His guiding presence." The rafters of Madison Square Garden must have trembled; these were new words there. "I don't win those races. God wins them. You see, God has given me all I have. I have one great lack. I didn't have the one thing the coaches say a long-distance runner simply must have. I couldn't sprint at the end of the mile. But God took care of that. In place of the sprint he gave me stamina." And that is correct. Dodds sprints the whole distance. He sets a killing pace all the way.

—*Christian Herald*

1875 "What Hath God Wrought!"

In conversation with Professor S. F. B. Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, the Rev. George W. Hervey asked this question:

Professor Morse, when you were making your experiments yonder in your room in the university, did you ever come to a stand, not knowing what to do next?"

"Oh, yes, more than once."

"And at such times what did you do next?"

"I may answer you in confidence, sir," said the professor, "but it is a matter of which the public knows nothing. I prayed for more light."

"And the light generally came?"

"Yes, and may I tell you that when flattering honors come to me from America and Europe on account of the invention which bears my name, I never felt I deserved them. I had made a valuable application of electricity, not because I was superior to other men, but solely because God, who meant it for mankind, must reveal it to someone, and was pleased to reveal it to me."

In view of these facts, it is not surprising that the inventor's first message was, "What hath God wrought!"

—*Moody Monthly*

See also: Love for God.

GOD, CALL OF

And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

—*Luke 19:13*

1876 Princess' Rest

Princess Elizabeth, daughter of King Charles I of England, lies buried in Newport Church, in the Isle of Wight. During the time of her father's trouble, she was a prisoner in Carisbrook Castle, on the same beautiful island. While there she had a long spell of sickness. She was found one day dead in her bed with her Bible open before her and her finger resting on these words, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

A monument in Newport, erected by Queen Victoria, represents the young princess with her head bowed in death, and her hand resting on a marble book before her, her finger pointing to the words.

—Walter Baxendale

1877 Come Unto Me

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon my breast!"
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn and sad;
I found in him a resting place,
And he hath made me glad.

This poem is entitled "The Voice from Galilee." The two secrets of its wonderful popularity are found in the fact that it introduces the words of our Lord in a picturesque way, as if one's ear had happened to catch them on the air, and then his voice made an immediate response by "coming" towards the words of invitation and promise; and then that it employs possessive pronouns for its phraselogy, and so individualizes the believer. Christ says, "Come to me," and the Christian says, "I came." Christ say, "I give thee living water;" and the listener answers, "My thirst was quenched." Christ says, "I am light;" and the child of God replies, "I found in Him my Star, my Sun!"

—*Current Anecdotes*

1878 From Benediction To Entreaty

It is recorded of Thorwaldsen, that in his great statue of Christ, which now stands in the "Lady Church" of Copenhagen, he had wanted to achieve the intended expression of benignity by making Christ's hands upraised as if for benediction. The effect was sublime, conjoined as it was with the compassionate sweetness of His kingly countenance.

But the soul of the sculptor was not satisfied. At last, as if by a sudden flash of genius, he depressed the arms of the clay model into a posture of yearning entreaty. And so the statue was wrought, an image to every hushed beholder of the Redeemer's appeal, in perfect sympathy conjoined with royal might, to the woe-stricken race of men.

—Walter Baxendale

1879 Call To China From Industry

Several years ago, this ad appeared in an English publication for six men to go to China:

Six courageous young men are needed at once to go to China for the Chinese Industrial Co-Ops which trains technicians for a democratically industralized China. They are to take the place of George Hogg, brilliant 31-year old Oxford graduate, who died of

"DESCANSO REFRESCANTE"

Mateo 11:28-30
25 de Abril de 1993

INTRRODUCCIÓN:

En un mundo de sufrimiento, problemas, y de dificultades...
*Cristo promete una vida DESCANSADA Y REFRESCANTE!

Como puedes gozar de tal descanso?

I. Tienes que VENIR a Jesús (Salvación)
("Venid a Mí" - v. 28)

II. Tienes que UNIRTE a Jesús (Dedicación)
("Llevad Mi Yugo" - v. 29a, 30)

III. Tienes que APRENDER de Jesús (Ser Discípulo)
("..aprended de Mí" - v. 29b)

CONCLUSIÓN:

"CORN ON THE COB AND THE WITHERED HAND"

(A Lesson on What Really Matters in Life)
Matthew 12:1-13
5/16/93

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).

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incorporated its observance into the requirements of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:9-11).

But that law is the only one of the Ten Commandments that is nonmoral and purely ceremonial; and it was unique to the Old Covenant and to Israel. The other nine commandments, on the other hand, pertain to moral and spiritual absolutes and are repeated and expanded upon many places in the New Testament. But Sabbath observance is never recommended to Christians, much less given as a command in the New Testament.

When Jesus began His ministry, the Old Covenant was still in effect and all of its requirements were binding on Jews, the special people of that covenant. Jesus observed every demand and met every condition of Scripture, because it was His own Word, which He came to fulfill and not destroy (Matt. 5:17). But for several hundred years the various schools of rabbis had added regulation after regulation, going far beyond the teaching of Scripture and in many instances actually contradicting it (see Matt. 15:6, 9). In no area were those additions more extensive and extreme than in regard to Sabbath observance.

Keeping the Sabbath was still a binding ceremonial obligation for Israel, but most Jews had little idea of the original purpose of the Sabbath or of how God intended it to be honored. Instead of being a day of rest it 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.

Jewish tradition had even caused the Sabbath to be dangerous. The apocryphal book of 1 Maccabees (2:31-38) tells of an incident during the time of Judas Maccabaeus when a group of Jews refused to defend themselves on the Sabbath against the Greek army led by Antiochus Epiphanes. As the soldiers of Antiochus attacked, the Jews "answered them not, neither cast they a stone at them, nor stopped the places where they lay hid; but said: 'Let us die in our innocency: heaven and earth shall testify for us, that ye put us to death wrongfully.' So they rose up against them in battle on the Sabbath, and they slew them with their wives and children and cattle, to the number of a thousand people."

In his *Antiquities*, the Jewish historian Josephus reports that it was also because Jews would not defend themselves on the Sabbath that the Roman general Pompey was able to capture Jerusalem. As was the custom in ancient Roman warfare, Pompey began building a high mound from which his troops could bombard the city. Aware that the Jews defending Jerusalem would not oppose him then, the general did all construction work on the Sabbath. "Had it not been for that practice, from the days of our forefathers, to rest on the seventh day," Josephus wrote, "this bank could never have been perfected, by reason of the opposition the Jews would have made; for though our Law gave us leave then to defend ourselves against those that begin to fight with us and assault us (this was a concession), yet it does not permit us to meddle with our enemies while they do anything else."

