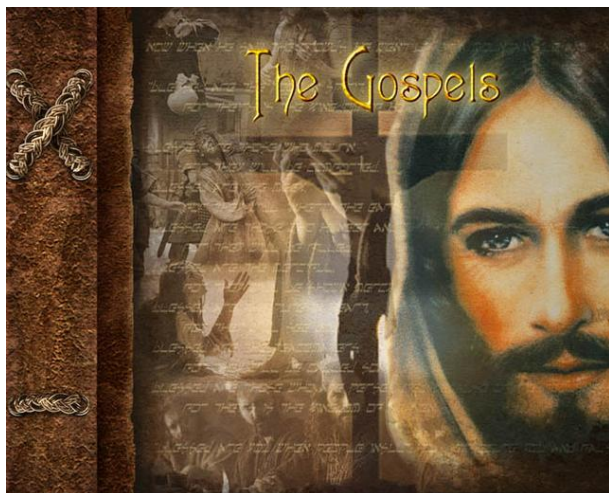


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Foreword



Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

Luke 1:1-4

This book series is dedicated to the life, ministry and teachings of Jesus Christ as foreshadowed in the Old Testament, presented in the Gospels and explained in the Epistles- letters to the churches in the books of Romans through Revelation. It's formatted in a manner to help facilitate ministry in various venues.

- Many types and shadows, prophecies and promises in the Old Testament point to the Messiah.
- God is a faith God, so He was calling into existence beforehand what He wanted- **Romans 4:17**.
- We find in Scripture that God seldom does anything without speaking it into existence first.

1 Peter 1:10-12

Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

- Even though great detail went into the coming of Jesus, not many recognized His coming.

John 1:10-12

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

- Jesus became a man in order to become our sinless substitute to redeem and ransom mankind.
- Jesus was born as a Jewish man under the Old Covenant, to fulfill and live it perfectly in life.
- What was impossible for man to do on His own, Jesus accomplished- **Hebrews 4:15**.

Matthew 5:17-19

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”

Luke 24:25-27

He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

- The life, death and resurrection of Jesus is at the heart of the Gospel message.
- Jesus came for one purpose only, to take away our sins so we could receive eternal life!
- John 1:29 John the Baptist said, *“Look the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”*



Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

- The word “Gospel” simply means “Good News.”
- When Jesus began His earthly ministry He read from Isaiah 61:1-2 to explain His mission.
- As we study the Gospel books together, we will see this theme fulfilled many times over.

Luke 4:17-21

The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

**“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to release the oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”**

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

- The Gospel books provide the foundation by which the “Gospel” message is preached today.
- Only through this message can faith come to the sinner to call upon the Jesus and be saved.
- God has given this message to the Church to proclaim to the whole world.

Mark 16:15-17

He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

- In the book of Acts we see how the Spirit of God led Philip to witness to Ethiopian Eunuch.

Acts 8:29-36

The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture:

“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb before the shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.
In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.
Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth.”

The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?”

- On another occasion an Angel told a man named Cornelius to ask for Peter to hear the Gospel.

Acts 11:13-14

He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, “Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.”

- This Gospel message is so sacred that tinkering with it brings swift judgment and consequences.

Galatians 1:8-9

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

2 Peter 2:1-2

But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them — bringing swift destruction on themselves.

- Only through the simplicity of this message, the “Good News” can people be saved.
- Because saving faith comes by hearing the salvation message of Jesus Christ.

Romans 10:14-17

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Acts 5:19-20

But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. “Go, stand in the temple courts,” he said, “and tell the people the full message of this new life.”

- Did you know that the subject of healing is also part of the Gospel message.
- So many only preach and teach a partial gospel, the forgiveness of sins only- important as it is.
- However, Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the Law in **Galatians 3:13**.
 - o That includes poverty, sickness and death.

Acts 14:8-10

In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, “Stand up on your feet!” At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

2 Corinthians 8:9

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

Acts 2:36-39

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call.”



- The Gospel message is simple enough, that even a child can understand it.
- God made it that way so that as many people as possible can be saved.
- When man adds their religious traditions to the truth they rob people of salvation.
- That is why this study is so important!

Luke 10:21

At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.”

Luke 11:52

“Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering.”

1 Corinthians 1:17-19

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel — not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

- Jesus made it very clear that He is the only way.
- The world will say, “Well you Christians are so exclusive and narrow minded”
- Funny, that is the very point Jesus was making as well.

Matthew 7:13-14

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

John 14:6-7

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

- Either Jesus was crazy, a liar or telling the truth- obviously the latter is the case!
- Salvation is found through faith in Jesus Christ apart from works- **Ephesians 2:8-9.**

Romans 10:9-11

That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

The Gospel period of Jesus is the vital link or transition between something old ending and something wonderfully new beginning.

- In the Gospels there is something for everyone.
- The Old Covenant Law abiding Jew, and the New Covenant born again Christian believer.
- Without the Gospels the Old Testament would be unfilled and the Epistles would make no sense.



- In addition to the Gospel message was the introduction to the teaching about the Kingdom.
- Jesus came to usher in His Heavenly Kingdom on earth in the lives of His disciples.

Luke 17:20-21

Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you.”

The subject of the “Kingdom of God” or the “Kingdom of Heaven,” is referenced eighty five times in the Gospels as recorded in the New International Version of the Bible.

- It was a central theme that Jesus preached and taught all throughout His earthly ministry.

What is the difference between the terminology “Kingdom of God” and the “Kingdom of Heaven?”

- Well, neither of these terms are ever found in the Old Testament.
- The majority of the references are made by Jesus Himself in the Gospels.
- All the references to the “Kingdom of Heaven” are made in the Gospel of Matthew.
- Consider a parallel passage like Matthew 5:3 and Luke 6:20 which reference the same thing.

We can say that the “Kingdom of God” and the “Kingdom of Heaven” mean the same thing and can be used interchangeably.

Matthew 5:3- “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Luke 6:20- “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.”

- In speaking of the Kingdom of God, it was a concept not realized under the OT Period.
- For them it was a future period foretold by the prophets- **Luke 2:25-32.**
- The nation of Israel had their hopes centered upon the coming Messiah.

2 Samuel 7:4-17; Psalms 2:6; 72:1; Isaiah 11:1; 32:1; 65:17; Jeremiah 33:15; Daniel 7:13-14; Micah 4:1; Zechariah 9:10; 12:1; 14:9.

- The four Gospels revealed the manifestation of God’s Kingdom- a spiritual one.
- However, the full manifestation of God’s Kingdom on the earth comes at the Second Advent.
- The judgment of God’s enemies is postponed to the not so distant future.

The Kingdom that arrived with Jesus did not include the triumphal victory so longed for by the Jews.

- It arrived secretly like leaven, and inconspicuously like a mustard seed.
- Like a small pearl of great value that can be hidden in one’s pocket- **Matthew 13:31-46.**
- The Jewish people expected the Messiah to defeat the Romans and usher in the Millennium.

The new reality of the Kingdom overlapped the present age, invading it rather than bringing it to an end. The demons reflect this oddity when they ask Jesus in:

Matthew 8:29

“What do you want with us, Son of God?” they shouted. “Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?”

Even after the resurrection, the disciples in the beginning misunderstood the timing of God's Kingdom. **Luke 19:11, 41-42; 24:21; John 18:36; Acts 1:6-8.**

- In Jesus' first advent, He came as a Lamb, the Second Advent He comes as a Lion.
 - o **John 1:29, 36; Revelation 5:5.**
- Jesus was the full embodiment of the Kingdom of God that He ushered in.
 - o **Matthew 3:1-3; 4:17; Luke 4:17-21; John 18:33-37; 1 Timothy 6:12-16.**

All that Jesus did is related to this claim that the Kingdom of God has dawned through His ministry.

- His healings were manifestations of the presence of the Kingdom.
- Now that Kingdom is within our spirit and is manifest in the earth through our faith.
 - o **Matthew 6:10; 18:18 Luke 10:18-19; 17:20-21.**

Matthew 11:12 AMP

And from the days of John the Baptist until the present time, the kingdom of heaven has endured violent assault, and violent men seize it by force [as a precious prize — a share in the heavenly kingdom is sought with most ardent zeal and intense exertion].

Luke 11:20 AMP

But if I drive out the demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has [already] come upon you.

- It all began with **John 3:16**, God sending Jesus to bring Salvation to the earth- **Acts 10:38.**

Remember, Adam had committed high treason in the Garden of Eden, and gave his God given dominion as gods of this earth over to Satan- **Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 82:6; John 10:34-35.**

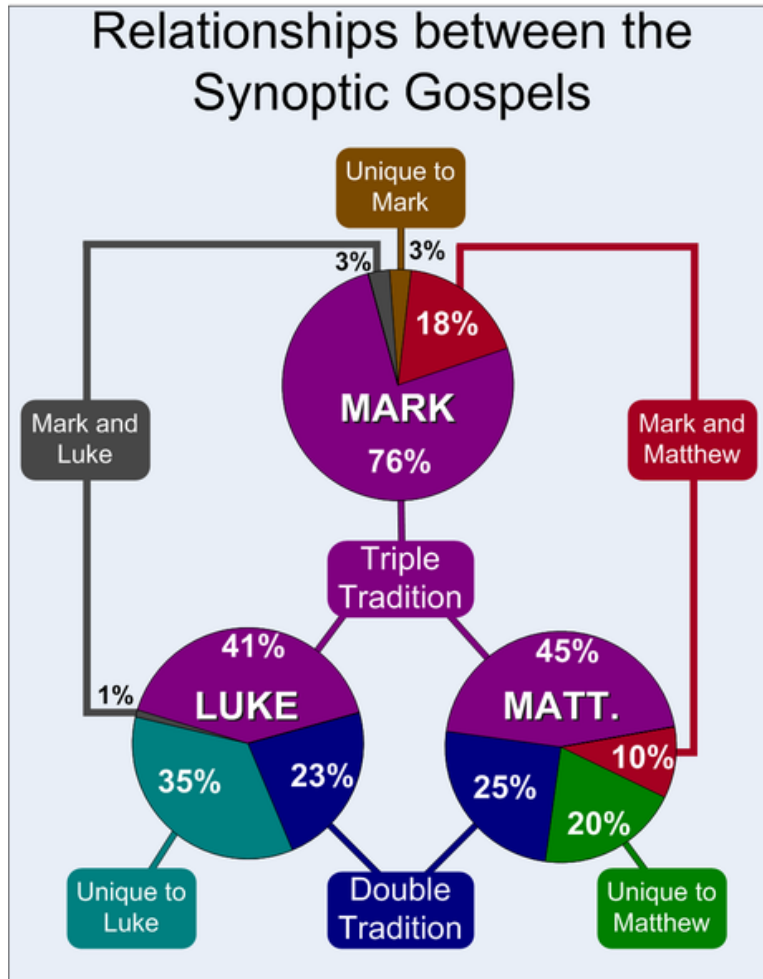
- Jesus came to reclaim what was lost and restore it back to us and defeated Satan- **Ro. 5:17.**
- After the resurrection of Jesus, Satan is still called the god of this age- **2 Corinthians 4:4.**
- This world system is still under his control- **Luke 4:5-7; 1 John 5:19; Gal. 3:22; Rev. 12:9.**
 - o **Ephesians 2:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8; Hebrews 2:8-9**
- For the time being- **Matthew 8:29; 1 Corinthians 7:31; Revelation 12:12; 20:1-3.**

We are now considered an occupation army in the earth, enforcing Satan's defeat until Jesus returns a second time to rule an reign physically on the earth from Jerusalem- **1Cor. 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:9-10.**

This kingdom within is manifested in our lives and in the natural realm through our faith in God's Word- we bring it out on display for the world to see, it's not automatic- **Luke 17:20-21; Mt. 5:14-16.**

- So how does one enter into this spiritual Kingdom?
- The answer is simple, we are born into it, through faith in Jesus- **John 3:3-8; Ro. 10:9-10.**
- To change kingdoms one must change lords.
- Before Christ we were sold as slaves to sin, Satan was our lord- **1 John 3:10.**
- Through the New Birth, we passed from death unto life- **John 5:24; Colossians 1:13-14.**
- We accept the invitation through the Gospel, only by faith- **Mt. 22:1-14; Luke 13:23-24.**
- Have you ever heard that saying, "You may be the only Jesus someone will ever see?"
- The same goes for unbelievers seeing what the Kingdom of God is like in this earth.
- It can only be seen in our lives; living out our full redemption for all to see how good God is.

Introduction



The first four books of the Bible: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are referred to as the Gospels.

The first three books are referred to as the synoptic gospels, because they are similar in that they include many of the same stories, often in the same sequence, and sometimes the exact same wording.

This degree of parallelism in content, narrative arrangement, language, and sentence structures can only be accounted for by literary interdependence.

Scholars believe that these gospels share the same point of view and are clearly linked. The term synoptic comes from the Greek *syn*, meaning “together”, and *optic*, meaning “seen”.

A. Principles of Interpretations

It is necessary for us to clarify proper Bible interpretation techniques that should be followed when rightly dividing the Gospels.

Principle #1: Old Covenant in Force

- The majority of the Gospel accounts occurred while the Old Covenant was still in force.
- Often times Jesus spoke as a man still living under the Old Covenant- follow the Mosaic law.

Matthew 8:3-4

Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” Immediately he was cured of his leprosy. Then Jesus said to him, “See that you don’t tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

Luke 10:25-28

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?” He answered: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

- Under the Old Covenant, adherence to the Law & animal sacrifices was their salvation.
- Remember, Jesus came to fulfill the Law and usher in the Age of Grace.
- Under the New Covenant Jesus is the final and ultimate sacrifice- faith in Him alone now!

Principle #2: Speaking to the Jewish Nation

- At times Jesus spoke specifically to the nation of Israel concerning the present and future.
- Those things have no specific relevance to the Church back then, today or in the future.
- For instance, Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple- 70 AD Romans.

Luke 19:41-44

As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace — but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”

- Other times, Jesus talked about the Tribulation period after the Church is raptured.
- He predicted events that would transpire that would affect the Jewish nation in the future.

Matthew 24:15-17

“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel — let the reader understand— then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

Principle #3: Jesus Addressing the Dispensation of Grace

- Jesus taught many times about the coming of the New Covenant, the Kingdom of God.
- After His resurrection, these principles, promises and directives were further clarified.
- The Holy Spirit through the early Apostles, explained them in the Epistles of the NT.
- These precious truths belong to us today under the New Covenant- like the New Birth.

John 3:3-7- In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” “How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!” Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.”

- Not until the disciples were born again after the resurrection could they understand.
- Many things were hidden from them, they did not have the Holy Spirit to comprehend.
 - o **John 7:37-39; 13:7; 16:12.**

John 12:16

At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him.

John 16:12-13- “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”

Principle # 4: The Bible is Progressive Revelation

- The Old Testament saints had less light or understanding concerning the Kingdom of God.
- That also includes their understanding of Satan and his kingdom as well.
- Throughout the ages, more truth and detail has been given as recorded in Scripture.
- The Epistles letters (Romans – Revelation) has the greatest amount of revelation given to us.
 - o **1 Peter 1:10-12; Hebrews 10:1.**

Hebrews 8:13- By calling this covenant “new,” he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.

- Though the Old covenant is obsolete, it still provides principles and examples for us today.
- The 10 commandments are still true and apply today and are fulfilled when we walk in love.
- Just look at **1 Corinthians 10:1-13**; written down as examples and warnings for us today.

Romans 13:8-10

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

- Just because we are under Grace and not the Law does not mean we are excused from it.
- Yes we are saved by Grace through Faith (**Ephesians 2:8-9**); not by the law- **Galatians 2:16**.
- God does not change, neither does His standard of holiness change between Old & New Cov.

Leviticus 11:44- I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy.

1 Peter 1:15-16- But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

- Remember the golden rule, “Love your neighbor as yourself” in **Leviticus 19:18**.
- That is the best the Old Testament Jews could do, since they were not born again.
- But what if they did not love themselves? Natural human love, very sub-standard love.

Jesus referenced many Old Testament Scriptures in the Gospels, many times He was speaking to Jews.

- They were not born again at the time and could only love their neighbor as themselves.
- The New Covenant takes it to the next level, love one another as Jesus loved us.
- Because there is more grace, the Holy Spirit and the New Birth- more is expected of us today.

John 1:16-18

From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

John 13:34-35

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

- Here is another example how the New Covenant improves upon the Old Covenant.
- So we are still to obey God’s eternal, unchanging principles of holiness in the Old Testament.
- Under the New Covenant, Jesus builds on the Old with New expectations of obedience.

Matthew 5:21-22

“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.”

Matthew 5:27-28

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Matthew 5:43-45

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

- So Jesus builds on the 10 commandments, He does not say they no longer apply.
- Jesus did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets, but fulfill them – **Matthew 5:17.**
- We obey the 10 commandments by walking in love from our heart on a whole new level!
- Under the New Covenant, we just have to ask one question, “What would Love do?”
- Jesus gave us the Law of Love, the Law of the New Covenant to govern His Church.
- **1 Corinthians 13**, known as the love chapter is our standard- also **Galatians 5:23-24.**
- So as we study the Gospels we need to keep these principles in mind to rightly divide it.
- As a good rule of thumb, keep in mind the audience, the time and the culture.
- There is no contradiction between the Gospel books, just a different eye witness account.

B. Guidelines for Interpretation

1. Analogy of Faith

- The primary rule of Bible interpretation was called “the analogy of faith.”
- The analogy of faith is the rule that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.
- In other words, Sacred Scripture is its own interpreter.

This means, quite simply, that no part of Scripture can be interpreted in such a way as to render it in conflict with what is clearly taught elsewhere in Scripture.

- If a given verse is capable of two different interpretations, go with what agrees with the Bible
- So with interpreting Gospel text, it should agree with the Epistles: Romans – Revelation.

2. Interpreting the Bible Literally

- To interpret the Bible literally is to interpret it as *literature*.
- The Bible is a special book in a class by itself – given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
- Under inspiration a noun remains a noun and a verb remains a verb.
- Questions do not become exclamations, and historical narratives do not become allegories.

That is, the natural meaning of a passage is to be interpreted according to the normal rules of grammar, speech, syntax and context.

3. Literal Interpretation and Genre Analysis

- The term *genre* means simply “kind,” “sort” or “species.”
- Genre analysis involves the study of such things as literary forms, figures of speech and style.
- Like distinguishing between lyric poetry and legal briefs, between essays and epic poems.

We distinguish between the style of historical narratives and sermons, between realistic graphic description and hyperbole (exaggeration for effect).

- Failure to make these distinctions when dealing with the Bible can lead to problems.
- So literary analysis is crucial to accurate Bible interpretation.
- For example, the Bible describes the hills as dancing and clapping their hands- obvious here.
- But what about Balaam’s donkey talking, is this fable or text narrating a miracle.

This particular episode takes place in the midst of a section of Scripture that does not bear the marks of poetry or fable. The immediate context bears all the marks of historical narrative.