One section alone of the Talmud, the major compilation of Jewish tradition, has twenty-four chapters listing Sabbath laws. One law specified that the basic limit

for travel was 3,000 feet from one's house; but various exceptions were provided. If you had placed some food within 3,000 feet of your house, you could go there to eat it; and because the food was considered an extension of the house, you could then go another 3,000 feet beyond the food. If a rope were placed across an adjoining street or alley, the building on the other side, as well as the alley between, could be considered part of your house.

Certain objects could be lifted up and put down only from and to certain places. Other things could be lifted up from a public place and set down in a private one, and vice versa. Still others could be picked up in a wide place and put down in a legally free place—but rabbis could not agree about the meanings of *wide* and *free*!

Under Sabbath regulations, a Jew could not carry a load heavier than a dried fig; but if an object weighed half that amount he could carry it twice. Eating restrictions were among the most detailed and extensive. You could eat nothing larger than an olive; and even if you tasted half an olive, found it to be rotten and spit it out, that half was considered to have been eaten as far as the allowance was concerned.

Throwing an object into the air with one hand and catching it with the other was prohibited. If the Sabbath overtook you as you reached for some food, the food was to be dropped before drawing your arm back, lest you be guilty of carrying a burden.

Tailors did not carry a needle with them on the Sabbath for fear they might be tempted to mend a garment and thereby perform work. Nothing could be bought or sold, and clothing could not be dyed or washed. A letter could not be dispatched, even if by the hand of a Gentile. No fire could be lit or extinguished—including fire for a lamp—although a fire already lit could be used within certain limits. For that reason, some orthodox Jews today use automatic timers to turn on lights in their homes well before the Sabbath begins. Otherwise they might forget to turn them on in time and have to spend the night in the dark.

Baths could not be taken for fear some of the water might spill onto the floor and "wash" it. Chairs could not be moved because dragging them might make a furrow in the ground, and a woman was not to look in a mirror lest she see a gray hair and be tempted to pull it out. You could carry ink enough to draw only two letters of the alphabet, and false teeth could not be worn because they exceeded the weight limit for burdens.

According to those hair-splitting regulations, a Jew could not pull off even a handful of grain to eat on the Sabbath unless he were starving—which, of course, is often a difficult thing to determine and would be cause for considerable differences of opinion. If a person became ill on the Sabbath, only enough treatment could be given to keep him alive. Treatment to make him improve was declared to be work, and therefore forbidden. To determine just how much food, medicine, or bandaging would be necessary to keep a person alive—and no more—was itself an impossible burden.

Among the many other forbidden Sabbath activities were: sewing, plowing, reaping, grinding, baking, threshing, binding sheaves, winnowing, sifting, dying, shearing, spinning, kneading, separating or weaving two threads, tying or untying a knot, and sewing two stitches.

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"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. GOD'S WORSHIP takes precedence over Sabbath legalism (v. 5)

How do the priests "*profane the Sabbath*"? They continue their work 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, double 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. SHOWING MERCY 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. <u>DOING GOOD</u> 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.

"CORN ON THE COB AND THE WITHERED HAND"

(A Lesson on What Really Matters in Life)
Matthew 12:1-13
5/16/93

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)

CONCLUSION:

"BEHOLD, MY SERVANT"

Matthew 12:14-21

6/6/93

INTRODUCTION:

V. 14

"***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: Muslims, Catholics).

"***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.

From God's point of view their (the Pharisee's & National Israel's) clock stopped.

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 reason is this: 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). Matthew in referring to Isaiah 42 does not quote it verbatim, but rather gives an interpretation of that prophecy.

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.*"
> Luke 19:10 - "*For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*"
> - "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister..."

Note the humble servanthood of Jesus Christ described in: Philippians 2:5-11

What is servitude?
What is a servant?

"***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*").

No one becomes a servant of God merely on his own will. Paul was called to be a servant

Christ is called "the beloved" (Eph. 1:6) to show the intimate relationship between Him and the Father.

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 is not pleased with Jesus, the Father is well 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 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, O God*" (Heb. 10:7).

II. He was <u>EMPOWERED</u> by the Spirit (v. 18b)

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.*"

"*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).

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*"

III. He was PROMOTED by Humility (v. 19)

"***Strive***" - to quarrel or wrangle.

"***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).
moaning

"***Streets***" - wide streets

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 Phil Donohue show 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.

If you want to be an influential communicator, if you want to get your message of righteousness across, remember James 3:14-18.

"*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).k

famous manufacturer and salesman of cheese in the world. He planned on becoming rich and famous by making and selling cheese and began as a young fellow with a little buggy pulled by a pony named Paddy. After making his cheese, the youth he would load his wagon and he and Paddy would drive down the streets of Chicago to sell the cheese. As the months passed, the young Kraft began to despair because he was not making any money, in spite of his long hours and hard work.

One day he pulled his pony to a stop and began to talk to him. He said, "Paddy, there is something wrong. We are not doing it right. I am afraid we have things turned around and our priorities are not where they ought to be. Maybe we ought to serve God and place him first in our lives." Kraft then drove home and made a covenant that for the rest of his life he would first serve God and then would work as God directed.

Many years after this, Dr. Criswell heard James Kraft say, "I would rather be a layman in the North Shore Baptist Church than to head the greatest corporation in America. My first job is serving Jesus." [Adapted from W. A. Criswell, *Acts* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983], pp. 187–88.][1224]

Service, Qualifications for

D. L. Moody aptly observed, "We may easily be too big for God to use, but never too small."[1225]

Service, Rewards of

Many years ago a humble pastor served a church in a little country town. His ministry was quiet, and few souls were brought to Christ there. Year in and year out, the work became more and more discouraging. It was only years later that the faithful minister found great joy in the knowledge that one of those he had won to Christ was Charles Haddon Spurgeon, a man who was later used by God to bring multitudes to his Son. Humble service is rewarded now and certainly will be rewarded even more when Christ comes.[1226]

Sex

Sexual intercourse outside of marriage is always wrong. Why? Because those who indulge in it are trying to isolate one aspect of union—the physical—from all the other aspects that were intended to make a *total* union of two people. There is nothing wrong with sexual plea-

IV. He was <u>CHARACTERIZED</u> 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).

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 a Lion 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 "<u>till</u> (until) He send forth judgment unto victory (conquest)"

V. He was CONCERNED 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 moral absolutes. (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).

"Contrary to the thinking and expectations of most Jews, the Messiah was to be the Redeemer of the whole world, not just of Israel" (MacArthur, p. 298).

The promise to Abraham was that through his seed "*all the nations of the earth would be blessed*" (Gen. 12:3).

"***In His name***" - 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.*"

CONCLUSION:

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.