4. The Problem of Metaphor

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them.

- The Bible frequently makes use of metaphors, and they are found often on the lips of Jesus.
- Jesus often used concrete examples (Parable of the Sower) to illustrate abstract truths.

John 10:9- I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.

5. The Grammatico-Historical Method

- The focus is upon grammatical constructions and historical contexts of the Bible.
- It is helpful to understand English grammar as well as Greek and Hebrew.

If for example, the general public had a thorough knowledge of Greek grammar, the Jehovah Witnesses would have a much more difficult time selling their interpretation of the first chapter of the Gospel of John by which the Witnesses deny the deity of Jesus Christ.

6. Source Criticism

If Mark was the first Gospel written and that Mathew and Luke had Mark's Gospel in front of them as they wrote, many questions of the relationship of the Gospels can be explained.

- Both Luke and Matthew include certain information that is not found in Mark.
- Having a source of information available to them that Mark did not have or choose not to use.

By isolating the material found only in Matthew or only in Luke, we can discern certain things about their priorities and concerns in writing.

- Knowing why an author writes what he writes helps us understand what he writes.
- We see that the intended audience of the Gospel of Matthew was to Jews- OT references.
- The Gospel of Luke was written to a wider audience, the Gentile world.

7. Authorship and Dating

- Questions of authorship and date are also important to a proper understanding of text.
- Language can change its meaning from one generation to another; from differing localities.
- It is important to be as precise as possible in fixing the place and date of a book.

8. Historical Narratives are to be Interpreted by the Didactic

- The term *didactic* comes from the Greek word that means to teach or to instruct.
- Didactic literature is literature that teaches or explains.
- Much of the Apostle Paul's writing is didactic in character.
- The Gospels record what Jesus did and the Epistles interpret the significance of what He did.
- Sure the Gospels often teach and interpret as they are giving a narration.
- But it is true that the emphasis in the Gospels is found in the record of events.

The Epistles are more concerned with interpreting the significance of those events in terms of doctrine, exhortation and application. They were written in the dispensation we live in today- Age of Grace!

Sure, the Gospels are a part of the New Testament, it recorded events that pertained to Israel and to us.

Building doctrine or drawing too many inferences from narratives alone is dangerous business.

9. The Implicit is to be Interpreted by the Explicit

- Many times we can learn from Scripture what is left implied or unsaid.
- There will be a central truth, but also secondary implications, applications or principles.
- However, implied interpretations should always be subordinate to what is explicitly revealed.

Romans 8:12-14

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, **because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.**

Explicit Interpretation:

The context of being “led by the Spirit” above is in putting to death the misdeeds of the body- **Gal. 5:18**.

Implicit Interpretation:

That the Holy Spirit will lead us concerning all matters that pertain to the will of God for our lives.

John 16:13

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

When an implication is drawn that is contradictory to what is explicitly stated in Scripture, the implication must be rejected.

- If we interpret the clear in the light of the obscure, we drift into gray areas- become cultic.
- No great knowledge of logic is necessary, just the simple application of common sense.

The basic rule is the rule of care: careful reading of what the text is actually saying will save us from much confusion and distortion- **1 Corinthians 13:9-13**.

10. Determine Carefully the Meaning of Words

The better we understand the individual words used in biblical statements, the better we will be able to understand the total message of the Scripture.

- Studying the roots/original meanings of words can be very helpful to gain the flavor of a term
- For example, the Hebrew word for glory originally meant “heavy” or “weighty.”
- Thus, the glory of God has to do with His “weightiness” or “significance.”

In addition to origins and derivations, it is extremely important for us to study language in the context of its usage. Words undergo changes in meaning depending on how they are used.

11. Observe the Difference between the Spirit and the Letter of the Law

Note that the Pharisees in the New Testament were quite detailed about keeping the letter of the law while violating the spirit constantly.

- For example, in the law it refers to the 7th day of the week as a Sabbath day, a day of rest.
- The Pharisees went to the letter of **Exodus 23:12**; Jesus corrected them in **Matthew 12:1-8**.

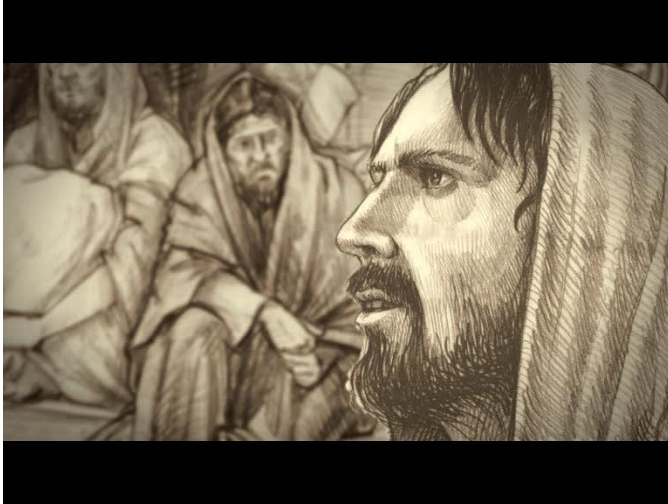
12. Cultural Conditioning and the Bible

The better I understand the first-century culture of Palestine, the easier it becomes for me to have an accurate understanding of what was being said. We are not obliged to conform to their culture- just truth.

- In Bible interpretation there must be a balance between distinguishing custom from principle.
- The Bible is conditioned by its cultural setting; I also am conditioned by my cultural setting.
- We tend to filter what the Bible is saying in light of our cultural manners & practices as well.
- The urgent need is for us is to conform to Biblical truth and not to present day secular values.

Book 1

The Parables



Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: “I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.”

Matthew 13:34-35

Welcome to the first book in this series called the “Gospels” where we will explore the Lord’s parables and discover their rich significance to us today.

A parable is a short, simple story designed to communicate a spiritual truth, religious principle, or moral lesson; a figure of speech in which truth is illustrated by a comparison or example drawn from everyday experiences. They are not just simple folk stories or fables of fiction- revelation truth of the Kingdom.

People usually enjoy sermons that are based on parables. Since parables are concrete stories based on life situations, they seem easier to handle than abstract concepts.

- Parables often use the literary simile to make a comparison- beginning with “like” or “as”.

Matthew 13:24-25

Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field...”

A parable is often no more than an extended metaphor or simile, using figurative language in the form of a story to illustrate a particular truth.

The Greek word for parable literally means “a laying by the side of” or “a casting alongside,” thus “a comparison or likeness.” In a parable something is placed alongside something else, in order that one may throw light on the other. A familiar custom or incident is used to illustrate some truth less familiar.

The safest and probably most accurate way to treat the parables is to look for one basic point or central truth in them.

As a rule of thumb, avoid the allegorizing of every detail within a parable, trying to look for some secret meaning in every statement. Unless the New Testament is clearly indicating an allegorical meaning.

Many of the parables are simply not suited to allegorical interpretation as they are found in prophetic Scriptures like Daniel or Revelation. The word “sea” in Revelation 13:1 speak of the Gentile nations.

Some parables, such as The Prodigal Son, obviously have more than one point. Some are extended similes; others are comparative stories; others have an obvious single moral application.

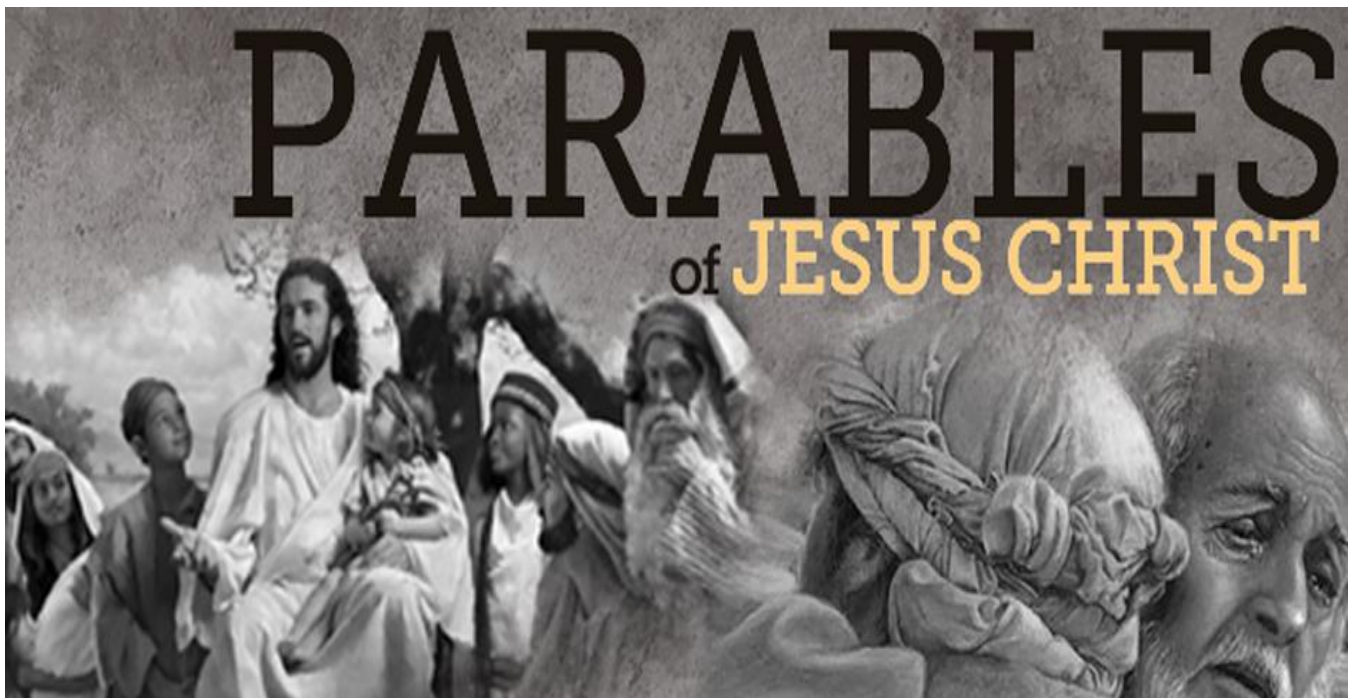
According to **Matthew 13:10-17**, Jesus spoke to the general public in parables as a form of code so that those with sincere motives and a desire for God would understand them, and the others would not.

Matthew 11:25-26

At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.”

- A major theme in Jesus’ parables is the demand of following Him in authentic discipleship.
- Jesus showed that the time for decision is now; parable of the great supper- **Luke 14:15-24**.
- Requiring that His followers be prepared to give up all- the unfinished tower **Luke 14:28-32**
- Parables of the hidden treasure and pearl of great price (**Mt. 13:44-46**)- Kingdom valuable.
- Jesus’ parables are a call to a radical decision to follow Him, regardless of the cost.
- Speaking of dedication, consecration and determination to be faithful to the end.

So let’s begin our epic journey together as we discover new insights into the parables of Jesus Christ!



Parable #1: The New Cloth and New Wine Skins

Reference: Matthew 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22; Luke 5:33-39

Theme: Reality over Religion

Context: Jesus is asked why His Disciples are not Fasting and Praying



They said to him, “John’s disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking.” Jesus answered, “Can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast.” He told them this parable: “No one tears a patch from a new garment and sews it on an old one. If he does, he will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, ‘The old is better.’“

Luke 5:33-39

A. Jesus Questioned about Fasting

Luke 5:33

They said to him, “John’s disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking.”

- We don’t see fasting as an ordinance set forth in the law of Moses.
- However it was a common practice amongst the Jews as a means of solemn reverence.
 - o It was to set time aside to seek God in prayer.
 - o A side note, fasting without being in the Word and Prayer is just dieting.
- The Christian Church continued the practice in **Acts 13:2-3** Worshipped the Lord/Fasted.

Acts 14:23

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

- Fasting in principle was the abstinence of food not water- **Luke 4:1-2**, Jesus fasted 40 days.
- There is what is called a Daniel’s fast- just water and vegetables- **Daniel 1:1-16**.
- Jesus referred to “Mourning” in **Matthew 9:15** in reference to fasting.
- Repentance: tear clothes and put on Sack Cloth and fasting- **1 Kings 21:27-28**.
- In the Sermon on the Mount He talked about fasting in **Matthew 6:16**.
 - o Not to disfigure your face and make it apparent to others that you are fasting.

B. Setting Priorities

Luke 5:34-35

Jesus answered, “Can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast.”

- Often times fasting like many things became a religious ritual rather than of the heart.
- Man has a tendency to elevate observances over the passionate pursuit of the Lord.
- David was an exception in his generation.

Acts 13:22- “I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.”

- Reminds me of when Jesus came over to Martha’s house for dinner.
- It illustrates the preoccupation of human nature with the details and miss the main event.
- Like the man hacking his way through the jungle, content with his progress- wrong jungle.



As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Luke 10:38-42

- Likewise the question to Jesus about His disciples fasting was not a priority to Him.
- When we get so distracted in serving Jesus that we forget to sit at His feet- that’s a problem.
- Keeping the “Letter” of the Law at the expense of not keeping the “Spirit” of the law as well.
- Religious practices like the Sabbath always took second seat to Jesus.

Matthew 12:7-8

“If you had known what these words mean, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the innocent. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

Matthew 23:23-24

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices — mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law — justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.”

C. A New Creation Foretold

Mark 2:21-22

“No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse.”

- Jesus was making reference to the “New Covenant” He was ushering in- like a new cloth.
- So trying to repair the old with a new patch is pointless- get a brand new garment instead.
- Jesus was ushering in a complete replacement of the old system with something brand new.

Hebrews 8:13

By calling this covenant “new,” he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.

- Human nature does not like change, there is security with what is familiar.
- The religious leaders were so entrenched in the Old Covenant they were afraid of change.
- Change also meant the prospect of them losing their power, position and prestige.

John 11:48

“If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”

- In Luke’s version of this parable, in light of what was stated above, Luke 5:39 makes sense:
 - o *“And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, ‘The old is better.’”*

Mark 2:22

And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins.”



Containers in Eastern nations were made, and are still made of skins of animals. Generally the skin was taken entire from a sheep or a goat, and when properly prepared was filled with wine or water. This made it very convenient to travel over arid and desert regions. They could fill two skins, and fasten them together and lay them across the back of a camel, and thus carry wine or water great distances.

The problem with old wineskins is that over time, they would become very dry and brittle. New wine put into them would ferment, and swell and burst them open. So new wineskins would be elastic enough to expand and contract without breaking and thus preserve the wine.

- With the coming of the New Covenant, Jesus here was talking about the New Birth.
- The illustrations of the old cloth and old wineskins speak of the old sinful spiritual nature.
- Religions of the world attempt to remodel or perform a makeover of something dead.
- It's like giving a condemned house a new paint job on the outside- what's the point?
- Jesus was saying, I'm going to totally replace the old man with a new man in Christ.

John 3:3

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

- In 2 Corinthians 5:17, the words "New Creation" in the Greek means a "New Species."
- Or something that has never existed before, from scratch, brand new, holy, pure, & righteous.

2 Corinthians 5:16-17

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

- Going back to our house analogy, when we get saved the old house is completely torn down.
- Even the foundation is ripped up and a fresh new foundation is laid down to build upon.

1 Corinthians 3:10-12

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

- So once we are born again, we begin to build on that foundation our new Christian life.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15

If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Conclusion:

So in the final analysis, what folks considered so important (keeping the religious ritual of fasting), is insignificant in light of the New Birth that Jesus was ushering in through the New Covenant. So what counts is a "New Creation" not a religious self-improvement job- filthy rags in Isaiah 64:6.

Galatians 6:15-16

Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.

1 Peter 1:3-6, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade — kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time."

Parable #2: The Two Debtors

Reference: Luke 7:41-43

Theme: Comparison- A Heart of Gratitude between a Prostitute (Inferred) and a Pharisee

Context: Jesus was Invited to Dinner at a Pharisee's House to be Scrutinized



Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

Luke 7:36-38

A. Jesus' Feet Anointed by a Prostitute

- It took an amazing amount of courage for this woman to do this in front of all these men.
- In small towns in Judea, everyone knew everybody- she was no doubt an outcast.
- Clearly her desire for forgiveness was greater than what others thought about her.

1. Fear of Man

Galatians 1:10

Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

- A great lesson to be learned here is about the "Fear of Man." A snare to the soul.

Proverbs 29:25, Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.

- Fear of what other people might think or do has kept many from the Kingdom of God.
- The threat of losing one's prestige, position or rank; perhaps fear of bodily harm.
- Satan uses intimidation and bullying techniques to cause people to shrink back.
 - o Unfortunately, that is why persecution is so effective- **Hebrews 10:32-39.**

John 12:42-43

Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.

Luke 12:4-5

“I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.”

- When we come to the Lord it's a total abandonment of our reputation- others might think.
- To be a follower of Jesus is an all or nothing proposition- some countries = martyrdom.

Matthew 10:37-39

“Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

- This sinful woman represents the truly sold-out, all the way, Jesus or bust kind of repentance.
- She knew Jesus was a controversial figure, but was unashamed to acknowledge Him.
- Like the song, “I have decided to follow Jesus...no turning back, no turning back”

Luke 12:8-10- “I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God.”

Luke 9:26-27

If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Romans 1:16- I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.

- Now there is a godly fear that the Bible talks about; the fear of the Lord is to hate evil.

Proverbs 8:13

To fear the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.

Romans 12:9-10- Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

- We are talking about a reverential awe, respect, love and devotion for the Lord.
- We serve an awesome God- **Daniel 7:9-10; Ezekiel 1:25-2:2; Isaiah 6:1-8.**

Hebrews 12:28-29

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our “God is a consuming fire.”

2. A Beautiful Display of Repentance

- Alabaster jar of perfume- very rare & expensive gift reserved for the only rarest of occasions.
- She was holding nothing back, in humility and tears she expresses a pure repentant heart.
- By the way Jesus' feet were dirty and stinky from wearing sandals in a hot and dusty land.
- That did not matter to this woman, she had only one thing on her mind- Jesus!

Acts 3:19

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord

Acts 20:21

I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

- Concerning the sinful woman, we learn a great lesson in repentance.
- According to the Bible it is a prerequisite to salvation.
- To repent simply means to turn and go in another direction.
- It is a tearing of the heart in regret, not being sorry we were caught; wanting to change!



“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love...

Joel 2:12-13

Acts 17:29-30

“Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone — an image made by man’s design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.”

- John the Baptists and Jesus preached a message of repentance; turn from sin to God.
- That it was not just lip service, but backed up by forsaking sin.
 - o Matthew 3:8-9, *“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.”*

Matthew 4:17

From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”

- The sinner is to come to Christ just as they are, with a wiliness of Heart to leave sin.
- A sinner can’t stop sinning, that is their nature, but they have to want to be free from it.
- A drunkard can’t come to Christ with the intent to remain a drunkard and have Jesus too.
- It’s all or nothing. We come to Jesus to be Born Again, so we can be freed from sin.
- As a result, “Eternal Life” operating in our spirit produces the fruit of righteousness.