"BEHOLD, MY SERVANT"

Matthew 12:14-21
6/6/93

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)

CONCLUSION:

"THE UNPARDONABLE SIN"

(Blasphemy Against the Spirit)

Matthew 12:22-33

7/4/93

INTRODUCTION:

The whole Bible bears testimony to this wonderful and glorious truth: God desires to and is able to forgive sin (Ps. 86:5; Ps. 103:3; Dan. 9:9; Ex. 34:6-7; Mic. 7:18-19; Eph. 1:7; I Jn. 1:9, 2:12).

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)

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.

V. 27

Jesus again shows the inconsistency of the Pharisees' accusation by appealing to their descendants (***"relatives"***) who perform exorcisms.

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*"

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 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."

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:

1) The Holy Spirit's ministry is to bear witness to Christ (Jn. 15:26) and to convict lost sinners (jn. 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.

CONCLUSION:

"THE UNPARDONABLE SIN"

(Blasphemy Against the Spirit)
Matthew 12:22-33
7/4/93

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 devil would not destroy his own work (v. 25-26)

B. Others have performed exorcisms by God's power (v. 27)

C. Christ is stronger than Satan (v. 28-29)

D. You cannot be neutral toward Christ (v. 30)

III. The Message that <u>Warned Against</u> the Blasphemy (v. 31-33)

CONCLUSION:

"YOUR WORDS ARE A MIRROR OF YOUR HEART"

Matthew 12:34-37
7/11/93

INTRODUCTION:

In the context, the Pharisees have used their tongues to blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

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 <u>NATURE</u> (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 w ho 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 HEART (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 whichc 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 putrified 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 CHARACTER (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, gathered, 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 ggood 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 heart 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 nothingg 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 wrod 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 injur someone)

4) I will answer to God for the content of what I say

God's uneraseable 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 o 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 guage of your heart, you will be judged based on your words.

"***Justified***" - to be proven rigtheous; 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, thous halt 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.

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."

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 <u>not</u>

"<u>reformation</u>" (reforming behavior, changing the outside)

but "<u>transformation</u>" (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 <u>heart</u>!

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 iwll 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.*"

"TUS PALABRAS SON UN REFLEJO DE TU CORAZÓN"

Mateo 12:34-37

11 de Julio de 1993

INTRODUCCIÓN:

***Examina tus palabras para evaluar tu corazón.**

Cinco razones por la cual debes de evaluar tus palabras:

I. Tus Palabras Exponen Tu <u>NATURALEZA</u> Verdadera (v. 34a)

II. Tus Palabras Exponen Lo Que Está Hondamente En Tu <u>CORAZÓN</u> (v. 34b)

III. Tus Palabras Exponen Tu <u>CARÁCTER</u> Verdadero (sea bueno o malo) (v. 35)

IV. Tus Palabras Serán Expuestas En El <u>JUICIO</u> (v. 36)

V. Tus Palabras Expondrán Tu <u>Condición</u> Y <u>Destino Eterno</u> (v. 37)

CONCLUSIÓN:

"YOUR WORDS ARE A MIRROR OF YOUR HEART"

Matthew 12:34-37
7/11/93

INTRODUCTION:

***Examine your words to evaluate your heart.**

Five reasons why you should evaluate your words:

I. Your Words Expose Your True NATURE (v. 34a)

II. Your Words Expose What is Deep Down in Your HEART (v. 34b)

III. Your Words Expose Your True CHARACTER (whether good or bad) (v. 35)

IV. Your Words Will be Exposed in the JUDGMENT (v. 36)

V. Your Words Will Expose Your CONDITION and ETERNAL DESTINY (v. 37)

CONCLUSION:

"CHARACTERISTICS OF A WICKED GENERATION"

Matthew 12:38-45
7/18/93

INTRODUCTION:

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 not have to prove Himself to anybody.

2) God does not stoop to reveal His power (by miraculous signs) to men at their choosing. (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***" - 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.

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).

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 "*sign*" (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 Wednesday.

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>)

Not Hardened by the Savior but Hardened to the Savior (towards)

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>" as 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.

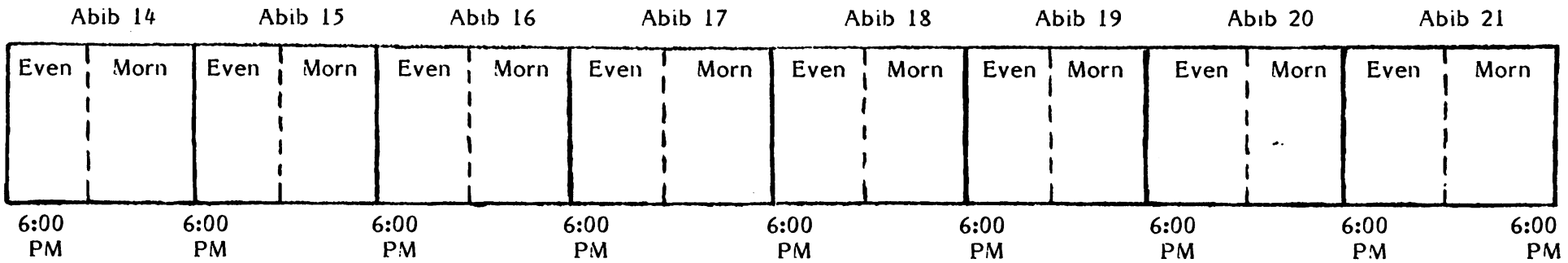
"***Behold***" - look, see, observe, open your eyes; notice who is here!

THE PASSOVER and FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

Does the scriptures teach or command the practice or remembrance of the Death Burial and resurection of christ? IN BAPTISM yes; IN EASTER NO, IF God DID tell us to practice this thing wouldn't God be (Precise) as he was in his old covenant ??

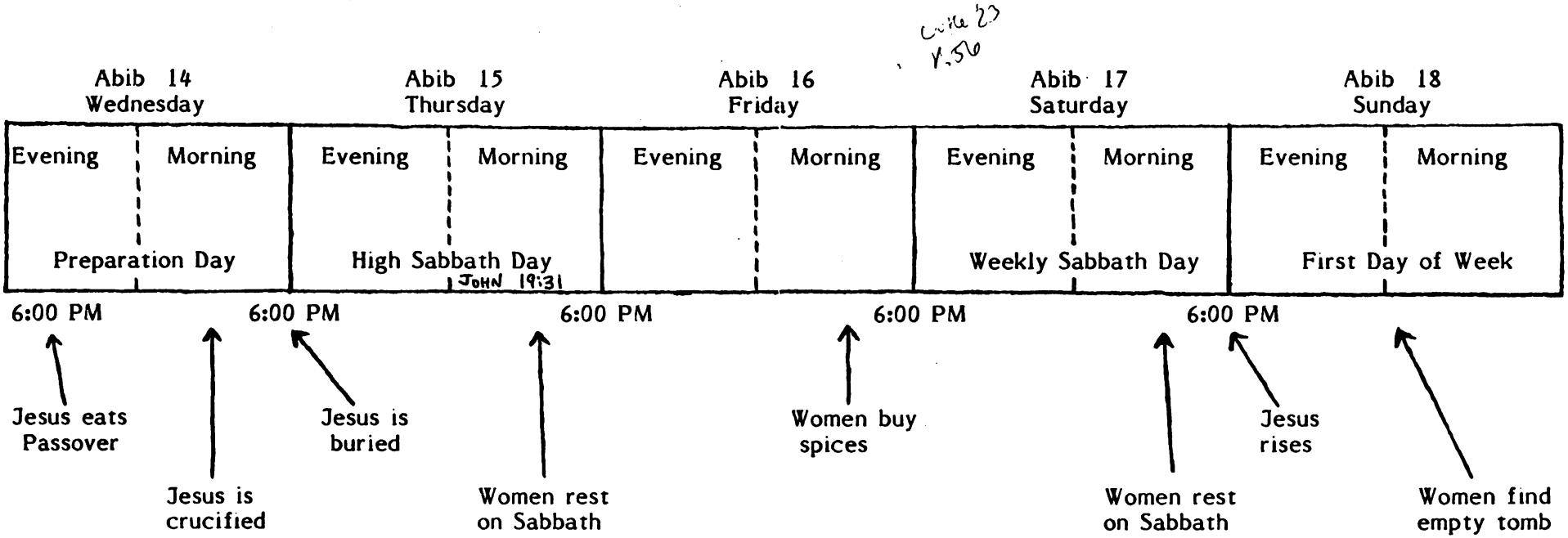
the easter today is ~~from~~ far from precise!!

PASSOVER — FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD



1. Abib was the first month of the year and the month in which God delivered Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 12:1-2; Deuteronomy 16:1).
2. A lamb was selected from the flock on the tenth of this month and kept up until the fourteenth of the month (Exodus 12:3-6).
3. The lamb was eaten on the fourteenth in the evening before the morning of the fourteenth (Genesis 1:5; Ex 12:6; Lev 23:5; 23:32).
4. The lamb was to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs reminiscent of Egypt (Ex 12:8; Deut 16:3; I Corinthians 5:6-8).
5. Seven days of unleavened bread followed the passover - the fifteenth to the twenty-first (Ex 12:18-19; Lev 23:5-6; Num 28:16-17).
6. The seven days of unleavened bread began and ended with special sabbath days (Exodus 12:16; Leviticus 23:7-8; Numbers 28:18).
7. The first sabbath day of the feast of unleavened bread was a special feast day (Leviticus 23:6; Numbers 28:17; Matthew 26:3-5).
8. The passover was to be observed in Jerusalem, which was the place God had chosen (Deut 16:2,5-6; II Chron 30:1; Matt 27:17-18).

THE DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST



1. Jesus ate the Passover with His disciples on the evening of the fourteenth by Moses' law (Ma 26:17-20; Mk 14:12-17; Lk 22:7-15).
2. Jesus' crucifixion began at 9:00 AM, and He died after the darkness ended at 3:00 PM (Ma 27:45-50; Mk 15:25,33-37; Lk 23:44-49).
3. Jesus was buried as the preparation day ended and the high sabbath day was about to begin (Mk 15:42; Lk 23:54; Jn 19:14,31,42).
4. The women who followed Jesus rested the high sabbath day before buying and preparing their spices (Mark 16:1 cp Exodus 12:16).
5. The women bought their spices and prepared them the regular work day between the two sabbaths (Mark 16:1 cp Luke 23:55-56).
6. The women rested during the weekly sabbath after buying and preparing their spices the previous day (Luke 23:55-56 cp Ex 20:10).
7. Jesus rose from the dead as the weekly sabbath ended - three days and three nights after burial (Matthew 12:39-40; Mark 8:31).
8. While it was still dark the morning of the first day of the week, the women found the tomb empty (Ma 28:1-6; Lk 24:1-3; Jn 20:1).
9. The gospel record of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection prove His sign of three days and three nights (Matthew 12:39-40).

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 more than a prophet, He is greater than the prophet Jonah, and He is more than a king, He is greater than King Solomon.

III. They are SELF-RIGHTEOUS (v. 43-45)
(Rather than inviting Christ into their life, they vainly clean house and leave Him out)

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; or due to turning over a new leaf (some vice is given up, but not replaced).

"***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 dirty (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 <u>do</u> allow.

We wrongly base our spirituality merely on what we <u>don't</u> do, rather than by what we <u>do</u> do.

To clean house is only half the answer; it laos needs to be lived in.

To repent of sin is not the full answer; to receive Christ is the answer.

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.

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:

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 A RELATIVE OF JESUS?"

Matthew 12:46-50
7/25/93

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).

SEE Matthew 13:55 for a list of the half brothers of Jesus. NOTE: Christ also had stepsisters.

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 tot each an important truth" (MacArthur, p. 339).

***Are you related to Jesus Christ?**

I. NOT EVERYONE is Related to Christ

("He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples") (v. 49)

"Toward His disciples" **-** this included more than the 12; it included *"them which sat about him"* (Mk. 3:34).k

Anyone who followed Christ was considered "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."

II. Being Related to Christ is NOT Accomplished by a BLOOD TIE to Him

("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 o 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.

III. The Entire World has an <u>EQUAL OPPORTUNITY</u> to be Related to Christ
("<u>Whosoever</u> shall do the will of My Father") (v. 50)

"***Whosoever***" - anyone and everyone.

The "whosoevers" of the Bible are a great encouragement (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 10:13; 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. <u>DOING THE WILL</u> of God Proves that a Person has Become a Relative of Christ
("Whosoever shall <u>do the will</u> of My Father. . . the same <u>is</u> My brother, and sister, and mother") (v. 50)

"***Shall do***" - to practice; to accomplish. It's not enough to <u>hear</u> God's will; you must do God's will.

It is not enough to know God's will; you must <u>do</u> God's will (Mt. 7:21). True belief in God's will will result in changed behavior ("works" - James 2).

Those who <u>do</u> God's will give evidence by their doing that they have received God's salvation.

The Christian life is not a noun, but a <u>verb</u>! 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)

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

8) SUFFERING (God wants you to be willing to suffer for His sake)

I Pet. 4:12-19; cp. 3:17

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Belonging to the family of God is a matter of prime importance!
"*Ye <u>must</u> be born again!*"
(John 3:7)

"ARE YOU A RELATIVE OF JESUS?"

Matthew 12:46-50
7/25/93

INTRODUCTION: Verses 46-47

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IV. **DOING THE WILL of God Proves that a Person has Become a Relative of Christ**
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"Ye must be born again!"
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" ERES TU UN FAMILIAR DE JESÚS?