1 John 3:9-10

No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

Acts 26:20

I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.

3. The Self-Sufficient Pharisee

Luke 7:39

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is — that she is a sinner.”

- The problem with our “Me” centric society today is that there is no awareness of sin.
- There is an epidemic of narcissism; a preoccupation with self, it’s all about me.
- We are plagued with the philosophy of relative moralism, though this is nothing new.

Psalms 36:2, “For in his own eyes he flatters himself too much to detect or hate his sin.”

Judges 17:6 NKJV

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

- Without a revelation that people are lost in their sin; why would they seek a Savior?
- The attitude today is, “I’m okay, You’re Okay” so let’s just all hold hands and feel good.
- The secular progressive religion of today exalts man and excludes God.

2 Corinthians 4:3-5

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

- The problem is that people are deceived and blinded from seeing the truth.
- I mean, who in their right mind would deliberately want to go to hell anyways?
- Hell was made for the devil and his angels not for man, who goes there by choice- **Mt. 25:41.**

Romans 7:7

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.”

- The Law or 10 Commandments was given to identify what sin is and our sinfulness.
- The purpose of the Law was to lead us to Christ.
- Even those who never heard still have a conscience- **Romans 2:12-16.**
- It was a perfect standard, designed to frustrate man, show his desperate need for a savior.

Galatians 3:19, 22, 24-25

What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

Jeremiah 17:9 AMP

The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly perverse and corrupt and severely, mortally sick! Who can know it [perceive, understand, be acquainted with his own heart and mind]?

- It is impossible for man to save himself, but not with God- **1 Peter 4:17-18.**

Matthew 19:25-26

When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

- Thank God for the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, when the Gospel is preached.

John 16:7-11

But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

- That is what is meant by being “Enlightening” in **Hebrews 6:4.**
- The Holy Spirit reveals their need for Jesus; they are lost without Him.
- It’s like a divine appointment that people have a few times in their lifetime- to accept Jesus.
- For some people, they may have only one opportunity to receive the Lord.
 - o Where the invitation is made and the Holy Spirit is drawing them to receive Jesus.

John 6:65

He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him.”

Acts 13:48

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

2 Corinthians 6:1-2

As God’s fellow workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. For he says, “In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.” I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.

- As Jesus said in **Matthew 16:26**, what can a man give in exchange for his soul.
- This is the most important and pressing question for humanity today- the meaning of life.
 - o What are we going to do with Jesus: Accept, Reject or Ignore Him.

Hebrews 2:2-4- For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

John 3:36

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”

Psalms 9:17- The wicked return to the grave, all the nations that forget God.

B. The Two Men who Owed Money



Jesus answered him, “Simon, I have something to tell you.” “Tell me, teacher,” he said. “Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?” Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled.” “You have judged correctly,” Jesus said.

Luke 7:40-43

- Now a denarii was a small silver coin in Roman currency.
- The image above was of emperor Augustus- 27 BC – 14 AD.
- The Bible refers to it as a day’s wage- Matthew 20:2; John 12:5 (300 denarii- 1 yr wages)
- So 500 denarii is comparable to 1 ½ years wages versus 50 denarii almost 2 months.
- Being in debt in ancient times was a serious matter.

Matthew 5:25-26

“Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.”

- If you were unable to pay your obligations you could be put in debtors prison.
- You would stay there until someone would pay off your debt and release you.
- Or you and/or your family would be sold into slavery to pay off the debt.
- There was no bankruptcy or consumer credit counseling options.

Matthew 18:23-25

“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.”

Jesus used this parable to illustrate the measure of gratitude in relation to the amount of sin forgiven. Yet it seems irrelevant if one sinned more than the other, because the penalty is the same.

- Jesus was describing the relative perception people have in relation to the forgiveness of sin.
- Again whether a person only committed one sin or one million- still deserve going to hell.

James 2:10

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

Romans 3:9, 22-24, “What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

1. He who is Forgiven Much, Loves Much

Luke 7:44-47

Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven — for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.”

- Notice that the Pharisee did not even provide the most basic of courtesies to Jesus:
 - o Have a servant wash his stinky and dirty feet- since they recline with feet raised.
 - o A complimentary kiss or greeting is given to guests to welcome them.
 - o Perfumed oil to anoint a person’s head to smell and look good.
- Yet Jesus the Son of God was honored not by the religious establishment, but a sinner.
- That is why Jesus came, to call sinful humanity to repentance.
- The problem with religious people, they think they are righteous and don’t need help.
- As a result, they are arrogant and sanctimonious- Jesus made a point to expose the hypocrisy.

Matthew 9:10-13- While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and “sinners” came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and ‘sinners’?” On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

2. Faith Gets the Job Done

Luke 7:48-50- Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

- Jesus, being God obviously was able to forgive sins, this was a revelation for them.
- There is another example of faith expressed resulting in forgiveness- paralyzed man.
 - o Mark 2:4-12, “*When Jesus saw their faith... ‘Son your sins are forgiven...’*”
- In the context of this story, it was the woman’s love that released her faith.

Galatians 5:6 AMP

For [if we are] in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith activated and energized and expressed and working through love.

- This same caliber of faith, that does not take “No” for an answer reminds me of another story.
- The woman with an issue of blood, risked being stoned in public to get her healing.

Matthew 9:20-22

Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. She said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.” Jesus turned and saw her. “Take heart, daughter,” he said, “your faith has healed you.” And the woman was healed from that moment.

Parable #3: The Lamp on a Stand

Reference: Matthew 5:14-16; 6:22-23; Mark 4:21-25; Luke 8:16-18; 11:33-36

Theme: The impact of God's Word in our lives to influence others

Context: Used in Different Settings:

Matthew 5:15-16:

Sermon on the Mount- behavior and conduct

Mark 4:21-25; Luke 8:16-18:

The Word as Spiritual Seed

Luke 6:33-36:

Jesus Teaching the People



“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:14-16

A. Good Deeds

- In the same passage Jesus stated that, *“You are the salt of the earth”* in verse 13.
- Salt preserves and adds flavor to those things that are rubbed with it.
- When we rub shoulders with the world, we are to influence them with the Love/Word of God
- One application of being a “Lamp on a Stand” is showing ourselves as Jesus’ disciples.

John 15:8

This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

John 13:34-35

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

- Failure to do so causes us to lose our purpose and distinctness among people.
- Being a light in the world, is having our lives on display, revealing the Grace of God in us.
- Resulting as a tremendous witnessing tool- adds credibility to the message of the Gospel.
- **Acts 20:34-35; Romans 14:16-18; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; Titus 2:9-10; 1 Peter 3:1-2.**

1 Peter 2:11-12

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

- A lamp on a stand is something prominent and visible for others to see on purpose.
- It's God's design that we be a light for others to see, that is Jesus in our lives.
- Light is a metaphor often used to represent the Kingdom of God and right living.
 - o **Romans 13:11-14; Colossians 1:9-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11; 1 John 2:7-11.**

Ephesians 5:8-14

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

B. Revelation Truth Revealed

Luke 8:16-17

"No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light."

- Light is also used as a metaphor to describe revealed truth, understanding and revelation.
 - o **Matthew 4:13-17; 13:11-17; John 1:1-9.**
- Darkness on the other hand represents sin, ignorance, doubt and unbelief.
- Spiritual illumination is something Paul prayed for the church at Ephesus.

Ephesians 1:17-19

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

- Knowledge of the truth leads to godliness according to **Titus 1:1**. Not to mention 2 Peter 1:2, *Grace & peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*
- Knowledge of the truth, when acted upon, sets and makes us free- **John 8:31-32.**

Psalms 119:130 AMP

The entrance and unfolding of Your words give light; their unfolding gives understanding (discernment and comprehension) to the simple.

Proverbs 20:27 KJV

The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

- God imparts revelation knowledge to our spirit; which in turn enlightens our mind.
- Light also stands for the spiritual growth and development of the human spirit.
- God's Word is the primary source of our spiritual training in godliness- **1 Timothy 4:8.**

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

C. Hidden Things Revealed

Mark 4:22-23

For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open.

Luke 8:17-18

For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open.

- Both of these synoptic passages were written within the context of the Parable of the Sower.
- The things hidden were in reference to the secrets of the Kingdom of God.
- Jesus was revealing them to His disciples, to be explained further in the Epistles.

Luke 8:9-10

His disciples asked him what this parable meant. He said, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables...”

- I often interpreted that these passages meant the revealing of our dirty little secrets.
- Certainly, this fact is covered by other Scriptures but not in **Mark 4:22-23; Luke 8:17-18.**

Hebrews 4:13- Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

2 Corinthians 5:10- For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

- We are so blessed to be a part of this generation; where God’s Word abounds!
- When the Epistles refer to the “Mystery” it’s not talking about something withheld from us.
- It’s referring to truth hidden in the past, but now revealed in this Dispensation of Grace.
- **Romans 16:25-27; Eph. 3:2-13; 5:22-33; Colossians 1:24-29; 2:1-4; 1 Timothy 3:14-16**

1 Peter 1:10-12

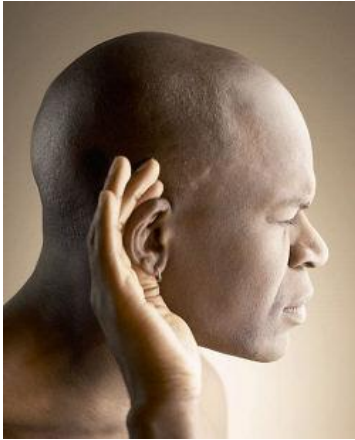
Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

- The Holy Spirit is the revealer and teacher of God’s Word to us, the Church of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:6-10

We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God’s secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”— but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.

D. The Measure of Consideration, Retention, and Appropriation



He replied, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.”

Matthew 13:11-12

- With the exception of **Matthew 25:28-30**, the context was the Parable of the Sower.
- The Lord’s disciples and we today, are privileged with the understanding of His parables.
- Why parables? Was the Lord showing favoritism- no, Jesus practiced what He preached.

Matthew 7:6

“Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.”

- In the Bible “Dogs” and “Pigs” refer to the godless and reprobate- **Heb. 12:16; 2 Peter 2:22.**
- Bible is coded, only understood as it’s revealed by the Holy Spirit to those who appreciate it.
- Only those with a heart to receive, rather than the cynic and skeptic will understand truth!

Luke 10:21

At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.”

1 Corinthians 1:20-21

Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

- The Holy Spirit is the teacher, counselor, the revealer of truth; without Him, we would know nothing at all in the Bible and God’s expressed will for our lives!
- It’s impossible for unbelievers to understand the Bible without the Spirit- **Hebrews 6:4.**

1 Corinthians 2:12-14

We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Mark 4:23-25

“If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” “Consider carefully what you hear,” he continued. “With the measure you use, it will be measured to you — and even more. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.”

Luke 8:18

Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him.”

- Jesus talked about the measure of consideration directed toward hearing the Word.
- How much we appreciate, value, treasure and willingly accept- hunger and thirst for.

Matthew 5:6- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

- Jesus puts the responsibility of hearing, appreciating and valuing the Word on the hearer.
- Are we earnestly seeking the truth or are we just a casual observer, “Impress me God!”
- Simply put, we get out of God’s Word what we put into it- persistent study and meditation.

2 Timothy 2:15 AMP

Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.

- Let’s break down each part of these passages of Scripture- “Consider Carefully/Be Careful”
- The Greek: behold, beware, lie, look (on, to), perceive, regard, see, sight, take heed.
- Not a warning about hearing wrong teaching; rather the value we place on what we hear.
- I like what the Amplified Bible says:

Mark 4:24 AMP

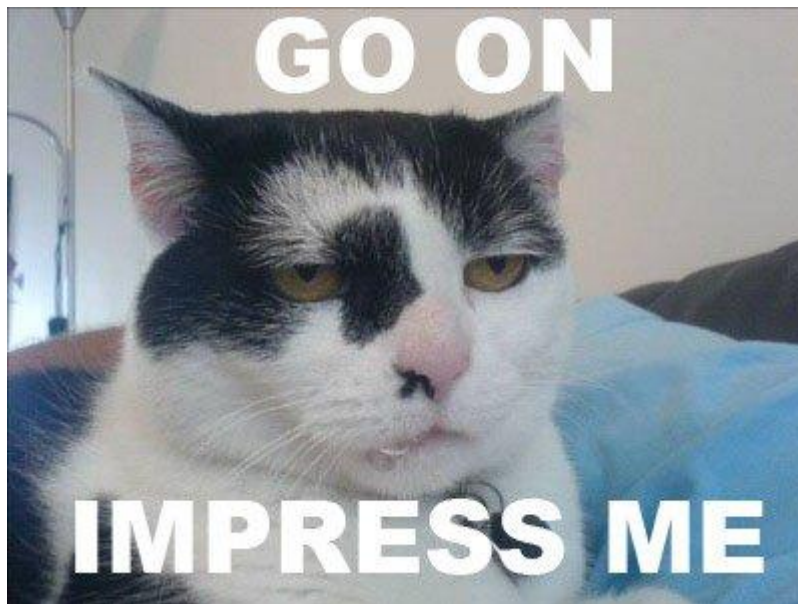
And He said to them, Be careful what you are hearing. The measure [of thought and study] you give [to the truth you hear] will be the measure [of virtue and knowledge] that comes back to you — and more [besides] will be given to you who hear.

- Notice the Biblical principle that we reap what we sow is in play here.
- “Thought and study to the truth we hear” = “Virtue and Knowledge” comes back to us.
- In the context of the Parable of the Sower, that would be 30, 60 & 100 times as much.
- Jesus talked about the measure of thoughtful hearing and study of the Word = truth returned.
- The Parable of the Sower was all about the Word sown into the human spirit.
- The types of ground represented the conditions/attitudes of the heart- having ears to hear!
- To have a good/noble heart (**Luke 8:15**) = is to be an attentive hearer and doer of the Word.
- One who treasures/hides God’s Word in their heart as valuable and precious- **Psalms 119:11**.

Luke 8:18 AMP

Be careful therefore how you listen. For to him who has [spiritual knowledge] will more be given; and from him who does not have [spiritual knowledge], even what he thinks and guesses and supposes that he has will be taken away.

- Jesus is giving a warning to whoever hears the Word of God being spoken.
- When the Word is falling upon deaf ears, the uninterested, flippant and dismissive hearers.



- Because of their calloused heart that does not embrace the Word they are hearing – lose it!
- The devil will come and take away what they heard, they will forget and discard it.
- As a result they will not receive a harvest of God’s Word in their lives- Salvation/healing etc.

Luke 8:11-13

“This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.”

- The references to “Having Ears to Hear” is in reference to hearing the Kingdom of God.
 - o **Mark 4:9, 23; 8:8; Luke 8:8.**
- With the exception of **Luke 14:35** where Jesus talked about the cost of being a disciple.
- The same concept is given by Jesus concerning the letters to the 7 Churches.
 - o **Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.**

Mark 4:23 AMP

If any man has ears to hear, let him be listening and let him perceive and comprehend.

- The point being: take these things to heart, meditate, and put them into practice in our lives.
 - o **Luke 8:21; Philippians 4:9; 1 Timothy 5:4.**
- The true sign that a person has embraced God’s Word is when they obey God’s Word.

James 1:21-25

Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it- he will be blessed in what he does.

- The key is to build our lives on a sure foundation- **Luke 6:46-49; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.**

E. The Eye is the Lamp of the Body

Matthew 6:22-23

“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”

- Jesus had stated that the eye is the lamp of the body; let's study this out a little further.
- **Matthew 6:22-23** was written within the context of having “Treasures in Heaven.”
- Where our treasure is, there our heart will be also- speaking of our priorities and focus.
- Our eyes represent what is important to us, what we are looking at has our attention/gaze.

Matthew 6:33-34, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

- Our eyes like our ears are gateways into our mind and spirit- the windows into our soul.
- The people we hang out with, where we chose to be, listen to and watch has great influence.
- Where our focus is set upon in life determines our conduct, behavior and lifestyle.
- So what are we allowing into our lives through the windows of our soul, our eyes?

Proverbs 4:23, “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”

Proverbs 23:7 KJV, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...”

1 Corinthians 15:33-34, “Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character.’”

1 Timothy 5:22, “...do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.”

- The Bible instructs us where to set our attention; on Jesus though faith in His Word.
- What helps us in what we think on (**Philippians 4:4-8**), is what we look at- **Romans 12:1-2**.
- Consider Peter when he walked on water; as long as his eyes were on Jesus- **Mt. 14:28-33**.

Colossians 3:1-2

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Hebrews 3:1, “Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.”

- So the world view we have, the perspective and paradigm of life must be Christ centered.
- Otherwise we will have a cloudy and distorted understanding of the world around us.
- **Matthew 6:22-23** is worded basically the same as **Luke 11:34-36**, but Luke has a little more.

Luke 11:35-36- “See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you.”

- Our physical body will reflect our spiritual condition- good or bad in health or sickness.
- **3 John 2**, notes that spiritual prosperity proceeds physical health and prosperity- **1 Tim. 4:8**.
- Walking in the light of the Word and in love will affect every area of our life- **1 John 1:7**.

Parable #4: The Parable of the Sower

Reference: Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23; Mark 4:3-20; Luke 8:4-15

Theme: Seedtime and Harvest

Context: Jesus was Teaching a Large Group of People by the Lake



What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe — as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor.

1 Corinthians 3:5-8

There is no harvest without a season of planting.

A. The Seed is the Word of God

Luke 8:11, “This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God.”

1 Peter 1:23

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

- All words are seeds, but God’s Word stands in a class all by itself as incorruptible seed.
- In other words God’s Word cannot fail, change, or be altered

Isaiah 55:10-11

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Matthew 24:35- “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. “

Psalms 119:89- Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.

- Seeds contain life within itself, when planted, that life is released and grows- effect change!
- The sowing is in the saying, we sow God’s Word when we speak God’s Word- **Ro.10:17.**
- It is sown through the preaching and teaching of God’s Word- **Acts 18:24-28; 11:19-26.**

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

The Gospels - Parables

Let the Word do the work! Jesus said His yoke would be easy and His burden light. However, without faith in God's Word that would be impossible. So often we rely on our own natural resources, and efforts to get the job done. Natural skill and resources are limited, but all things are possible to them who believe. The Father wants His children to enter into rest by sowing His Word in our lives, and allowing our faith to bring substance to the things we hope for.

Hebrews 4:1-3

Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. Now we who have believed enter that rest.

- Let's now take a look at two laws of Genesis that absolutely changes our lives.
- Law #1 – Everything produces after its own kind.

Genesis 1:11-12,29

Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. The land produced vegetation; plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. Then God said to man, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it.”

John 12:23-24

Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

- There is a natural side as well as a spiritual side to this law that God set in motion in Genesis.
- The seed of every living thing is within itself to reproduce itself.
- Trees reproduce trees of the same species. A bird and a fish cannot reproduce together.

If we want a harvest of wheat, what kind of seed would we sow? Wheat seed of course! We can't take rice seed, plant them and expect to receive a harvest of wheat.