Mateo 12:46-50
25 de Julio de 1993

INTRODUCCIÓN: Versos 46-47

* Estás relacionado/a a Jesucristo?

I. **NO TODOS están relacionados a Cristo**
("Y extendiendo sus manos hacia sus discípulos,..") (v. 49)

II. **Ser relacionado con Cristo NO es por medio de SANGRE FAMILIAR**
("Quién es mi madre, y quiénes son mis hermanos?") (v. 48)

III. **El Mundo Entero tiene la IGUAL OPORTUNIDAD para ser relacionado con Cristo**
("Por todo aquel que hace la voluntad de mi Padre") (v. 50)

IV. **EL HACER LA VOLUNTAD de Dios prueba que una persona se ha relacionado a Cristo**
("Por todo aquel que hace la voluntad de mi Padre,..ése es mi hermano,y hermana, y madre") (v. 50)

El pertenecer a la familia de Dios es de asunto primordial!
"Os es necesario nacer de nuevo!"
(Juan 3:7)

"The Sower, Seed, & Soil"

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

8/1/93

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 comparred 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 seeed 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 man** (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 man** (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 believver was not real, genuine, or sincere.

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."

"No Deepness" - This shallow hearted individual had not deep conviction of sin or salvation; as evidenced by his withering when criticism or pressure comes.

V. 20

"Anon with joy" - right away or immediately with much emotion.

This quick response to the gospel was svery promising (especially when comparred 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 penettratedhis heart but only the edge of his mind, and it is therefore as immediately renounced at it was immediately recieved." (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 man** (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 man** (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 blc it has a different basic composition than the other kinds of soil, but blc it is rightly prepared" (MacArthur, p 361) It was not compacted, not rock filled, not thorn infested. Note: Such Preparation is done by God! (ex. Lydia - 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 (Ps. 1:2-3)

* The average yield ration of grain crops in Palestine was less than 8 to 1. (MacArthur p362) Therefore, this harvest of fruitfulness is →

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 your ways" -- because God can no longer teach you.

What we need is thirsty soil!

--Not cement which can take no water (hard heart)

--Not rock-filled shallow soil which can only drink a little (faint-hearted)

--Not thorn infested soil which has its water robbed (half-hearted)

--But fertile, cultivated 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) - 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).

"The Sower, Seed, & Soil"

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
8/1/93

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 man**
(one who does not want to hear it at all).

II. **FAINT - Hearted (v. 5-6, 20-21)**
***This soil characterizes the non-committed man**
(one who is emotionally interested but not committed).

III. **HALF - Hearted (v. 7, 22)**
***This soil characterizes the easily distracted man**
(one who is preoccupied, other things are more important).

IV. **WHOLE - Hearted (v. 8, 23)**
***This soil characterizes the tender man**
(one who has a sincere and good heart - Luke 8:15).

"BLINDNESS, DEAFNESS, AND HEART TROUBLE"
Matthew 13:9-17

8/8/93

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 of 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 <u>them</u> it is <u>not</u> 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 <u>conceal</u> truth than to reveal truth.

The Lord was actually being <u>merciful</u> 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 <u>heightened their condemnation</u> every time they heard a clear presentation of the gospel yet rejected it.

The parables would either "<u>turn some people off</u>" or <u>incite the interest</u> 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 s lip 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 ("natural man") is without spiritual understanding. He views spiritual things (as revealed in the Bible) as foolishness (I Cor. 2:14).

   b. The unsaved man has a blinded mind (II Cor. 4:4)

2. ***Illumination begins at salvation.***

   a. Heb. 6:4 - "once enlightened"

   b. Heb. 10:32 - "ye were illuminated"

3. ***Illumination is a work of the Holy Spirit*** (I Cor. 2:9-16)

   a. The Holy Spirit reveals God's Word only to believers (I Cor. 2:9-10)

   b. The Holy Spirit reveals the "deep things of God" (I Cor. 2:10)

   c. The Holy Spirit convicted men of sin, righteousness and judgment (Jn. 16:8).

   d. The Holy Spirit is our guide into all truth (jn. 16:13).

"BLINDNESS, DEAFNESS, AND HEART TROUBLE"
Matthew 13:9-17

8/8/93

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:

"THE WHEAT AND THE TARES"

Matthew 13:24-30, 34-43
8/15/93

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 saem 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 the sheep from the goats (Mt. 25:31-46). Proof: In the parable of the "wheat and tares" 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.

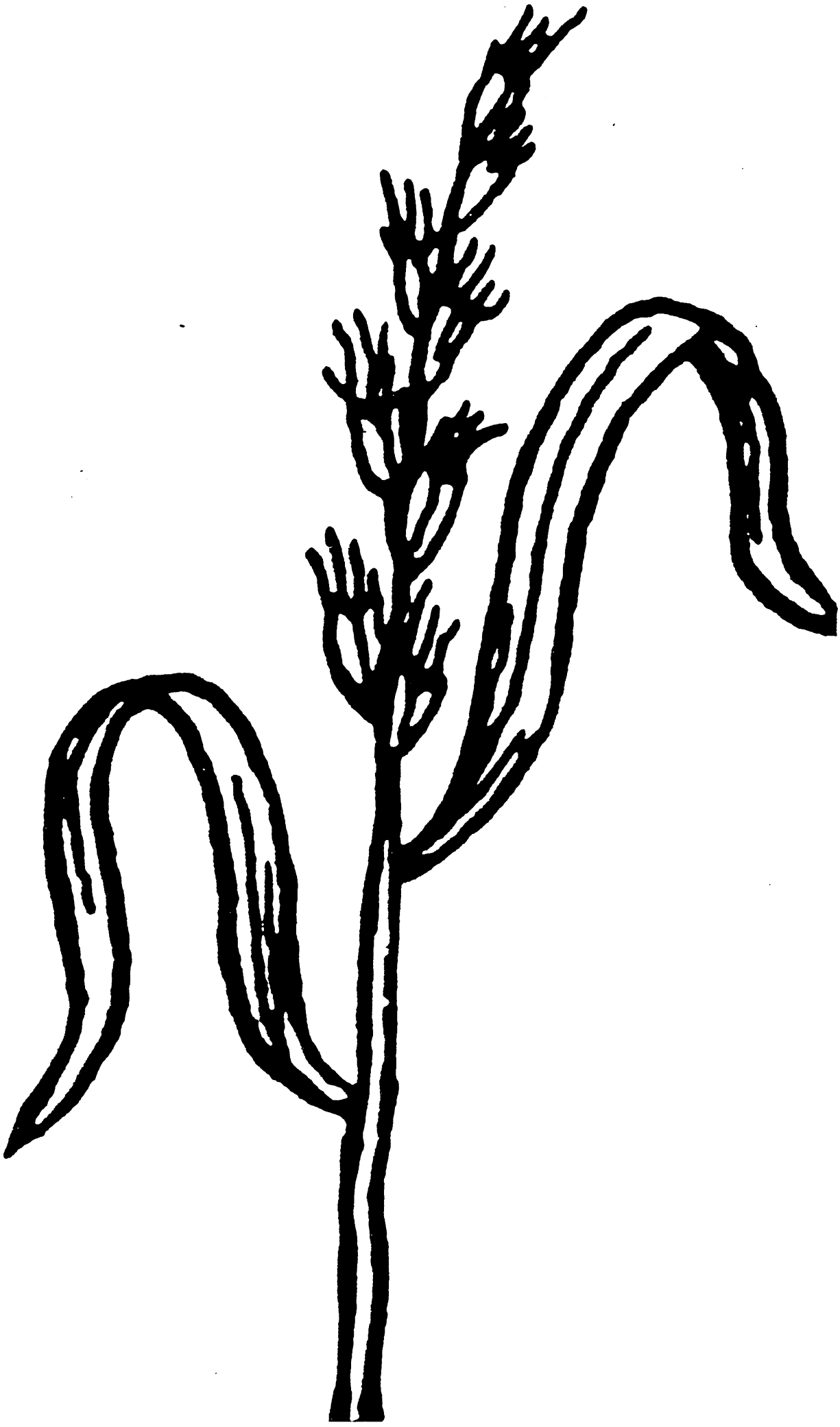
"***The righteous will shine***" because rather than causing others to sin while on earth, they turned sinners to righteousness (Dan. 12:3 - "*And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*")