- The Bible contains all the seed of God's promises and provision for our lives.
- So to meet a specific need, we need to find the specific seed that covers that need.
- If our body is in need of physical healing, find healing Scriptures and sow them in our hearts.
- That healing seed will grow in our heart and materialize in time a harvest of healing.
- If we need healing, but plant peace seed instead, we'll receive lots of peace, but no healing.

2 Corinthians 1:20-21

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.

2 Peter 1:3-4

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

- Law #2 – “As long as the earth endures, there will be seed time and harvest.”
- Before every harvest, there is always a season of planting.
- Again, this principle applies both in the natural and spiritual realms.

Genesis 8:20-22

Then Noah built an alter to the Lord and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: “Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. As long as the earth endures, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.”

The spiritual law of sowing and reaping not only refers to speaking the Word of God, but also to our own actions as well. Repetitive actions have a corresponding consequence, good or bad over time.

Galatians 6:7-10

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

- Sometimes as Christians we try to do through prayer what only the Word of God can do.
- It's the truth of God's Word, acted upon that sets us free- **John 8:31-32; John 17:17.**
- There is so much more we could say about the preeminence of God's Holy written Word.

Many, instead of saying, “pray for me” should first say, “teach me God's Word, so I can intelligently cooperate for my recovery.”

The seed of God's Word is sown into the human heart whenever it is heard. As we have just read, the condition of a person's heart will determine if that seed will grow, and produce a harvest. What I want us to appreciate is the fact that the seed has the power within itself to bring about its own fulfillment, and produce after its own kind. As long as the conditions of faith are operating in a good, and noble heart are present, God's grace will bring the increase and harvest in time.



James 1:21

Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

B. Why Did Jesus Speak to the People in Parables

Matthew 13:10-17; Mark 4:10-13; Luke 8:7-10

One might get the impression that God just wants to speak to people in riddles and leave them confused and frustrated. Nothing could be further from the truth. Often times God speaks in “code” in order to hide its meaning from the cynical skeptics who are self exalted- not interested in the truth anyway.

Matthew 11:25-26

At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.”

In the same context as the parable of the Sower, Jesus made this statement, Mark 4:23, *“If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”* Speaking of receptivity and an open heart to hear from God- **Luke 19:41-44.**

- A closed heart to the things of God is incapable of understanding spiritual truths.
- Jesus provided a similar admonition to the early church in Revelation 2:7, *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*
- Understand that the Bible is a progressive revelation of truth to humanity over time.
 - o **Mark 7:18; John 13:7; 1 Cor. 13:9-13; 2 Cor. 3:14-18; Ephesians 3:1-12.**
- The Old Covenant was full of types and shadows, pointing to the realities found in Christ under the New Covenant- **Colossians 2:7; Hebrews 8:5; 10:1; Luke 24:13-35; John 16:12.**

1 Peter 1:10-12

Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

Please Read: 1 Corinthians 1:18-29; 2:6-16

- God has hidden revelation truth from the so-called wise and has revealed it to us.
- That is the primary ministry of the Holy Spirit for us today- revealer of truth, **John 16:13-15.**
- It is by the Holy Spirit through our spirit that we understand- **Psalms 119:130; Pr. 20:27.**

The following passage reveals some insight into understanding why Jesus spoke in parables to the people. Revelation truth is more precious than any earthly treasure because it has eternal implications.

Matthew 7:6

“Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.”

- Revelation truth comes to those who hunger and seek after it; read on in **Matthew 7:7-11.**
- The apostle Paul admonished the Church to ask God for revelation- **Ephesians 1:17-23.**
- Jesus talked about the key to knowledge in **Luke 11:52.** In Jesus are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge- **Colossians 2:2-4; Luke 1:77; John 8:32.**

C. Conditions of the Human Spirit - Four Types

Matthew 13:18-23; Mark 4:13-20; Luke 8:11-15

Before we examine the different types of soil, we must first identify what the soil represents. We already illustrated that the seed represents the Word of God. So the soil speaks of the human heart- spirit of man.

Romans 10:10-11

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

- In Mark 11:22-23 Jesus said, *“does not doubt in his heart but believes...”*
- **1 Thessalonians 5:23** refers to the tri-cotomy of man- spirit, soul and body.
- We are spirit beings, with a soul, who live in physical bodies. The spirit man is the real you.
- The Kingdom of God is within us, it is out of our spirit that faith, hope and love operate.



Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you.”

Luke 17:20-21

“My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to a man’s whole body. Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”

Proverbs 4:20-23

Jesus referred to the spirit of a person as the seat of God’s indwelling Holy Spirit, from whom the life and power of God would resonate throughout our entire being, transforming our lives and quickening our mortal bodies- **Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 3:17-18**. Living water- **John 4:10-13; John 7:37-39**.

- The condition of our heart is the type of soil that Jesus is talking about in this parable.
- We are responsible for the kind of heart, motive and attitudes we have, not God.
- God has given us a free will to choose life or death, blessing or cursing- **Deuteronomy 30:19**
- There is nothing wrong with the seed of God’s Word, it is incorruptible and eternal. The variable in this equation is the condition of our heart that the seed comes in contact with.
- God does not show favoritism or partiality, the Word works for all who receive it by faith.
 - o **Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25**.

1. Seed Along the Path

Agriculture during Jesus’ time was obviously a manual job on foot. The path Jesus was talking about are the rows in the field that the farmer would walk on when he sowed his seed. It would become hard due to the foot traffic, so when the seed accidentally scattered on these areas, it could not penetrate due to the hardness of the soil. As a result, the birds would spot the exposed seed and eat them.

- So the first type of soil Jesus had mentioned was the hard ground.
- Remember the goal here is to have a harvest or multiplication of the seed of God's Word.
- The context here is Gospel seed, hearing the message of Salvation.
- We had been saying that the sowing is in the saying; when we speak God's Word we sow God's Word- Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God in **Romans 10:17**.

Matthew 13:19-20

When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.

Mark 4:15-16

Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.

Luke 8:12-13

Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.

I love the synoptic passages in this parable, each author provides a slightly different glimpse of what Jesus was teaching us. Matthew's account points out that after hearing the message about the kingdom, they do not understand it- why?

- Well we had just read in the previous verses 10-16 about the people having a calloused heart.
- What causes a heart to become hard to the things of God that we become blind and deaf?
- In Hebrews chapters three and four we see a lesson from the generation of Israelites who failed to enter into their Promise Land. The cause was a sinful unbelieving heart.
- The deceitfulness of sin is that it hardens the heart, sears the conscience- **1 Timothy 4:2**. This results in a lack of sensitivity, openness or desire for God- **Mark 6:52**.
- The practice of sin will cause an indifference and even a disdain for the things of God. The cure for such a condition is godly repentance- **2 Corinthians 7:8-11; Revelation 2:5; 3:3**.

Hebrews 3:12-13

See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

Apparently the work of Satan is all about hardening people's hearts through the practice of sin and the world system in order to keep them from being saved.

- The New Birth is the result of believing God's Word in our hearts; that is a process of sowing, watering, cultivating and harvesting to achieve results- this takes time.
- Folks mentally acquiescing to a historical Jesus is a form of godliness without the power- that is dead religion, **2 Tim. 3:5**. Jesus called us to make disciples not converts- **Mt. 28:18-20**.
- Mental ascent is when people have God's Word in their head, having heard it a few times, and not in their heart, and try to pass it off as Bible faith. Nothing happens, does not work.

We are instructed to meditate, speak God's Word continually until it gets into our heart where it begins to work. This process may take months of studying and speaking the Word of promise. **Joshua 1:8-9; Psalms 1:1-3; 119:11; Romans 10:5-10**. The answer comes when we believe God's Word in our heart.

2. Seed Sown on Rocky Places

It the first scenario Jesus talked about the hardness of heart, now He addresses those folks who receive the Word at once with joy, but their commitment to the Word and His Kingdom is shallow.

- Here Jesus is talking about the feel-good fair weather folks who are only in it for themselves.
- With the prospect of a better life, sunny days and good times, there is no resolve to remain faithful, endure or preserve persecution and suffering for the Name of Jesus.
- In 2 Timothy 2:3 we are admonished to, *“Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”* That requires commitment and sacrifice on our part- **Heb. 10:36; Rev. 3:10.**

Matthew 13:20-22

The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.

Mark 4:16-18

Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

Luke 8:13-14

Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.

- Being a Christian does not mean it will be easy, life's challenges comes to every human being. The difference for us is that Jesus is our Good Shepherd to see us through them all.
 - o **Psalms 23; 34:19; 2 Timothy 3:12; 4:17-18; 1 Peter 4:1-5, 12-19.**

Another point to be seen in the shallow follower is their lack of commitment to put the Word of God first place in their lives.

- Jesus requires total commitment of His disciples. Salvation is not just a fire insurance policy that keeps us out of hell. It is the total surrender and abandonment to the Lord.
- When we confess Jesus as our Lord, that means we are making Him Lord of our lives.
- Yet He is not going to make us serve Him faithfully; that's our choice/response to His love.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

- Jesus makes some amazing statements to the extent we are to sell out and follow Him alone.

Matthew 10:37-39

“Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

Luke 9:62

Jesus replied, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

Revelation 3:15-16

“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm — neither hot nor cold — I am about to spit you out of my mouth.”

- Wow, we are to follow Jesus all the way, with no regret, no remorse and no turning back.
- The world would look at this as cultic in nature; not when the One we serve gave His all and died for us first. To serve Jesus with our whole life is the reasonable or logical thing to do.
 - **Romans 12:1; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 2 Timothy 4:1.**

No doubt Satan will use persecution to try to intimidate and pressure us to quit and fall away from the Lord- **1 Thessalonians 3:4-5; Revelation 2:10; Luke 21:16-19; 22:31.** They are only temporary!

- The key is to persevere and to endure, knowing these things will make us stronger in our faith and character if we overcome them through faith in God’s Word- **James 1:2-4; Ro. 5:3-5.**
- A person can have 10 miles of trials and not grow an inch unless he/she stands on the Word.
 - **Ephesians 6:10-18; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9.**
- There are many Christians who have fallen away, and became a victim instead of a victor.

Trials, tests and temptations have no virtue in themselves to mature us, they are sent by Satan to destroy us- **John 10:10.** It’s what we do in the midst of the attack that makes all the difference.

2 Timothy 3:12,

In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Jesus warned that the casual, half-hearted individual who “tries” God will lose even the little bit of understanding they have of Him. It’s an all or nothing proposition, let’s not play with this.

Mark 4:24-25

“Consider carefully what you hear,” he continued. “With the measure you use, it will be measured to you — and even more. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.”

- Jesus put a premium on hearing and then putting into practice the truth of God’s Word.

Matthew 7:26-27

But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

Luke 8:21

He replied, “My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s word and put it into practice.”

- Knowledge is important, but wisdom is even better- the application of knowledge. With wisdom comes a personal understanding of the truth of God’s Word in our lives.
- So let’s purpose to put the Word into practice when we hear it, simple obedience.
 - **Philippians 4:9; James 1:22-25; 2:14-26.**

3. Seed Sown Among Thorns

Matthew 13:22

The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.

Mark 4:18-19

Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

Luke 8:14

The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.

As Jesus so eloquently put it, the problem with weeds is that they choke what is good in our lives. Weeds are a result of the fall in **Genesis 3:18**, they are worthless in value and cause painful toil to remove them in order to grow anything good.

- Jesus further explained what weeds represent in the next parable in **Matthew 13:24-30**.
- Like yeast, weeds are a type sin; either individuals, behavior or weights in our lives.

Hebrews 12:1, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

- Weeds are people or things in our lives that hinder and trip us up in running our race.
- Satan is continually seeking to plant weeds in our lives. Our job is to routinely pull them up out of our lives, otherwise they will inevitably choke the life of God out of us- **1 Cor. 9:27**. 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 Cor. 15:33, *"Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character.'"*

The Worries of this Life

The world is full of distractions, all competing for our attention. The world system, under Satan's control is all about getting our eyes off of Jesus- **1 John 2:15-17; 5:19; Ephesians 2:1-2**.

- The weed of fear comes in the form of anxiety and worry that seek to rob us of blessing.
- Fear is the enemy of faith and comes from listening to the words of the enemy- choking!

1 Peter 5:7 AMP

Casting the whole of your care- all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all- on Him; for He cares for you affectionately, and cares about you watchfully.

The word "Care" above in Vines Expository Dictionary- To draw in different directions, to distract. To get our attention off of Jesus and the Word- **Matthew 14:28-31; Colossians 3:1-2; Hebrews 3:1; 12:2**.

- Jesus talked at length about not worrying about our lives in **Matthew 6:25-34**.
- When we give into worry, we are saying to the Father God, "Father I'm sorry, but I just don't think you are competent to handle this one; I'd be better off taking care of it myself."
- Resist worry like you resist any other temptation- **Ps. 37:35; Isaiah 26:3 Philippians 4:8**.

The Deceitfulness of Wealth

In our western culture, with all our affluence and material possessions comes a great temptation- it's called idolatry. What is an idol you may ask? It is anything that draws our devotion, time and desire away from God. We might not bow down to a graven image of wood or stone, but many have bowed down to their career, education, money, drugs, sex and numerous other material things in this world.

Colossians 3:5-6

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

- Greed is a powerful influence in the world; lusting for what we think will make us happy.
- God has no problem with His children being wealthy, just does not want us to be covetous.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”

- Those who are eager for money pierce themselves with many griefs- **1 Timothy 6:9-10.**
- The Bible talks about being content with what we have- **1 Tim. 6:6-8; Philippians 4:11-12.**
- That does not mean we are to be content with living below God's provision of plenty, prosperity and health. He wants us blessed to be a blessing- **Acts 20:35; 3 John 2;**
- It takes money to fund the Kingdom of God on this earth, the question is will we be faithful to what the Lord entrusts to us- **Matthew 24:45-51; 25:14-30.**
- So our Father wants us to have a full supply, and all of our needs met! He just does not want us greedy and selfish about it- **James 4:1-4.** When it becomes an idol between us and God.

Psalms 35:27 NKJV

Let them shout for joy and be glad, Who favor my righteous cause; And let them say continually, “Let the Lord be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.”

The problem with greed, envy and covetousness is that it declares that God is not enough for us. That we need something more to make us happy and fulfilled. That is a great insult to our Heavenly Father. Acts 17:28, *“For in him we live and move and have our being.”*

Psalms 16:11

You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

- It was greed that ruined Judas' life, one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus- **John 12:6.**
- Ultimately it lead up to him betraying Jesus for money- **Luke 22:1-6; Matthew 27:3-9.**
- The things of this life are so temporary; as Solomon put it, vanity- **Ecclesiastes 1:1-4.**
- Serving and obeying God, winning the lost and loving others in Jesus' Name lasts forever.

The Desires for Other Things

“The Pilgrim’s Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come” is a Christian allegory written by John Bunyan and published in February, 1678. It is regarded as one of the most significant works of religious English literature has been translated into more than 200 languages, and has never been out of print. The book depicts the life of a sinner seeking salvation, after which faces the world, along with a myriad of trials, tests and temptations. The book has great application for the Christian today.

In chapter 6 of the book, there was a town called “Vanity” and in the town was a fair that just kept on going all year round, called “Vanity Fair.” It was a place of constant partying, reveling and self-indulgence. There was no thought of tomorrow, it was all about gratifying selfish desires for today.

1 Corinthians 15:32, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”

- Sure we are in this world, but we are not to be taken up with its viewpoint of life
- The Bible calls us aliens and strangers in this world- **1 Peter 2:11.**
- Our citizenship is in heaven, we are ambassadors here- **Philippians 3:20; 2Corinthians 5:20**

1 Corinthians 7:30-31

...those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.



Christian and Faithful enter Vanity Fair.

Do not love or cherish the world or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh [craving for sensual gratification] and the lust of the eyes [greedy longings of the mind] and the pride of life [assurance in one’s own resources or in the stability of earthly things] — these do not come from the Father but are from the world [itself].

And the world passes away and disappears, and with it the forbidden cravings (the passionate desires, the lust) of it; but he who does the will of God and carries out His purposes in his life abides (remains) forever.

1 John 2:15-17 AMP

- Don’t get me wrong, the Lord will give us things out of this world to enjoy that are godly.
- The key is to keep it from preoccupying our time, attention and priorities away from God.
- Good things can become bad when abused, over used and taken to the extreme.
- A good rule of thumb is this: what we think about the most is what is most important to us.
- We must keep Jesus first place in our lives. So what is taking up most of our time?

4. The Good Soil

Matthew 13:23

But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

Mark 4:20

Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop — thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown.

Luke 8:15

But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

All four examples of human hearts begin the same way, they hear the Word of God. What happens with the seed next is the result of the kind or condition of the heart that the seed is sown into.

- Remember there is nothing wrong with the seed, God's Word is perfect- **Psalms 19:7.**
- The issue is with the quality of soil and cultivation that affects the outcome of the harvest.
- Let's now look at what Jesus said constituted good ground so we can get our hearts ready!

Mark – *Accepts it*

Matthew – *Understands it*

Luke – *A Noble and Good Heart, Retains it and by Persevering Produce a Crop*



I want you to notice that 3 out of 4 of the types of soil, 75% received nothing! Yes there are reasons why people don't receive from God: get saved, healed, prosper or whatever, but it's never God's fault or will for people to fail to reap a harvest from the seed of God's Word!

What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge."

Romans 3:3-4

a) Accepts God's Word

Before the seed even has a chance to grow, we must first accept, agree and embrace what the Bible is saying. For example, Jesus was explaining that He is the bread of life and that His body and blood would be offered as the supreme sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. Yet Jesus was speaking figuratively about drinking His blood and eating His flesh- Jesus was not talking about cannibalism.

John 6:60-64

On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."

There are a lot of “Hard Sayings” in the Bible. I am talking about those passages of Scripture that we know what is being said, it just appears to us as being hard to obey.

- Jesus talked about the strict requirements of the marriage covenant in **Matthew 19:1-12**.
- If we want God’s blessing, we must be willing and obedient- **Isaiah 1:19; Hebrews 13:4**.

Suppose we are having trouble getting along with a certain individual who has hurt and offended us. The Bible is very clear about the subject of forgiveness- **Matthew 6:14-15; 18:21-35; Mark 11:25**. Before the seed of forgiveness for others can produce a harvest of grace to forgive, we must first be willing to accept and obey it. If we are closed to the idea of doing what the Bible explicitly says- that is a problem!

- When we are born again, our spirit becomes a new creation, but not our mind or our body.
- The key is to reprogram our minds from worldly thinking to God’s way of thinking.
- The Bible is our primary source to accomplish this.
 - o Proverbs 23:7 KJV, “*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...*”
- Since behavior is driven by our thinking, we must first change how we think and speak.
 - o **Ephesians 4:17-5:15; James 3:2-12**.
- It may take some time of hearing the Word over and over again until we finally accept it.

Colossians 1:21-22

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

So I believe to “Accept” God’s Word means to have read and studied the Word until our minds are completely renewed, open and in agreement with it. This is a prerequisite before going any further.

b) Understands God’s Word

Meaning to believe God’s Word in our heart, having a revelation of it in our spirit, a supernatural knowing that it is real in our life. Remember how we talked about not mentally acquiescing to the truth.

- Only having a head knowledge of what the Bible says; void of having faith in our heart.
- The seed works in our spirit, the ground, not out of our head.
 - o Matthew 18:35, “*...forgive your brother from your heart.*”
 - o Romans 10:9, “*...believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead...*”
- The “Word of Faith” principles- **Deuteronomy 30:11-14; Romans 10:5-10**.
- Meditating or speaking the Word of God (seed), until it gets planted in our heart.
 - o **Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:1-3**.
- Initially, confession of God’s Word renews our mind and causes faith to come- **Ro. 10:17**.
- Over the course of time it will drop down in our spirit; that is when the seed gets planted.
- Remember our example of forgiveness above? Faith works by love (**Galatians 5:6**), but walking in love towards other also works by faith, as small a mustard seed- **Luke 17:1-6**.

Until the seed gets in our heart through the continual confession of God’s Word, nothing happens. It may take a very long time until we finally believe God’s Word in our heart- folks often give up prematurely.

Abraham is a good example, his name means “Father of Many Nations” as mentioned in **Romans 4:17**. For him it took 25 years from the time of receiving the promise until the time Isaac was born. So How do we know that we have faith in our heart as he did? By Romans 4:21 explains, “*being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.*” To understand God’s Word is to be “fully persuaded” and believe that we receive what we have asked for in prayer, before we have it- **Mark 11:22-23**.

c) A Noble and Good Heart

Let's consider what Jesus meant by a "noble and good heart" that produces a harvest in **Luke 8:15**. The Greek word for "Noble" could also be translated as "honest." The same word is used in **1 Peter 2:12** as "good deeds." It speaks of an honorable or noble individual whose life is exemplified with godly living and behavior that would solicit honor and esteem from others- not in a prideful way- **James 3:13-18**.

Greek word *kalos*- "good, admirable, becoming," has also the ethical meaning of what is "fair, right, honorable, of such conduct as deserves esteem."

- This speaks of both inward nature and outward behavior reflecting the grace of God within.
- The doctrine of sanctification is what we are really talking about here- key to fruitfulness.
- Sanctification, from the Greek word *hagiazō*: to make holy, purify, consecrate or set apart.
- To sanctify something is to set it apart as something holy. Like placing a urn of your mother's remains on the fireplace mantel, in a special place, set apart from other common things.
- Sanctification denotes a cleansing from unclean things, both the inside and out.

Instantaneous Sanctification- Hebrews 10:10

Before we can change what we are in our outward behavior, we must first change from within. We change the root in order to change the fruit- that would be the spirit of man. Before Christ we had the spiritual nature of Satan, a sinful nature- **1 John 3:7-10**. The New Birth is the rebirth (**John 3:3**) of the human spirit, becoming a new creation (**2 Corinthians 5:17**) or in the Greek, a new species something that never existed before.

As stated in Titus 3:5, "*He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*" The eradication of the sinful spiritual nature we once had- **Ro. 15:16; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Colossians 2:11**. This is a large subject, but the point I want to make is that our spirit has been made productive again with the life and nature (**Romans 5:5**) of God, called eternal life- **Romans 6:23; 2 Peter 1:4**.

Progressive Sanctification- Hebrews 10:14

The goal here is to take God's nature of love in our spirit, and cause it to dominate, rule and take the ascendancy on the outside; where it translates into Christ like behavior. Here are a few scriptures that cover this subject- **Romans chapter 6; 8:13; 12:1-2; 13:12-14; Ephesians 4:17-5:15; 1 John 2:6**.

Finding sanctification scriptures/seeds like these and meditating (Speaking the Word- **Joshua 1:8**) on them will release God's grace and power through our faith (**Ephesians 2:8**) to be holy, noble, honorable and have a good heart for the seed to grow; faith works by love, a prerequisite- **Galatians 5:6**.

Ephesians 5:25-27

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

The Holy Spirit is a gentleman and requires our cooperation for Him to take the Word and renew our minds and clear our hearts of conditions that would nullify the seed of God's Word from working in our lives. This is referred to as progressive sanctification, where the Holy Spirit works in us throughout our lives to conform us to the image of Jesus- **2 Corinthians 3:17-18; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2**.

- Folks are asking God to change their heart, but the New Birth has already done that!
- Now, we mix our faith in God's Word to change us from the inside out- **Hebrews 4:1-3**.
- Sins of the heart (Pride, Jealousy, Envy etc.) that are not easily seen.
- Sins of the flesh (Sexual Immorality, Drunkenness, Laziness etc.) not so hidden from sight.
- These things must be dealt with to receive from God- **James 4:1-10; 1 Peter 3:7-12**.

James 1:21

Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

Romans 12:2

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.

2 Timothy 2:19-21

Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness." In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

- In our spirit nature we are made perfect, righteous, holy, justified and sanctified. We can't improve on that to go to heaven- **Romans 5:1; 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:11; 2 Cor. 5:21**.
- Not to be confused with maturing in Christ- a work in progress, under lifetime construction.
 - o **1 Cor. 1:8; Philippians 1:6; 2:12-13; Ephesians 2:10; 2 Timothy 2:13; Jude 24**
- We are not saved by good works, we are saved unto good works by God's grace & our faith.
- So training in godliness (**1 Timothy 4:8**) is a must if we are going to be fruitful for God.

John 15:7-8

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

Retains it

To retain the seed of God's Word portrays tremendous imagery of fastening a death grip upon the Word. Nothing in this world is going to shake us from believing on the Word of God in Jesus' Name!

Psalms 119:31; 1 Corinthians 15:2; Hebrews 3:6; 4:14; 10:23; Revelation 2:13, 25; 3:11

- Greek word for "Retains" ketecho: To hold down and hold fast, to possess, seize and take.
- Satan is a thief and he will use trials, tests and temptations to try and dislodge the Word.
 - o **John 10:10; 1 Thessalonians 3:3; 2 John 7; Revelation 2:10;**
- The enemy fears the awesome potential of God's Word in our lives.
- Even well meaning people will try to talk us out of believing God.

Luke 22:31 AMP

Simon, Simon (Peter), listen! Satan has asked excessively that [all of] you be given up to him [out of the power and keeping of God], that he might sift [all of] you like grain, [Job 1:6-12; Amos 9:9.]

d) By Persevering Produces a Crop

One of the greatest areas of exposure or weakness that we have to contend with is giving up too soon. In our western mindset we want things instant, give it to me now.

James 5:7-8

Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.

- As Jesus pointed out in this parable, the things of God come through seed time and harvest.
- The seasons of sowing and reaping requires some time; we must hold fast to our confession.
- We must watch our words, just as we sow seed with our words, so we can also dig that seed up with our words (speaking contrary to the Word of promise) and forfeit our harvest.
- The key to faith confessions, is holding fast to saying the same thing- **Hebrews 4:14.**

Hebrews 10:23 AMP

So let us seize and hold fast and retain without wavering the hope we cherish and confess and our acknowledgement of it, for He Who promised is reliable (sure) and faithful to His word.

- Patience, perseverance and endurance build character in us as we learn to hold the course.
 - o **Romans 5:3-5; James 1:3-4; 2 Peter 1:6.**
- As we grow in the Word and spiritually mature, we will stay steady- **Ephesians 4:14-16.**
- Tap into the fruit of our recreated spirit (**Galatians 5:22**)- the joy of the Lord is our strength.
 - o **Nehemiah 8:10; Psalms 126:2; Isaiah 12:3; John 17:13; Romans 15:32.**
- Joy is also given to the believer by the Holy Spirit to strengthen and refresh us.
 - o **Acts 13:52; Romans 14:17; 15:13; Eph. 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; Hebrews 1:9.**
- We must learn to keep our eyes on the goal that is set before us, it's worth it- **Hebrews 12:2.**

Galatians 6:9, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Hebrews 6:11-12, "We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised."

e) Produces a Crop; 30, 60 & 100 Fold Return

Interesting that the yield is not always the same, but will be different from case to case. As we have been saying, the condition of the heart determines the type of soil that the seed is planted in, which translates in the amount of the harvest that is yielded, but there are other factors in determining the harvest as well.

Why Some People Don't Have Harvests

- Let's rule out the obvious, we have to sow before we can reap- no sowing = no harvest.
- Our lack of sowing of God's Word often finds its roots in a lack of faith- **Mark 9:21-24.**
 - o **Genesis 8:22; Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8.**

It's a mistake for us to separate spiritual things from natural things- thinking that they have nothing in common. In reality, God patterned the natural world after the spiritual realm by design, so we would make the connection and connect the dots.

- Another reason as I mentioned already, they got tired of waiting and gave up.
- Folks have certain expectations on when they should reap a harvest- sooner rather than later.

2 Kings 19:3

They told him, “This is what Hezekiah says: This day is a day of distress and rebuke and disgrace, as when children come to the point of birth and there is no strength to deliver them.”

It’s sad when people have sowed for a long period of time, and worked for God, so when harvest time finally comes to reap the fruit of their labors, they have given up already.

- Many think that reaping is automatic. That the harvest just magically falls in their lap.
- Reaping the harvest is no more automatic than sowing the seed is.
- We are responsible for the sowing and the reaping.

The parable of the growing seed is talking about the spiritual counterpart to the natural process of seed growing in the soil. So in this parable, who sowed the seed? The man did. Who caused the seed to grow and develop? The soil or God does. Who reaped the harvest, God or man? The man did- **Mark 4:29.**

- Here is a provocative question, “can Christians sleep through their harvest?” **Proverbs 6:6-8**

Proverbs 10:5, “He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.”

Once we get the seed in the ground, then the growth is automatic, but when the harvest is ready, does the crop just jump from the field into the barn automatically? No! **1 Corinthians 3:6-8.**

- We have to take responsibility for reaping the harvest! Putting in the sickle is work!
- Reaping is not automatic and it requires faith on our part to bring the harvest of blessing in.
- Sadly, many are waiting on God when God is waiting on us.

That is why many have not been receiving God’s provision for their lives, because they don’t realize that they are the ones responsible for going out there into the field of opportunity and provision in order to gather it up and reap it all into their life. We must discern our harvest- where and when, led by the Spirit.

- We must take hold of the promises of God through faith’s confession- **1 Timothy 6:12.**
- Are we as good in the reaping arena as we are in the sowing area- takes faith to do both.
- Like the children of Israel, we must press in and take hold of our Promise Land- **Heb. 4:1-3.**
- Thank God for the angels that are working on our behalf- **Psalms 103:20; Hebrews 1:14.**

Why Some People Have Small Harvests

The obvious reason is that they were timid or lazy about the amount of seed they had sown in that area.

2 Corinthians 9:6- Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

- It’s really quite simple, little measure, little harvest, big measure, big harvest.
- Another reason is the kind of soil the seed was sown into- ourselves or others.
- Wrong motives or not walking in love will forfeit the blessing of God- **James 4:1-5.**
- Allowing the thief (Satan) to come in and rob from us- **John 10:10.**

Parable #5: The Growing Seed

Reference: Mark 4:26-29

Theme: The Process and Stages that the Growing Seed goes through unto Harvest

Context: Jesus having just taught on the Parable of the Sower further illustrates how the Kingdom of God operates



He also said, “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain — first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”

Mark 4:26-29

A. The Kingdom of God is Like

It is really important to note what Jesus starts out by saying, “This is what the Kingdom of God is like.” In other words, God’s Kingdom operates this way, or this is how we are going to receive- seed time and harvest. The natural principles are patterned after the spiritual realm.

- The implication is, we need to study and apply these spiritual laws if we expect to receive.
- Whether we like or not, this is what the Kingdom of God is Like- it is what it is.
- I can see why folks look for spiritual gifts, no real work involved to receive. Thank God for gifts like that, but they are generally not given very often- God want us to use our faith.
- Yes, it takes some effort to exercise the laws of seed time and harvest- that’s good for us!

“Give a man a fish and feed him for a day, but teach him how to fish and feed him for a lifetime.”

B. A Man Scatters Seed on the Ground

- There is no harvest without first planting seed, and we reap what we sow.
- It is important to note that “Seed” takes on many forms- words and actions.
- God’s Word is incorruptible seed, so it is the highest form of seed- **1 Peter 1:23**.
- Our behavior, actions and deeds also act as seed sown- how we treat others.
- The ground is our life and the lives of others that are affected by the seed being sown.

Galatians 6:7-8

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Seed can be the words we speak, the time we sow in serving others, acts of kindness, giving finances to the local church as well as to others- **1 Corinthians 3:6; 9:11; 2 Corinthians 9:10.**

Hebrews 6:10

God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.

- Seed also refers to the life and nature of God in us through the New Birth- **1 John 3:9.**
- Seed can even refer to people, offspring or descendants- **Genesis 13:16; Galatians 3:16.**
- The point being we are responsible for the type of seed we sow in our lives- good or bad.
- Not only are we sowing seed in our lives but also in other people- great responsibility!
- When we speak life, blessing and success over our kids, what will we reap?
- We need to be strategic, deliberate and consistent in our seed sowing- have a plan in mind.

C. Night and Day, the Seed Grows

Notice what Jesus says next, “Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows.”

Isaiah 55:10-11

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

- I love this, let the seed do the work, it’s like an investment, the return comes in time.
- Once we sow the seed, the rest is automatic as long as we don’t dig up our seed!
- This is the “Rest” of God mentioned in **Hebrews 4:1-3.**
- This is what Jesus meant by His yoke being “Easy” and the burden “Light”- **Matthew 11:30.**
- Jesus did all the hard work in purchasing our redemption; just need to mix our faith with it.
- Praise God, the Word is working mightily in us, releasing life, changing and producing fruit.
 - o **John 15:1-17.**

1 Thessalonians 2:13

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

D. Though He Does Not Know How

Thankfully the Lord made so many things in this life that don’t require our intimate understanding of the intricacies of how things work as a prerequisite to receiving and enjoying them.

- I may not know how a brown cow can eat green grass and produce white milk, but I can enjoy the fruit of it in all kinds of dairy products- Amen!
- Look at our anatomy, so much of our bodily functions just work without us thinking about it.
- I don’t know how digestion breaks down my food and disseminates it throughout my body. But I’ll know when it’s doesn’t work and need to believe for healing in the Bible.
- We are basically responsible for proper diet, exercise and sleep, and our bodies do the rest.

When we consider the miracle of reproduction and all that goes on in the development of offspring whether for humans or the animal world. When it comes to having kids, what's involved?

- The seed gets planted, that's the fun part. The mother needs to watch diet and environment.
- God takes over and knits the baby in his/her mother's womb- **Psalms 139:13.**
- When the time for delivery comes, the harvest is reaped when the baby is born.
- So we do the sowing and reaping and God makes things grow.

1 Corinthians 3:6-7

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

So all we are responsible for is knowing and working the principles of sowing and reaping, and God makes the seed grow.

1 Corinthians 15:37-38

When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.

- So God is so good, He spares us the complicated aspects of creation and teaches us how to work the principles to receive whatever we need- **2 Peter 1:1-4.**

E. From the Ground Up

Next Jesus said, *"All by itself the soil produces grain — first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head."*

- First, the soil produces the grain, speaking of the human spirit as illustrated by the four types of soil in the Parable of the Sower.
- The Kingdom of God is within us according to Jesus in **Luke 17:20-21.**
- From our re-created human spirit, the seed of the Word of God grows and matures.
- Clearly there is a process, stages and levels in seed development.

During these stages of growth, the harvest is far from certain. Even though the seed is incorruptible, the soil is not, we are the variable in this equation. God and His Word never changes but we do- **Malachi 3:6; Mark 13:31; Hebrews 13:8.**

- We have to cultivate our heart, keep it free from choking weeds- **Mark 4:18-19.**
- We must keep our hearts free from bitterness and unforgiveness- **Heb. 12:15; Mark 11:25.**
- We must avoid sin and walk in love towards others- **Ro. 13:10; James 4:1-5; 1 Peter 3:7.**

Hebrews 6:11-12

We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

So yes, God makes the seed grow, but we have to do our part and guard our heart- **Proverbs 4:20-27.**

F. Finally the Harvest Has Come!

The climax of this whole process of the growing seed comes with reaping the harvest in verse 29, “As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”

- Wow there are some definite principles to getting to this point of reaping what we have sown.
- Any seasoned farmer will tell you that it takes some skill, knowledge and favorable conditions to get a harvest; even more so when we seek a bumper crop- 100 fold return.
- The good news is that as Christians we are partakers of a New Covenant- better promises.
 - o **2 Corinthians 1:20; Ephesians 1:3; Hebrews 8:6.**
- Through faith and patience, the correct application of the Word and the blessing of God, we can expect a great harvest of blessing to be a blessing to others- **Acts 20:35.**



Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the Lord blessed him. The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy. He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him.

Genesis 26:12-14

John 12:23-24

The Hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

- We prepare the ground of our heart.
- And sow the seed of God's Word by confessing it.
- Next, we irrigate it through praise and thanksgiving and living right.
- Don't forget to pull out the weeds of doubt, worry and fear.
- We must protect it from the devil who would like to kill, steal and destroy it.
- Finally when the harvest has come, we do the reaping, believing, and receiving of it.
- We have to take possession of the harvest; walk through those doors of opportunity He provides.

John 4:35-37

“Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true.”

The Parable of the Growing Seed like the Parable of the Sower are of major significance to our understanding of how the Kingdom of God operates in our lives and in the world today.

2 Timothy 2:6-7, “The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.”

Parable #6: The Wheat and Weeds

Reference: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Theme: A Clear Depiction of the End of the Age; the Second Advent of Jesus Christ

Context: Jesus Continues His teaching on the Kingdom of God; just Discussed the Parable of the Sower

What is striking to me about this parable is the pointed language Jesus uses. There is no political correctness and inclusiveness. Not everybody is a child of God as some espouse.



Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. “The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’ “‘An enemy did this,’ he replied. “The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ “‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’“

Matthew 13:24-30

The explanation that Jesus provides for this parable is quite clear so we will examine it piece by piece.

A. Children of God

Matthew 13:36-37, “Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.” He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man.”

- First of all from a Biblical perspective, God only sees three people groups in the world.
- Sure there are all kinds of ethnic groups that man recognizes, but let’s see what the Bible says.
 - o Non-believing Jews, those natural descendents of Abraham who are not saved.
 - o Non-believing Greeks/Gentiles, those who are not saved and are obviously not Jewish.
 - o Church of God- Both former Jews and Gentiles who are now born again Christians.
- The good news is that through the New Birth a “Weed- Sinner” can become “Wheat- Saint.”

1 Corinthians 10:32

Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God.