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
8/29/93

INTRODUCTION:

***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)

II. The MIXTURE of the Kingdom (v. 33)
(The Kingdom's saints are presently mixed in with sinners)

III. The VALUE of the Kingdom (v. 44-46)
(The Kingdom's worth is infinitely beyond compare)

A. The Hidden Treasure (v. 44)

B. The Pearl of Great Price (v. 45-46)

IV. The PURGING of the Kingdom (v. 47-50)
(The Kingdom will not be inherited by the wicked)

CONCLUSION:

"THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN"

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-50
8/29/93

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>

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: Matt. 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 <u>not</u> 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 PURGING 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 "*sit 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).

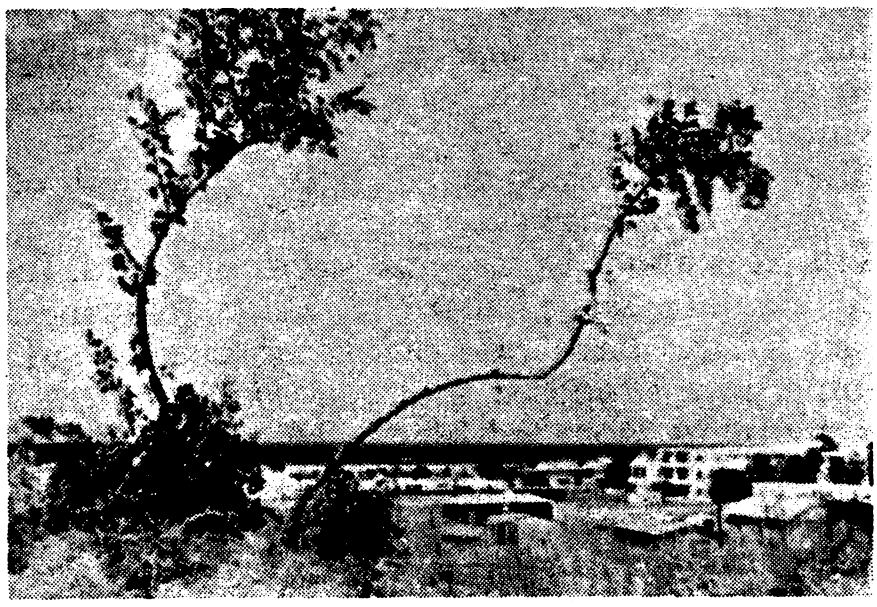
"***Wailing***" - to weep in a loud cry - speaks of the emotional sorrow (because of the realization of eternal loss and ruin).

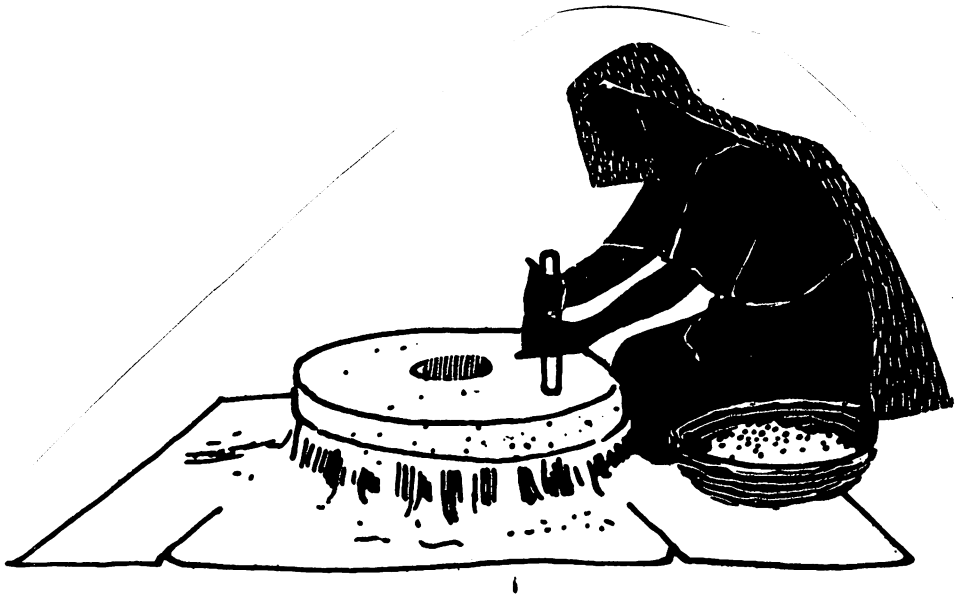
"***Gnashing of teeth***" - speaks of the physical pain (to be endured throughout eternity).