Galatians 3:26-29

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

- Why do I point this out, because so many folks get hung up ancestry and genealogy.
- It often becomes a pride thing and can lead to discord, comparison and pride.
- I am more interested in my true identity in Jesus Christ as a citizen of heaven- **Philippians 3:20**.
- The Bible declares I am an alien and stranger in this world- **Hebrews 11:13-14; 1 Peter 2:1**.
- I am not knocking nationalism, but it should be secondary to our true citizenship.
- In **Galatians 3:28**, God removes gender and economic inequality- everyone is equal before God.

Often times the Bible uses the term “Seed” as a figure of speech to describe posterity, descendants and offspring- **Genesis 22:18; Romans 4:13; Galatians 3:16**.

- The King James version uses “Seed” and NIV often translates it as “Offspring.”
- Jesus referred to His work at Calvary as a grain of wheat dying in order to produce many seeds after Him; conformed into His image- **John 12:23-24; 1 Cor. 15:20-23; Col. 1:15,18 ; Rev. 1:5**
- Jesus formed the mold by which multitudes after Him would be poured into- **Hebrews 12:2**.
- The “Good Seed” Jesus is referred to are believers- Jesus makes us good/righteous- **2 Cor. 5:21**.
- Jesus choose us out of the world unto Himself- **Matthew 22:14; John 15:16-19**.

John 6:39-40, 44, “And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

B. Children of the Devil

Matthew 13:38-39

The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil.

Have you ever heard people in the world say, “Well you know, we all are God’s children.” It’s true that we are all created in God’s image (**Genesis 1:26**), but we are certainly not all of His children.

- Weeds as a type in the Bible, point to sin- **Genesis 3:18; Mark 4:18; John 19:2; Hebrews 6:8**.
- From the very beginning God made a distinction between God’s children and the devil’s.

Genesis 3:15 NKJV, “And I will put enmity Between you (Satan) and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”

- A person could be the most morally outstanding individual, that even puts many Christians to shame concerning conduct/behavior, but if they are not born again, they are a child of the devil.
- Jesus referred to the religious Pharisees as children of the devil- **John 8:31-47**.
- Sadly, many people who are religious and believe there is a God are not saved.
 - o **2 Timothy 3:5; James 2:14-26; Jude 3-16**.
- Satan plants his followers everywhere he can in order to contaminate and infiltrate, even in the church- **John 13:27; 2 Cor. 11:15; Eph. 2:1-2; 1 Timothy 5:15; 2 Timothy 2:26; Rev. 2:9**.

1 John 3:9-10, “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.”

C. The End of the Age

Matthew 13:39-41

“The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.”

I believe the “End of the Age” here is referring to the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. When He is revealed to all of mankind at the Battle of Armageddon as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Matthew 24:40-41

Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

- The above verse is not talking about the “Rapture” of the Church.
- The context in Matthew chapter 24 is Jesus talking to the Jewish nation of Israel; what they can expect to see when Jesus returns and intervenes at the brink of their annihilation.
- After the Second Advent of Jesus, the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ begins from Jerusalem for a 1,000 year period- **Revelation 20:1-6**.

In **Revelation 20:1-10**, the Millennial period is revealed, notice that nations are mentioned. Meaning lots of people will repopulate the earth. Only by those who survived the Great Tribulation period.

- So those who are left in **Matthew 24:40-41**, are the Tribulation Saints (Saved Believers) who have not been martyred for their faith- **Revelation 20:3**.
- They get to go on living in their natural bodies, along with having children- **Revelation 20:7-8**.

In these passages: **Isaiah 11:1-9; 65:20-25** we see a glimpse of what it will be like in the Millennium.

- Those who are taken, are the unsaved; they are put to death and taken to hell by the angles.
- These unfortunate ones accepted the mark of the Beast and are doomed - **Revelation 14:9-12**.
- Consider the manner in which Jesus returns and what He does to the nations, **Revelation 19:15**, *“Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.”*

During this global judgment (**Rev. 19:17-21**) , multitudes of people will be put to death (**James 2:26**) by Jesus and cast into hell to be reserved for judgment at the Great White Throne- **Revelation 20:11-15**.

- All those people who have already died in their sins are in hell right now- **Luke 16:19-31**.
- Those who die specifically in the future at the “End of the Age” will join them in hell.
- Those who have died in the Lord are in heaven right now.
- Those who are taken up during the rapture or die as Tribulation Saints will also be in heaven.
- They will come back with Jesus at the “End of the Age” and rule with Him for 1,000 years in glorified physical bodies.
- Those who are “Left” specifically in this parable will also be with Jesus, but in natural bodies.

Matthew 13:42-43, “They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

Parable #7: The Mustard Seed

Reference: Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19

Theme: Faith as a Seed Starts Small but Accomplishes Great Things- Multiplication of Power

Context: Jesus' Teachings Concerning the Kingdom of God; Works as a Seed- Words



Again he said, “What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed you plant in the ground. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade.”

Mark 4:30-32

Often times we think big is better, and sometimes it is, but some very small things contain great power.

A. Big Things in Small Packages

Hebrews 11:3

By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

We cannot see electrons or atoms, but they are real and serve as the building blocks of the universe. Many living things, good and bad are on a microscopic level, just because they are unseen to the naked eye does not render them insignificant.

John 6:63, “The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.”

- For example, we cannot see words, they are invisible but contain great power.
- It was through words that God created the universe; never does anything without saying it first.
- It is also through the words of Jesus Christ that the universe holds together.
 - o Hebrews 1:3 AMP, “...*upholding and maintaining and guiding and propelling the universe by His mighty word of power.*”
- The power of God is contained in the Word of God- the Word of His Power!
- **Hebrews 4:12** declares that God Word is “*sharper than any double-edged sword.*”
- **2 Timothy 3:16** states that God's Word is “*God-breathed,*” full of the life and nature of God.
- God's Word never fails or returns to Him empty handed- **Isaiah 55:10-11; Mark 13:31.**

God is in the multiplication business, like when he took the little's boy's lunch and multiplied it to feed a few thousand people in **John 6:5-13**. Words are small, but when spoken with faith from the heart, great things will happen- **Ephesians 3:20**.

B. Words Release Authority

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

- God created us in His image, and gave us dominion over all the earth..
- That authority is exercised and released through words.
- Words have the power of life and death; salvation and damnation in them.
- Our mouth is like a loaded gun, so many just go around shooting their mouths off recklessly.

Matthew 12:36-37

"But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

Proverbs 18:21

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

- Consider what Jesus said in response to the Centurion and his understanding of authority.
 - o *"I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith."*
- The Centurion understood that words change things and solicit obedience.

Matthew 8:8-10

The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.

- Changing things with words is at the heart of the "Spirit of Faith" in **2 Corinthians 4:13**.
- It is the Word of Faith principles that gets the Word in our heart to believe- **Romans 10:5-9**.
- But it is the Spirit of Faith that actually moves the mountains according to **Mark 11:22-23**.
 - o Jesus said, verse 23, *"I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain..."*
- The mountain representing the problem or obstacle- Jesus told us to speak to it, not pray about it.
- He did not tell us to submit a prayer request or ask God to move it for us did He?
- So often Christians are waiting on God to deal with the problem, when God is waiting on us.
- As Christians are under God's authority to exercise it on His behalf- **James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9**.

Through the power of attorney Jesus gave us His Name to use on His behalf to deal with the devil and the junk he tries to put on us in life- **Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 10:18-20**. We don't have authority over people's wills, neither does God. But can trample the Satan under our feet!

C. Faith as a Seed

- In **Luke 17:3-5**, Jesus told the disciples to forgive without limit when the offender repents.
- The disciple's response was, *"Increase our Faith."* In other words we need big faith to do that!
- Jesus said the opposite is true in verse 6, *"If you have faith as small as a mustard seed..."*
- To forgive is to walk in love, and that takes faith to release God's Grace or power to forgive.
 - o **Galatians 5:6; Ephesians 2:8-9.**
- God's Grace is God's power at work in us who believe, faith releases that power in our lives.
 - o **Acts 20:32; Hebrews 4:1-3.**

Luke 17:5-6

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you."

According to the Parable of the Sower in Luke 8:11, *"The seed is the word of God."* We sow God's Word when we speak God's Word- the sowing is in the saying. So faith as a seed is to *"say to this mulberry tree"* or as in Mark 11:22, *"if anyone says to this mountain"* to do something- do what?

- Mark 11:23- *"Go, throw yourself into the sea..."*
- Luke 17:6- *"Be uprooted and planted in the sea..."*
- And what would happen? It would obey you! Why us, because God gave us the dominion.
- Remember **Genesis 1:26**, Jesus has restored our lost authority that Adam had given to the devil in the Garden of Eden- **Luke 4:5-6.**
- Because of God's Grace and the gift of righteousness we can reign in life through Jesus, or as the Amplified translation puts it, *"reign as kings in life"* in **Romans 5:17.**

John 10:34-35

Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are gods'? If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came — and the Scripture cannot be broken."

- Jesus was quoting **Psalms 82:6**, Jesus took back what the devil stole from us in the Garden.
- Satan is still the god of this world system for now- **1 Corinthians 15:24-28; 2 Corinthians 4:4.**
- But he is not god over you or me in Christ, Jesus is now our Lord and Jesus defeated the devil.
 - o **Colossians 1:13-14; 2:15; Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 1:18.**
- When we believe God's Word in our heart, where the Kingdom of God now resides, than all things are possible to them who believe- **Mark 9:23.**

Luke 17:20-21

Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."

So the key is not having more faith, but knowing how to use it- releasing faith filled words. By speaking God's Word in faith from our heart, we can move mountains, mulberry trees and anything else that tries to hinder us from accomplishing God's will for our lives.

Parable #8: The Yeast

Reference: Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:20-21

Theme: The Power of God's Word to Grow and Prevail in the Lives of Men

Context: Jesus' Teachings on the Seed of God's Word and its Power to Produce and Multiply



Again he asked, “What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

Luke 13:20-21

The general reference to “Yeast” in the Bible is in the context of sin, and how it contaminates and corrupts that which it comes in contact with. Kind of like a spreading disease that brings death.

- For instance in **Matthew 16:1-12** refers to yeast as metaphor for the traditions of men- **Gal. 5:9**.
- In **Luke 12:1** yeast is compared to the hypocrisy of the religious Pharisees.
- Yeast is also used as a symbol for sin that contaminates others- **1 Corinthians 5:1-8**.
- The relationships we form have a great affect upon us spiritually- **1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor. 6:14-18**.
- The Old Covenant uses yeast as a physical symbol to admonish the people of God to avoid sin.
 - o **Genesis 19:3; Exodus 12:1-20**.
- As you probably know, from a natural use, yeast causes dough to rise and give it volume.
- It has been used in baking and fermenting alcoholic beverages for thousands of years.
- From a biological standpoint it is a microorganism, classified as fungi.
- It grows most optimally in warm and moist environments.
- As Jesus points out, a little yeast grows, spreads and works through a large amount of flour.

So let's interpret the flour as the target for the yeast to impact in a positive manner. The flour could represent a person, church, community or any situation that needs to be changed by the power of God's Word- Acts 19:20, *“In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.”*

- By virtue of the Great Commission God's intent is that the Gospel spread and be preached throughout the world like yeast; in order to transform, revolutionize and save humanity.
- Like salt and light, the Lord mixes us into the world, society and culture to influence, infiltrate and infect them with the love and power of God unto salvation- **Romans 1:8-9**.
 - o **Matthew 5:13-14; Acts 5:20; 2 Corinthians 10:16**.
- Not the other way around, not stained by the world- **2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Timothy 5:22; 1 John 2:15**.

2 Thessalonians 3:1

Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you.

Parable #9: The Hidden Treasure- A Pearl of Great Price

Reference: Matthew 13:44-46

Theme: Discovering the Kingdom of God; All in for Jesus is the only Acceptable Response

Context: Jesus Teaching on the Word of God as the Secret to the Kingdom of God



“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

Matthew 13:44-46

I am combining these two analogies that Jesus is making with the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price, because they are conveying the same message.

A. The Treasure of God’s Kingdom

- Who can put a price tag on being adopted into God’s family- **Romans 8:15-18; Ephesians 3:15.**
- Having the first fruits of the Spirit right now as a deposit- **Ro. 8:23; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14.**
- Spending eternity in God’s very presence, light and love- **Colossians 1:27; Revelation 21:5-7.**
- Escaping the horrors of eternal damnation in the Lake of Fire- **Lk. 16:23; Rev. 14:11; 20:14-15.**

B. Hidden from View

Think of it, who in their right mind would pass up such an indescribable treasure and go to hell instead? The answer can be described in one simple word- Deception!

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

- The problem with spiritual darkness is that it blinds people from seeing the truth- **1 John 2:8-11.**
- First of all spiritual truths are hidden from the cynical- **Mt. 11:25; Luke 19:41-44; 1 Cor. 2:14.**
- The Parable of the Sower points out 3 out of 4 hearts are unable to produce a harvest.
- Jesus promised that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled- **Matthew 5:6.**
- God is not going to give what is sacred to those who don’t care or want it- **Matthew 7:6.**
- If we press into the things of God we will not be disappointed- **Matthew 11:12; Hebrews 2:3.**

C. All In for Jesus

It is true that eternal life is a gift from God according to **Romans 6:23**. It cost Jesus everything, and we did nothing to earn or deserve this amazing Grace from God. Yet what is our proper response to this?

- If our salvation cost Jesus everything to obtain it, will it not also cost us everything to receive it?
- While we were still sinners, Jesus died for us; our response to Him is to give Him everything.
 - o **Matthew 6:33; Romans 5:6-8; 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.**
- For so many Jesus is their Savior from hell, but Lord of their life is something elusive.

Luke 9:23-26

Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.”

- In our western society, no one is pointing a gun to our head saying denounce Jesus or die.
 - o **Philippians 1:20; 2 Timothy 2:12-13; Revelation 2:10.**
- Yet many Christians around the world are suffering this way- **Hebrews 10:32-39; 11:35.**
- In our affluent society, the great temptation is idolatry, desire for other things- apathy.
 - o **Mark 4:19; 1 Timothy 6:9; Revelation 3:16.**
- We fall into a spiritual slumber, asleep in the light, numb to the reality around us.
 - o **Romans 13:11; Ephesians 5:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; 1 Peter 4:7; 5:8; Rev. 3:2-3.**

When you consider the apostle Paul, he was sold out for Jesus, he gave up everything to follow Jesus. Philippians 1:21, *“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”*

Philippians 3:7-9

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

- There is so much temptation to compromise and settle for second best.
- Like the rich man that turned down Jesus’ offer of eternal life and to become a disciple of His.
- Yet the other disciples left everything to follow Jesus, was it worth it? Yes- **Mark 10:17-31.**

As the parable points out, making Jesus Lord and Savior of our lives will cost us everything. We lose the right to do our own thing and call the shots, but it is so worth it- exchange junk for jewels!

- Like the story of the prodigal son, giving up the world’s pig sty- **Luke 15:16; 2 Peter 2:20-22.**
- At best living in the world is enjoying sin for a short time, at a great cost- **Hebrews 11:25.**
- Serving God has huge benefits now and for all eternity, that’s why the man in this parable, when he got the revelation of it got really excited- **Psalms 16:11; 84:11; 103:1-12; Colossians 2:2-3.**

2 Corinthians 4:7, “But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.”

Parable #10: The Net

Reference: Matthew 13:47-51

Theme: Like the Parable of the “Wheat and the Weeds” we see a Clear Depiction of the End Times

Context: The Final Parable in this series of Jesus’ Teaching on the Word and the Kingdom of God



“Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Matthew 13:47-50

- Remember how Jesus called some of the early disciples who were fishermen.
- In Jesus’ parable of the net, He was using something that they could understand quite clearly.
 - **Matthew 4:18-20.**
- Ancient fishing in Bible times was done using small boats with a net in the sea of Galilee.
- The Gospel Message is in itself a very straight forward message that people will accept or reject.
- Jesus died for our sins, was buried and raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.
 - **1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Romans 1:16-17; Galatians 1:6-12; 2 Timothy 2:8; Rev. 14:6.**
- We are called to be witnesses, when people reject the Message, we move on- **Matthew 10:14.**
- Every day people are exercising their free will, choosing between life and death- **Dt. 30:19.**

A. Two Kinds of Fish

Not everything that is caught in a net was intended to be caught. Generally speaking fishermen are looking for a specific type and size of fish that would make them money in the market place.

- So the good or valuable fish are kept in baskets while the others are thrown away.
- At the Second Advent when Jesus returns in physical form at the Battle of Armageddon, Jesus will put to death all those who have rejected Him- **John 3:36; Revelation 19:21.**
- Those who are taken (**Matthew 24:40-41**) are thrown into hell to be held for judgment at the Great White Throne in **Revelation 20:11-15.**
- The Bible calls the unrepentant sinners worthless- **Romans 3:12; Hebrews 6:7-8.**

All those who have called upon the Name of the Lord and are saved (**Romans 10:9-13**), their names are written in a special book in heaven called the Book of Life.

Exodus 32:31-33; Psalms 69:28; Philippians. 4:3; Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27

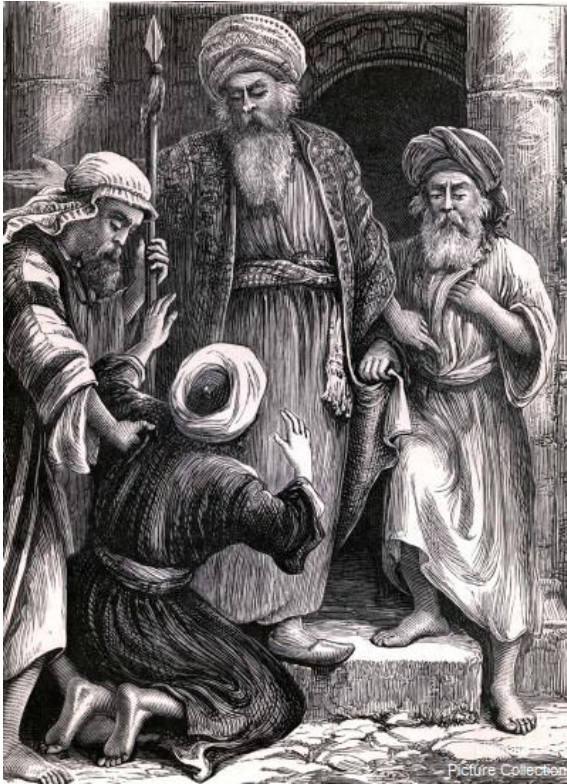
- The truth of God’s Word brings such seriousness and finality; God is Holy- **Hebrews 12:28-29.**
- Godly fear, a reverential awe of God is a good thing- **Proverbs 8:13; 2 Corinthians 7:8-11.**
- This evidenced quite graphically in this parable and other passages- **2 Thessalonians 1:5-10.**

Parable #11: The Unmerciful Servant

Reference: Matthew 18:23-35

Theme: Forgiveness in God's Kingdom is Unlimited or it's Nothing at All

Context: Peter Asks the Lord How Many Times he should Forgive his Brother in verses 21-22



“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. The servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded. His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’ But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.

Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”

Matthew 18:23-35

First let's look at what just preceded this parable with Peter's question on forgiveness. Which by the way was an excellent question, and Jesus of course provides a brilliant answer.

Matthew 18:21-22

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”

- Rabbinic teaching based on (**Amos 1:3; Job 3:29-30**) dictated that the moral obligation to forgive was limited to just 3 times in a lifetime. Peter was being generous and expanded it to 7.
- Jesus takes forgiveness to the next level- 490 times. In other words, so many times we lose count. Jesus was talking about forgiveness without limit.
- Forgiveness is a real stretch for people's sense of justice and perceived wrongs- **Luke 17:3-5.**

A. An Unimaginable Debt

Matthew 18:23-24

“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.”

- In Jesus’ parable, the king mentioned here is God the Father according to verse 35.
- The debt to be settled is a debt of sin against God, which Jesus uses money to illustrate this.
- The man in question had a debt of 10,000 talents, which is an unimaginable amount of debt.
 - o 10,000 talents is worth about 150,000 years of wages.

Here’s the calculation:

1 talent = 60 minas

1 mina = 3 month’s wages

1 talent = 60 x (3 months’ wages) = 180 months’ wages

1 talent = 180 months’ wages / 12 months in a year = 15 years’ wages

1 talent = 15 years’ wages

10,000 talents = 150,000 years’ wages.

So if a yearly wage is \$15,000 (about 40hrs/week at minimum wage (\$8/hr)

150,000 year’s wages = 2,250,000,000

(Two Billion, Two Hundred Fifty Million dollars US)

The point Jesus was making is that the sins of an individual against God, amounts to a debt that can’t be possibly be paid by the person who committed them.

- Sin is spiritual crime and the punishment for just one sin is eternal death- **Romans 3:23; 6:23.**
- How many do we commit in a lifetime- 10,000 talents worth is what Jesus is saying?
- It is impossible for man to save himself, when we do the crime we have to do the time.
- Unless of course someone who lived the perfect life on earth dies for us on our behalf- **Heb. 4:15**

Mark 10:26-27

The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”

I owed a debt I could not pay, He paid a debt He did not owe, I needed someone to wash my sins away.

- God is a Holy and Just God and the punishment for sin must be paid by someone.
- So we have a choice, spend eternity in the Lake of Fire and suffer for our sins or accept Jesus’ perfect substitution for our sin on our behalf, accept His right standing with God and go free,
 - o **Matthew 20:28; John 1:29; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:26-27; 1 John 2:2.**
- We cannot fathom the weight of sin Jesus carried on the cross- the sins of all humanity!
- So the persistent and all important question we must all answer, “What will we do with Jesus?”

John 8:24

“I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins.”

B. Forgiveness, the Gift of God

Matthew 18:25-27

“Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. The servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.”

- Prior to the 19th century debtors’ prisons were a common way to deal with unpaid debt.
- In Medieval Europe, debtors, both men and women, were locked up together in a single large cell, until their families paid their debt.
- Debt prisoners often died of disease contracted from other debt prisoners.
- Conditions included starvation and abuse from other prisoners.
- If the father of a family was imprisoned for debt, the family business often suffered while the mother and children fell into poverty.
- Unable to pay the debt, the father often remained in debtors’ prison for many years.
- Often times family members were sold into slavery to pay their debts- **2 Kings 4:1-7.**

The man did the smart thing and begged for forgiveness. This is also the smart thing for sinful man to do as well. Why pay for your sins when Jesus already paid for them; not by our good deeds.

Romans 4:2-8; 9:30- 33; 11:6; Ephesians 2:8-9.

- Thank God for His amazing grace, the only thing we deserve is an eternity in hell.
- I love Psalms 103:3, “*...who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.*”
- In His unfailing love and mercy He does not treat us as our sins deserve!
- Even as Christians when we miss it today, God will forgive us of our sins- **1 John 1:9.**

Psalms 103:8-12, “The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

- The man incurred forgiveness from his master through an act of repentance.
- To repent is to beg for mercy and turn from sin- **John 8:11; Acts 26:20; Hebrews 6:1.**
- It is a matter of the heart, in response to the conviction of the Holy Spirit- **John 6:65; 16:5-11.**

Joel 2:13

“Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love...”

- Repentance is our response to hearing the Gospel message, turning to God- **Acts 3:19; 20:21.**
 - o **Luke 24:47-48; Acts 5:31**
- Having a repentant heart is to continue as believers; not in condemnation- **Romans 8:1.**

Acts 17:30-31

“In the past God overlooked such ignorance (Idolatry), but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.”

C. Mercy Triumphs Over Judgment

So when this recently forgiven servant goes out and finds another servant (another human being), who had wronged him and consequently owed him a debt, what was his response?

Matthew 18:28-30, “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded. His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’ But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.”

- What is amazing here is that this servant had just been forgiven of an unimaginable debt.
- Another servant happens to owe him 100 denarii, a fraction of the amount that was just forgiven.
- A silver denarius coin in Roman times was equivalent to one day’s wages for a common laborer.
- So its value with respect to bread is estimated to be around \$20 US in the early empire.
- Based on this estimate, 100 denarii would have been equal to 4 months pay or \$2,000 US.

James 2:12-13, “Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!”

This man in the parable was not merciful to his fellow servant. In fact the servant with the small debt sought forgiveness using basically the same wording as the first servant, but to no avail.

- No matter how hurtful the offense was, nothing compares to how we have offended God.
- Therefore, there is never any excuse to not forgive and try and restore others into fellowship.
- Consider the apostle Paul, he murdered Christians before his conversion, and yet God forgave and used him mightily in the ministry- **1 Timothy 1:15-16.**

Luke 17:3-4

“If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”

Matthew 18:15-17

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

I know whoever is reading this is probably thinking right now, “What about those who would abuse this grace and mercy as a license to keep on sinning and taking advantage of people?”

- Restoring trust in a relationship that was violated requires true repentance on behalf of the offender. If they are abusing grace then the condition of true repentance is not being met is it?
 - o **Jude 4; Hebrews 6:1.**
- In which case, restoration cannot be made until there is a true rending of the heart to change.
- The key is not to hold onto unforgiveness and bitterness which is a cancer to the soul!
 - o **Romans 12:18; Hebrews 12:15.**

D. Unforgiveness Results in Judgment

Matthew 18:31-34

“When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.”

- Since there is never a justification to hold unforgiveness against anyone, to do so is sin.
- Look at what sinful men (**Hebrews 12:2-4**) had done to Jesus, and what was His response.

Luke 23:34, “Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’”

- Not even God holds unforgiveness against humanity, so who are we to think we can.
- Technically speaking, Jesus has already paid the price for every sin ever committed.
 - o **Hebrews 7:27; 9:26; 10:10; 1 Peter 3:18.**
- So the only sin left that sends people to hell is rejecting Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior.
 - o **John 3:34; Hebrews 2:1-4.**
- The Holy Spirit convicts the lost of only this one sin according to **John 16:9.**

2 Corinthians 5:18-19, “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”

1. Being Turned Over for Judgment

- So what happens to Christians when they persist in the sin of unforgiveness?
- They are “turned over” to Satan to be tortured until he/she repents.
 - o **1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 1 Timothy 1:20.**
- God gives His people a season of repentance, to change before He has to turn them over to the devil, accuser of the brethren- **Job 1:6-12; Revelation 12:10-11; 2:20-23.**
- The enemy wants us turned over to him, in order to kill steal and destroy our lives- **John 10:10.**
- The Scriptures tell us to “judge” ourselves when we are not walking in love- **1 Cor. 11:17-34.**
- Disobedience opens the door to the enemy to attack us- **2 Corinthians 2:10-11; Ephesians 4:26.**

When folks fail to repent and force God’s hand to judge them, God in course turns them over to the devil who is waiting to have access to them. There are numerous Scriptures concerning the children of Israel, where God gave them over to their enemies due to their persistence in sin and rebellion- they left God with no other choice- **Psalms 78:61-62; Judges 2:14-15; Jeremiah 22:25; Hebrews 13:4.**

- So to be judged by the Lord is to allow Satan to oppress the unrepentant disobedient Christian.
- The moment we repent, judge ourselves and do the right thing, God’s deliverance comes.

God takes no pleasure in turning people over to the enemy for judgment. So if it grieves Him to judge folks why does He do it? Because He is the righteous judge of the universe. God judged our sin in Jesus Christ and poured out His wrath on Him so we could go free. In this way God satisfies His perfect Holiness and we go free if we accept this Great offer of Salvation through Jesus Christ!

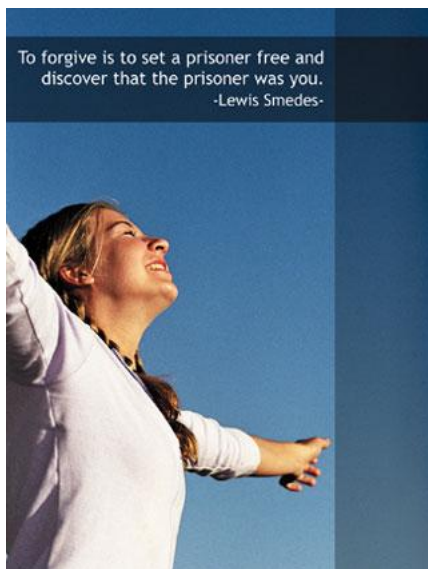
E. A New Covenant Mandate to Forgive

Matthew 18:35

“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”

- Forgiveness of sin is at the heart of Scripture, an expression of God’s great love for us- **John 3:16**
- We are love children of a love God; born of love, God’s nature in us- **Romans 5:5; 1 John 4:8.**
- Spiritual maturity is measured by our love walk; being like Jesus- **Ephesians 5:1-2; 1 John 2:6.**
- At the core of sin is pride and selfishness. To not walk in love is to be earthly- **1 Cor. 3:1-4.**
- The God-Kind of love is supernatural- referred to as *agape* in the Greek- love that gives!
- Natural human love of sinners and carnal Christians is selfish, can turn to hatred in a moment.

Matthew 6:14-15, “ For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”



John 13:34-35

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

John 15:12-14

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.”

1 John 3:16-17

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

2. So How Are we to Love One Another

- Unlike the Old Testament standard of “love your neighbor as yourself” in **Leviticus 19:18.**
- Jesus raises the bar to love each other as He loves us- lay down our lives for each other.
 - o Colossians 3:13, “*Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*” **1 John 3:23.**
- God is not unjust, He gives us more grace in the New Covenant to obey this command.
- As a matter of fact, to walk in love is to never sin- **Romans 13:8-10; 2 John 6; James 3:2.**
- The Lord wants us to restore and look after each other- **Gal. 6:1-2; James 5:19-20; 1 John 5:16.**
- A good rules of thumb, be quick to forgive and quick to repent- **Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4.**
- Remember that unforgiveness always makes us the prisoner- **Romans 12:18; Hebrews 12:14.**



When God forgives, He forgets and so should we by faith- **Galatians 5:6.**

Hebrews 8:12, “*For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.*”

Parable #12: The Good Samaritan

Reference: Luke 10:25-37

Theme: Jesus Reveals what True Religion is all about

Context: An Expert in the Law Asks Jesus what he Must do to Inherit Eternal Life

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?” He answered: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

Luke 10:25-29



A. Who is my Neighbor?

Remember that Jesus came to the earth while the Old Covenant was in force. Therefore, a lot of what He said and did was in conformity to that dispensational period. However, Jesus came to fulfill the Law and the Commandments and usher in a New Covenant of Grace, much more superior to the Old Covenant.

Matthew 5:17-18, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”

- This was not the first time Jesus was asked this question, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”
 - o **Matthew 10:17; Luke 18:18.**
- Jesus answered them all the same way, as far as the Old Covenant was concerned- obey the Law.

Leviticus 18:5

Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the Lord.

Predictably, the religious leader wanted to show Jesus that He was a righteous man- self-righteous that is. He wanted to make a distinction of who his neighbor was; who would be worthy of his love.

- Jesus declared that we are to love everyone, even our enemies- **Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27-36.**
- The religious leaders were notorious for keeping the letter of the law and not the spirit of the law.
 - o **Matthew 12:3-8; 15:1-9; 23:1-39; Mark 7:1-13.**
- God’s requirement for salvation under the New Covenant is simplified- Jesus - **Romans 10:9-10.**
- We are to believe on Jesus and love one another; fulfills the law- **John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:23.**

John 6:29, “Jesus answered, ‘The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.’”



In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and

bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Luke 10:30-37

B. The Religious Elite

Since the expert in the law was wanting to justify himself, Jesus provided a wonderful example of how one is to put their religion into practice- **1 Timothy 5:4; James 1:26-27.**

Luke 10:30

“In reply Jesus said: ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.’”

- Jesus begins the story with a man taking a journey on a road from Jerusalem to Jericho- alone!
- This road was known for being full of danger and peril due to the high rocks, ravines and caves.
- Back then they did not have much law and order, it was like the wild west in the wilderness.
- A haven for gangs of robbers and bandits that would descend on innocent folks.
- Remember the two men crucified with Jesus, they were thieves themselves- **Matthew 27:38-44.**

Now when Jesus said they left him half dead, this man was as good as dead out there in the middle of nowhere. Like Paul when he was stoned, these kinds of people intend for their deaths- **Acts 14:19-20.**

Luke 10:31-32

A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But alas, the cavalry is coming, a priest, a man of the cloth, a man who exemplifies mercy and compassion has stumbled across this unfortunate traveler, hope for the hopeless has come- Not!

- The Priests and Levites were consecrated unto God for religious service.
- Unfortunately their definition embraced a wide separation from the common man.
- To their defense, they probably thought this man was dead, so they did not want to risk it to find out and then become ceremonially unclean if the man was indeed dead- **Numbers 5:1-4; 9:6-10.**

John 18:28

Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover.

Of course there were provisions in the Mosaic Law for them to become ceremonially clean again, but that would have imposed delays and costs; in their mind, this was an unnecessary distraction.

- This is a classic example of the letter of the law being exalted above the spirit of the law.
- Like ceremonial cleanliness another sacred cow was keeping the Sabbath to the extreme. The religious leaders added all kinds of additional requirements to this basic requirement.
- Jesus points out that human life is more important than following man's traditions- **Mt. 12:1-8.**

Matthew 12:11-12

He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

- Notice what Jesus said, "how much more valuable is a man..."
- The Priest and Levite could have been temporarily unclean for helping the man, but it's worth it.
- Unfortunately they had an obsessive preoccupation with ceremonial cleanliness.
- The irony of it all was in all their outward conformity, Jesus pointed out their inward baseness.

Matthew 23:27-28

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness."

C. Authentic Compassion

Luke 10:33-35

"But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'"

- First of all it was not by chance that Jesus used a Samaritan as the "good guy" in this story.
- Samaritans were ethnically half Jewish and half Gentile- they were hated by the Jews- **John 4:9.**
- A "True" Jew would go miles out of his way to travel around Samaria to get to Jerusalem.
- They were not allowed to worship in Jerusalem, they were spurned as outcasts and demonized.
 - o **Luke 17:16; John 4:19-26; 8:48.**

So this Samaritan man took pity on the half-dead traveler and was not hung up by religion to do something to help this man. He went out of his way to take care of him and pay for his recovery.

- Without the compassion of this Samaritan, the man would have died for sure.
- Jesus is giving us a mandate to lay aside our inhibitions & fears and reach out to people in need.
- People are looking for real, authentic love; as the Church of Jesus Christ are we giving it to them.
- The greatest need that mankind has is the need for salvation! After that the physical/mental.

Romans 12:16

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

One of the teachers of the law heard Jesus debating and asked Him which commandment was the most important- **Mark 12:28-31**. Jesus quoted Old Testament Scripture, and the man was impressed.

Mark 12:32-34

“Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

- Notice that this teacher of the law understood the spirit of the law; devotion of the heart towards God and man. Not just mechanical and superficial observance of religious rites.
- Even as New Covenant believers we can become Christian in name only, having a form of godliness, going through the motions- **2 Timothy 3:5; James 2:14-26; 1 John 3:16-18**.
- Good deeds are a result of being Born Again- **Matthew 5:16; Titus 3:8, 14; 1 Peter 2:12**.
- We are saved unto good works, not by good works- **Ephesians 2:10**.

Proverbs 21:3, “To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.”

D. Authentic Compassion

Luke 10:36-37, “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

- The religious leader could not even get himself to say it was the Samaritan who had done the right thing. This is how entrenched their bias and prejudice was against them at that time.
- Jesus, being their God was wanting more than just lip-service from His people.
- Likewise for us under the New Covenant, our faith is expressed by what we do- **James 2:14-26**.

Mark 7:6-8

He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.’ You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.”

Parable #13: The Friend at Midnight

Reference: Luke 11:5-13

Theme: Don't be Shy or Timid about Seeking God in Prayer – Faith is Bold

Context: Jesus is Teaching on the Subject of Prayer



Then he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.’ “Then the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man’s boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.”

Luke 11:5-8

It is important to make the connection between the Lord teaching the disciples how to pray and this parable about prayer and the supporting teaching that follows. Jesus clearly reveals the Father’s heart in how He responds to our petitions in contrast to the unwillingness of men to help.

A. “Don’t Bother Me”

- This parable captures the urgent needs of people at the most inconvenient times seeking help.
- Natural human love and friendship is selfish at its core- **Luke 6:34; 14:12-14.**
- So Jesus is illustrating the limitations of mankind; they give when it’s convenient to them.
- Often times however our needs are pressing and urgent, so men will fail us but God never will!
- However this man in need will not take “No” for an answer- he keeps knocking on the door.
- The secret to this man getting his request granted was:
 - o NIV- Boldness; KJV- Importunity; NKJV- Persistence; NEB- Shamelessness

Nelson’s Bible Dictionary: Importunity- persistence in making a request or demand.

Luke 11:8 AMP

“... yet because of his shameless persistence and insistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.”

So the central truth in this parable is the need for persistence in prayer, not giving up, not be dissuaded or deterred. Faith in prayer is not passive, dormant or frail, it’s a “go-getting” failure is not an option

Matthew 11:12 AMP

And from the days of John the Baptist until the present time, the kingdom of heaven has endured violent assault, and violent men seize it by force [as a precious prize — a share in the heavenly kingdom is sought with most ardent zeal and intense exertion].

- We can't be half-hearted and expect to receive much from the Kingdom of God.
- As the old saying goes, "we get out of it what we put into it."
- We reap a harvest in proportion to the effort we put in sowing- **2 Corinthians 9:6.**

Luke 11:9-10

"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."

- The word "Ask" in the Greek is in the present active imperative- a command to keep asking, seeking and knocking. That is also how the Amplified translations interprets it.
- Folks who "Try" prayer as a last resort will generally be disappointed.
- As Matthew 5:6 put it, we must "*hunger and thirst for righteousness*" to receive from God.
- Realizing the promises of God in our lives requires faith and patience- persevere and not give up.