CONCLUSION:



SOWING SEED



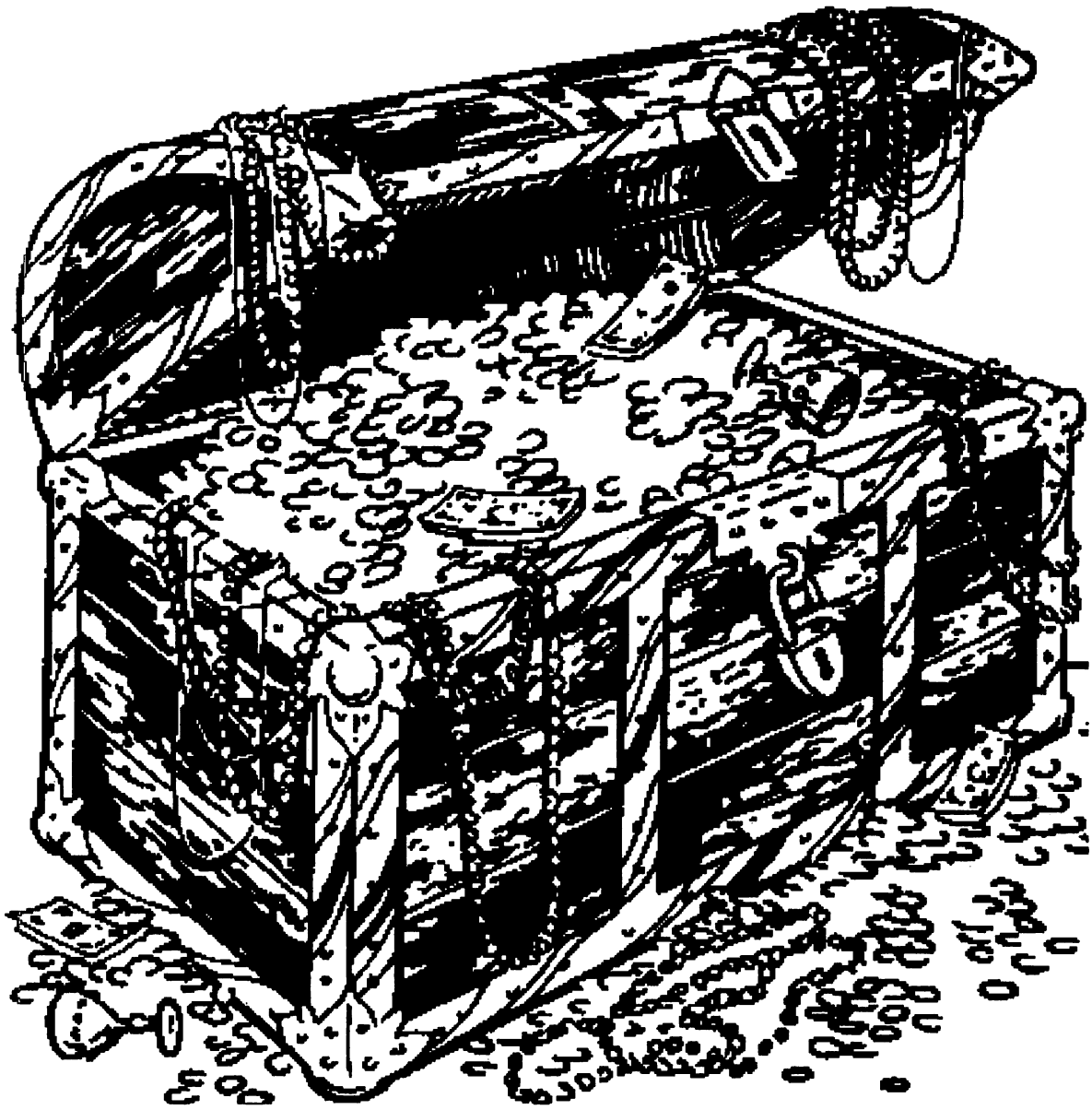


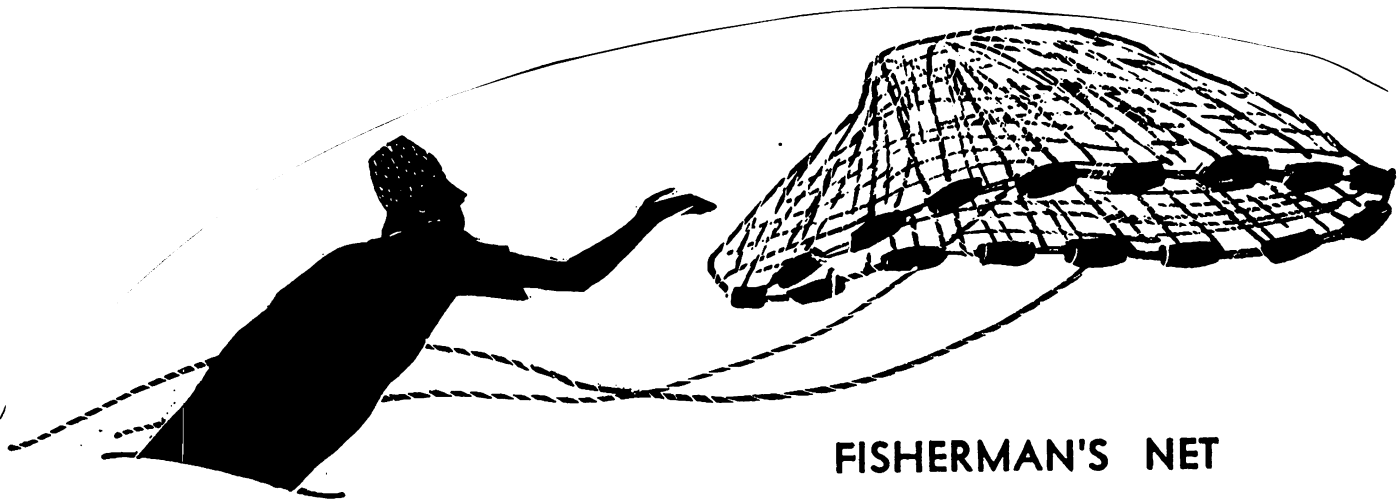
UNLEAVENED BREAD



LEAVENED BREAD







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Timeline of the Kingdom

The Church Age	The Rapture - The Return		Judgement of the Living	"Millennium" 1,000 Year reign of Christ	Great White Throne	Eternal State
Matt.16:18	I Thess.4:13-18	Rev.19	Matt.13:47-50 Matt.25:31-46	Rev.20:1-10	Rev.20:11-15	Rev. 21-22
				Phase I of Christ's Eternal Kingdom		Phase II of Christ's Eternal Kingdom

"THE TRAGEDY OF UNBELIEF"

Matthew 13:53-58
10/3/93

INTRODUCTION: Verse 53

Some people wrongly view Christ as a mere man (a mere mortal).

EX: the humility of Christ in His incarnation. He surrendered so much. His deity was veiled from 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)

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 made in life is to live and die without ever 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

granted. . . . Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand" (vv. 11, 13).

As far as preparation of the disciples was concerned, the two most important parables of Matthew 13 were those of the sower and of the wheat and tares. The story of the sower made clear that some people would believe the gospel but many would not; and it prepared them to anticipate the four basic responses men would make to the gospel. The vivid story of the wheat and tares made clear that, for the present period of Christ's kingdom, the saved and the unsaved would coexist side by side. The twelve—and all succeeding witnesses of Christ—would carry on their ministry in a time of both belief and unbelief and of both good and evil.