Hebrews 6:11-12

We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

B. "The Father's Willingness"

Just reading this parable by itself could leave the impression that we have to likewise bang on heaven's doors to get our prayers answered from a busy, reluctant or disengaged heavenly being. Nothing could be further from the truth. We must read on after this parable to see how Jesus further explains the dynamics of prayer and the Father's heart to meet our every need without delay- **1 Timothy 5:5-6.**

Luke 11:11-13

"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

- Jesus make a comparison with a parent's love for their children with the Heavenly Father's love for His children, "*...to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine*" in Ephesians 3:20.
- The Father's love for us is infinite, so there should be no doubt- **1 John 5:14-15.**
- I like how Jesus in the parable of the unjust judge reveals the Father's passion for us.

Luke 18:6-8

And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

In Genesis 22:13-14, "*... the Lord will Provide,*" God revealed Himself to Abraham as Jehovah Jireh. The Hebrew root meaning of this redemptive name means: "Jehovah will see to it." In other words, He sees the needs that we have ahead of time and sees to it that they are met when the actual need arises.

Parable #14: The Rich Fool

Reference: Luke 12:13-21

Theme: Be on your Guard Against All Kinds of Greed – Life is More Important than Material Things

Context: A dispute Arose Between Brothers Concerning their Father's Estate



And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ “Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I’ll say to myself, You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’ “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have

prepared for yourself?’ “This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.”

Luke 12:16-21

Money can be such a contentious topic today as it was in Jesus’ day. For instance, it is one of the main reasons for divorce and disharmony within the home in our nation.

- So it’s not surprising that Jesus had a lot to say about the right handling of money.
- You know, God does not mind His children being rich, He just does not want us to be covetous.
- All throughout the Bible, God’s Covenant people who were walking in fellowship with Him had a super abundance, full supply, well off, had all their needs met- that is my definition of rich.
- Many promises concerning prosperity, God wants us blessed to be a blessing- **Acts 20:35.**

Luke 12:13-15

Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”

A. Greed, a Snare for the Soul

Notice the strong warning Jesus made about greed or covetousness- the two words are interchangeable. I love the statement Jesus made, *“a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”*

- The world system pushes the lie, that if we just have more stuff, we’ll be happy.
- Yet the more stuff people get a hold of, the emptier they feel and life becomes meaningless.
- A vain/futile pursuit for fulfillment outside of Jesus- **Psalms 127:1; Ecclesiastes 2; 2 Peter 2:22**

1. The Unquenchable Thirst of Greed

Romans 7:7-8

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.” But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.

- The problem with the lust of greed is that it does not know when to stop- **Pr. 23:1-8; 27:20.**
- Like the compulsive gambler that is never satisfied and can never just walk away.

Ecclesiastes 5:10

Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless.

- The god of money and materialism is an idol that we all have to deal with in this life.
- Rich and poor alike, every human being must choose whom they will serve- God or money!
 - o **Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5-6.**
- Even vocational ministers have to be especially on guard against the temptation of greed.
 - o **Luke 16:14-15; John 12:6; 2 Corinthians 2:17; 1 Timothy 3:3; 1 Peter 5:2-3.**

Matthew 6:24

“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”

The other problem with greed that it is the obsessive preoccupation of physical things- not just money. The idol of beauty, fame, power or any other compulsive pursuit outside of our Creator God.

Mark 4:18-19

“Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.”

Mark 4:19 AMP

Then the cares and anxieties of the world and distractions of the age, and the pleasure and delight and false glamour and deceitfulness of riches, and the craving and passionate desire for other things creep in and choke and suffocate the Word, and it becomes fruitless.

- The, “worries of this life,” “deceitfulness of wealth” and “the desires for other things” do what?
- They choke out the things of God in our lives, become weights and sins- **Hebrews 12:1.**
 - o Rather in verse 2, *“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith”*
- Why does Jesus call wealth “deceitful” I wonder, perhaps because of the distractions it can cause to solicit and capture our devotion and love away from God who is jealous for us.
 - o **Exodus 34:14; Deuteronomy 32:21; 2 Corinthians 11:2.**
- To love and be devoted to the things of this world is sin- **James 4:1-10; 1 John 2:15-17.**

God understands that we have physical needs and He is more than interested and able in meeting our daily needs- to have an abundance. Let’s not put them first or worry about them, rather seek first His Kingdom and righteousness and all these others things will be added as well- **Matthew 6:25-34.**

2. Nothing Satisfies Like Jesus

God made mankind as spirit beings, and without God there is this aching void in their hearts that is reserved only for God to fill. No amount of money, sex, drugs, fame or anything else can fill it or provide an escape from the ever pressing and urgent reality that they need Jesus as Lord of their heart.

1 Peter 1:18-19

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

- The more people lust for the things of this life, the more unsatisfied and empty they become.
- The world provides hollow and deceptive philosophies to answers life's deep questions- religion.
- The plain truth is that the reality is found in Jesus alone- **Colossians 2:8-23; Galatians 4:8-10.**
 - o Therefore, the meaning of life becomes quite simple:

John 17:3

“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

1 John 5:11-12

“And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

- God is the author and creator of pleasure and all that is good and wholesome- **James 1:17.**
 - o Acts 17:28, *“For in him we live and move and have our being.”*
- Satan perverts and corrupts what God has created to ensnare and enslave people to destruction.
- He is a liar, and deceives people into thinking that God wants to steal their fun and happiness.
- Sure the pleasures of sin are real, but they are temporary and carry a great cost- **Hebrews 11:25.**
- Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you are willing to pay.

Psalms 16:11

You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

3. Understanding the Bigger Picture Helps

Mark 8:36-37

“What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?”

We have all heard it before, “life is short,” but why is it so important to grasp that truth. Because, it is a value or belief that shapes our day to day decisions.

- People without a revelation of eternity live like there is no tomorrow- **Luke 16:19-31.**
- Like a man with an unquenchable thirst, they are driven by a lust for more- **Ephesians 4:19.**
- So the world lives like there is no tomorrow, when eternity exists today for everyone.

2 Corinthians 4:18

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

- There is such a thin veil that separates this natural realm from the eternal or spiritual realm.
- Our lives on this earth is so temporary- **Psalms 103:13-17; 1 Peter 1:23-25.**
- As Christians, we live for eternity today as though we will be in heaven tomorrow.
- When people boast about what they will do in their lives, this kind of boasting is sinful.
 - o **James 4:13-16; 1 Corinthians 1:31.**

1 Corinthians 15:32-34

If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God — I say this to your shame.

- We are aliens and strangers in the world; citizens of heaven- **1 Peter 2:11; Philippians 3:20.**
- We are in this temporal world that is passing away, but not of it or engrossed in it- **1Cor. 7:30-31**
- We need to realize that there will be some form of judgment for all of mankind in the future.
 - o The wicked at the Great White Throne- **Revelation 20:11.**
 - o For Born Again Christians- **Romans 14:12; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10.**

Acts 24:15

“...and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.”

- The reality is that we have brought nothing into this world and we can take nothing out of it.
- The secret is learning to be content and focused on Jesus- **Philippians 4:11-12.**
- Note, money is not evil, it is neutral, like the internet, it can be used for good or for evil.
- It is the love of money, greed and covetousness that idolizes material possessions, that is sin.

1 Timothy 6:6-10

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

- That does not mean we are to be content with poverty, which is a curse- **Galatians 3:13.**
- We should be very interested in prosperity, not to heap it upon ourselves, but to be a blessing to others and fund the Great Commission throughout the world.
- God is not against financial planning, an estate, banks, investments for retirement etc.
 - o **Genesis 41:33-36; Proverbs 13:22; Acts 11:27-30.**
- There are some in the Body of Christ called to make money and give- **Romans 12:7.**

Proverbs 23:4-5

Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.

4. Being Rich Toward God

Getting back to the rich man in the parable, the problem with this guy is that he wanted to hoard his wealth for his own personal consumption- **Proverbs 3:9-10**.

- Had a false perception about the future; assumed that nothing would happen to him or his stash.
 - o **Matthew 6:19-20; Luke 12:32-34.**
- Nor did he give thanks or credit to God for the abundant prosperity he received.
- That's the problem often times with abundance, people forget about God and His Kingdom.
 - o **Job 8:8-15; Psalms 9:17.**

Proverbs 30:7-9

“Two things I ask of you, O Lord; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.”

- Again, God wants His children to be blessed with good things.
- We need to realize that wealth has a purpose in God's economy, consider the Early Church.
- They surrendered their lives and possessions to the Lord's disposal as the Spirit led them.

Acts 4:32-37

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need. Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

- The proper stewardship of money is a great blessing to the Body of Christ.
- Since God is our source, who gives us the ability to gain wealth, it all belongs to Him anyway.
 - o **Deuteronomy 8:18; Proverbs 13:22.**
- It's problematic when folks get stingy, greedy and selfish with money- **Proverbs 11:24-26.**
- When we give to the poor and God's people the Lord takes it personally in a good way.
 - o **Proverbs 19:17; 28:27; Matthew 25:40; 2 Corinthians 8:19.**
- Investing in the lives of people is the only thing that counts for eternity!

Hebrews 6:10, “God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.”

Regardless of economic status, we are all called to put God first and be a good steward of His resources.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Parable #15: The Wedding Banquet

Reference: Mark 13:32-37; Luke 12:35-40

Theme: Stay Awake, be Ready and Watching for the Lord's Return at Any Moment

Context: Knowing the "Signs of the Times" and having an Eternal Perspective



“Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night.

But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

Luke 12:35-40

A. Be Ready

The central point of this parable is about watchfulness, being alert and ready for the Lord's Return. Living in a state of readiness, eagerly expecting His return at any moment.

- The word “Ready” is used three times in this parable and “Watch, Waiting and Watching” is also used three times as well. So six words about staying alert are used to drive the point home.
- To be ready is to be active, diligent and obedient to wait for the Master's return.

In ancient times, the expectation of servants was to always be on call for their master's return in order to wait on him and care for his physical needs.

- The expression, “Keep your lamps burning” reinforces the sediment of staying awake.
- It's harder to fall asleep when the light is on, it helps keep us awake.
- We have to be prepared at all times and in every way, so as not to be caught off guard.

Luke 12:38-39

“It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night.”

- The goal is to “immediately” be ready when the Lord returns, not distracted or detached.
- Half in the world and half in the Kingdom of God, being lukewarm- **Revelation 3:16.**
- We are to encourage one another along these lines so none of us falls behind.
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11; Hebrews 3:13; 10:25.**

Revelation 16:15

“Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.”

- I like the parallel passage in Mark 13:32 which words things very similar to Luke’s account.
- Particularly in verse 37, “...*do not let him find you sleeping.*”

Mark 13:32-37

“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. “Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back — whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”

- The key is to keep from being distracted by the world and our own agenda- **1 John 3:3.**
- Keeping our minds fixed on Jesus will keep us in a state of readiness whether the Lord comes in our lifetime or not- **Colossians 3:1-2; Philippians 4:4-9; Hebrews 3:1.**
- We must be focused and disciplined- **1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 1 Timothy 1:18; 6:12.**
- Knowing that it’s how we finish, and not how we start our Christian race that counts.
 - o **2 Timothy 4:7-8; James 1:12; Hebrews 10:36; 2 John 8; Revelation 3:11**

1 Peter 4:7

The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.

B. The Blessing of Being Ready

Luke 12:37

“It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them.”

In Bible times, the host of the house would take on the role of a servant and serve his guests personally as a gesture of honor.

- This is what the Lord will do for us if He finds us faithful to the end- **Revelation 2:26-27.**
- For every disciple of Jesus Christ, we yearn to be found worthy of these beautiful words.

Matthew 25:23

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant!’ You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

- This is a choice that each individual Christian must make.
- We can’t blame other people for our lack of preparedness; these are decisions we must make.

Romans 8:18, “ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”

C. The Day and Hour is Unknown

Luke 12:39-40

But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

- God the Father in His sovereignty has hidden the day and hour of when Jesus returns.
- Curious minds want to know, like the early disciples, we all want to know the timing.

Acts 1:6-7

So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

- Why do you think the Father God would do that, hide the exact timing of when Jesus returns?
- We all know about human nature, how we procrastinate until the last minute for things.
- If we knew exactly the timing of Jesus’ return, we may live carelessly until the last hour.
- Also Satan could coordinate his plans and strategies around that timetable.
- In the wisdom of God, the exact timing of Jesus return is hidden to keep man and Satan guessing.
- One thing is certain, for those in darkness, this day will take them completely by surprise.
 - o **1 Thessalonians 5:1-4; 2 Peter 3:10-15; Revelation 3:3.**

Matthew 24:36-39

“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”

Since God has hidden the exact time of Jesus’ return, anyone who tries to put a date on it is automatically in error, not even Jesus knows when, so how is a human going to know before Jesus does?

- We should plan as though Jesus is returning in 100 years, but live like He is coming tomorrow.
- Even though the day and the hour is hidden from us, we can still know when the return of the Lord will be imminent, so that it won’t catch us by surprise- **1 Thessalonians 5:4.**
- There are many prophetic signs in the Bible that we can look for- **Matthew 24:32-35.**
- Sadly, folks in the past have missed God’s signs- **Matthew 16:2-3; Luke 19:41-44.**
- We have the Holy Spirit to guide us in the Word of God, and through dreams, visions and the inward witness.

John 16:12-13

“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”

Parable #16: The Wise Manager

Reference: Luke 12:42-48

Theme: Stewardship and Accountability that Comes with Responsibility and Knowledge

Context: Thousands of People Assemble and Jesus Teaches them- Warnings and Encouragements



The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers. “That servant who knows his master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”

All of us have been called to stewardship in one form or another, no one exempt from being responsible for what the Lord has put in our hand to serve others.

A. What’s that in your Hand?

- God will use what is in your life to further His purpose and Kingdom in the world you live in.
- Moses did not have much when he returned to Egypt to lead God’s people out of bondage but the clothes on his back and a staff in his hand.

Exodus 4:1-4

Moses answered, “What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, ‘The Lord did not appear to you’?” Then the Lord said to him, “What is that in your hand?” “A staff,” he replied. The Lord said, “Throw it on the ground.” Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it. Then the Lord said to him, “Reach out your hand and take it by the tail.” So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand.

- Human nature often times recoils in fear or indifference from responsibility offering excuses.
- Like the prophet Jeremiah had done:

Jeremiah 1:6-8, “Ah, Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am only a child.” But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a child.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the Lord.

- None of us is empty handed, we all have something to offer by God's grace.
- No one is exempt, regardless of age, gender or social status, if you are a follower of Jesus Christ, than you are part of the Body of Christ- **Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31.**
- For the Body of Christ to grow and function, it requires each part to do its work- **Eph. 4:11-16.**
- Jesus said in Matthew 10:8, "*Freely you have received, freely give.*" This is not a suggestion.

1 Peter 4:10, "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

B. Good Steward

Luke 12:42-44

The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions."

- We have all been given a charge from the Lord to be a faithful and wise manager/steward.
 - o Like taking care of our family, to provide and protect them- **1 Timothy 5:8.**
 - o Pastoral ministry, to feed and care for God's flock- **John 21:15-18; 1 Peter 5:1-4.**
 - o Any form of teaching God's Word to others- **James 3:1.**
 - o Living the Christian life as salt and light to the world- **Mt. 5:13-16; 1 Peter 2:11-12.**

All of us at one point or another have been responsible for other people- God's precious children.

- We are our brother's keeper to watch each other's back: to encourage, restore, and serve.
 - o **Gen. 4:9; Luke 22:32; Gal. 6:1-2; Col. 4:12; Php. 2:21; James 5:19; 1 John 5:16.**
- The clear directive from the Lord is to love one another as He has loved us.
 - o **John 13:34-35; John 15:13; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:16**
- Our love for God is demonstrated in obeying His commands; what it means to walk in love.
 - o **John 14:15, 23-24; Romans 13:8; 1 John 5:2-3.**
- In the parable of the sheep and the goats, Jesus makes an amazing statement.
 - o The Bible is very clear on this one point, people matter to God- so treat them right.

Matthew 25:40

"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

Our God takes it personal in how we treat other people. Jesus set an example for us to follow, to do as He did when He washed the feet of His disciples- **John 13:12-17; Philippians 2:1-13.**

- The other principle that Jesus points out is being faithful, consistent and endure to the end.
 - o Please Read: **Ezekiel chapter 18 and chapter 33:1-20.**
- It's not how we start our Christian race, but how we finish it, that is how we will be judged.
 - o **1 Cor. 15:2, 58; Php. 2:12; 2 Timothy 2:12; Hebrews 10:32-39; Rev. 2:10, 26; 3:10.**

Ezekiel 33:18-19

If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does evil, he will die for it. And if a wicked man turns away from his wickedness and does what is just and right, he will live by doing so.

C. Bad Steward

Luke 12:45-46, “But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.”

- In the natural, without light we would stumble around in the darkness not knowing where we are.
- One major consequence to walking in darkness, disobedience to the Lord, is that it blinds folks.
 - o **1 John 2:9-11** makes this very point, stumbling around in the darkness.
- To walk in the light of God’s Word is to be obedient and in fellowship with God.
 - o **John 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:4-5; 12:35-36; Ephesians 5:8-9; 1 John 1:5-7.**
- Walking in the Light allows us to see things coming, so we are not taken by surprise.
- Another analogy can be drawn from people sleeping when it is dark, and awake when it is day.
 - o **Ephesians 5:13-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8.**

So the Bible uses light and darkness as metaphors to represent the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Our allegiance to one or the other is demonstrated by our choices and corresponding behavior.

Romans 13:12-13; Colossians 1:12-13; Revelation 3:15-16.

Light is also used as a figure of speech to represent truth and knowledge or ignorance for darkness.

Psalms 119:130; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Ephesians 1:17-18; Hebrews 6:4; 10:32.

- Many Christians are asleep in the light, oblivious to eternal implications going on around them.
- The bad steward is clearly backslidden and in open disobedience to his master’s will.
- Living in such darkness has blinded him from the timing of his master’s return- out of touch.
- As a result, the bad steward is caught off guard and is severely punished- sent to hell.
- To be assigned with unbelievers is certainly not talking about going to heaven.

What is interesting with the previous parable of “The Wedding Banquet” in Luke 12:35-40, there is no mention of hell. Those servants were not given over into sin like this bad steward in this parable.

Luke 13:6-9; Romans 11:22; 2 Timothy 2:11-13; Hebrews 6:4-9; 10:26-39; 2 Peter 2:20-22.

D. Accountable for What We Know and Do With it

Luke 12:47-48

“That servant who knows his master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”

- As Christians in the western world, we have so much accessibility to the Word of God.
- We have the freedom to go to church and serve in various ministries, but do we.
- Are we studying the Word and walking it out in our lives- **2 Timothy 2:15; 2 John 6; 3 John 4.**
- Consistently putting it into practice- **Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6:46-49; 8:21; Php. 4:9.**
- We need to watch how we live around others- **1 Timothy 4:16; Colossians 4:5.**
- What are we doing with what God has invested in our lives to serve others