Beginning with 13:53 and continuing through the first part of chapter 16, Matthew records eight incidents in the life of the Lord that correspond to and demonstrate the truths presented in the two parables just mentioned.

The first incident involved the offense taken against Jesus by His hometown of Nazareth (13:54-58). To them Jesus was a stumbling block, and the soil of their hearts was obviously hard.

The second incident involved Herod (14:1-12), whose heart was also hard but who rejected the Lord more out of indifference than hatred.

The third incident had two parts and centered first on the large multitude whom Jesus miraculously fed and then around the people of Gennesaret (14:13-21, 34-36). In both instances, the initial fascination with Jesus was positive but superficial. The first group followed Him because they were fed and the second because they were healed. Their interest eventually withered, just like plants in shallow soil do when the sun comes out.

The fourth incident occurred between the two parts of the third and involved the twelve disciples, whose "good soil" was evidenced by their worshiping Jesus after He walked on the water and calmed the storm (14:22-33).

The fifth incident involved the scribes and Pharisees who tried to find an excuse to condemn Jesus (15:1-20), and it illustrates again the hard and stony ground of unbelieving rejection.

The sixth incident centered on the Canaanite woman who immediately confessed Jesus as Lord and begged Him to deliver her demon-possessed daughter (15:21-28). The soil of her heart was soft and fertile, and the seed of the Word took firm root.

The seventh incident involved the Galileans who brought their sick and afflicted to Jesus for healing but made no genuine commitment (Luke 15:29-39). Here was a mixture of shallow and thorny soils, in which the gospel was partially but not permanently received.

The eighth and last incident involved the Pharisees and Sadducees who sought to test and entrap Jesus by asking for a special sign (16:1-4). The soil of their hearts was obviously hard.

In these eight accounts there is exactly the ratio of belief to unbelief (one out of four) found in the parable of the sower. By the marvelous wisdom and provision of

the Lord, the twelve, through these incidents, witnessed living demonstrations of the principles He had just taught them about men's response to the gospel in the present age. In these situations both the power of belief and the power of unbelief are revealed.

The power of belief is attested throughout Scripture. Abraham believed God and became the father of a great nation and of God's chosen people. Israel believed God and walked through the Red Sea on dry land. David believed God and was enabled to slay Goliath. Naaman believed God and was healed of his leprosy. Daniel believed God, and the lions could not harm him. A Roman centurion believed God, and his servant was healed. Two blind men believed God and received their sight and their salvation. Jairus believed God, and his daughter was brought back to life. The Philippian jailer and his household believed God and received eternal life. The list could go on and on.

But the list of accounts showing the power of unbelief is also long. Adam and Eve failed to believe God, and the whole world was cursed. The world itself refused to believe God's warning preached through Noah, and it was destroyed in the Flood, except for eight people. Pharaoh refused to believe God, and he lost his firstborn son, his entire army, and his own life. Israel refused to believe God and wandered forty years in the wilderness; and as a kingdom the people again refused to believe and were scattered for centuries among foreign nations. Aaron refused to believe God's command about worship and led the people into idolatry, resulting in the loss of 3,000 lives. Moses refused to believe God, and it cost him the privilege of entering the Promised Land. Nebuchadnezzar refused to believe God and became a senseless beast. Many would-be disciples refused to believe God because they were offended by Christ's teaching, and they entered into eternity without hope. The rich young ruler refused to believe God and forfeited eternal life. Most of the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees refused to believe God and were condemned to the eternal torment of hell. Although he lived for three years with Jesus, in the presence of the living Truth and Light, Judas refused to believe God and was condemned to hell, which Jesus said was Judas's own place. Felix, Festus, and Agrippa refused to believe God through the witness of Paul, and they were lost forever.

Just as faith has the power to bring forgiveness of sins and eternal life, unbelief has the power to hold a person in his sins and under the condemnation of eternal hell. Just as belief has the power to bring eternal happiness, joy, peace, and glory in God's presence, unbelief has the power to bring eternal sorrow, pain, and anguish in God's absence.

As the parable of the sower illustrates, most of the response Jesus faced and the disciples would face was that of unbelief. Whether unbelief comes from the heart beaten hard by sin, from the rocky heart covered by a shallow layer of superficial belief, or from the thorny heart whose worldliness chokes out the truth of the gospel—all unbelief is a matter of will. Unbelief is a choice; it is saying no to God in spite of the evidence.

Matthew's account of the first incident illustrating the parable of the sower is preceded by the brief mention of Jesus' departure from Capernaum.

"THE TRAGEDY OF UNBELIEF"

Matthew 13:53-58

10/3/93

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)

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 say 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 COVER UP 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 BEHAVIOR and Foolish DECISIONS (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 REPENTANCE (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.

"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:

"JESUS CHRIST:
The God of the Impossible

Matthew 14:14-21

10/24/93

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 thedock! 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). Mt. 15:23

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 NOT ADEQUATE 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 they 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 You do! 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 INSIGNIFICANT (v. 17)

"***We have here but. . .***" - 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 no 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 yrs.

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 <u>MUCH</u> 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!

VI. Realize: THE INCREDIBLE IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE FOR JESUS (v. 20-21)

V. 20

"***They did all 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 best 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!

"JESUS CHRIST:
The God of the Impossible

Matthew 14:14-21
10/24/93

INTRODUCTION:

***Limited resources don't limit Jesus Christ one bit!**

Six truths to realize:

I. Realize: TURNING PEOPLE AWAY IS NOT THE ANSWER (v. 16a)

II. Realize: WE ARE NOT ADEQUATE IN OURSELVES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE MULTITUDES (v. 16b)

III. Realize: WITH JESUS NOTHING IS INSIGNIFICANT (v. 17)

IV. Realize: LITTLE BECOMES MUCH WHEN GIVEN TO JESUS (v. 18)

V. Realize: WHAT JESUS DOES FOR PEOPLE, HE OFTEN DOES THROUGH HIS SERVANTS (v. 19)

VI. Realize: THE INCREDIBLE IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE FOR JESUS (v. 20-21)

CONCLUSION:

"OUR LIFE-PRESERVER"

Matthew 14:22-36

10/31/93

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 walk on by (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 <u>title</u> for Himself, a title which identified Him as Jehovah God (cp. Jn. 8:58, 18:6 with Exod. 3:13-14).

He said literally: "***<u>I AM</u>***" *(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 <u>RESCUES</u> 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 <u>saw</u> the wind" **-** Too often we let what we "<u>see</u>" 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 needed anymore. The purpose for that storm was accomplished. Jesus used it to glorify 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 REMOVES Our Afflictions (v. 34-36)

V. 35

"***All 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 as many as 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:

"OUR LIFE-PRESERVER"

Matthew 14:22-36
10/31/93

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: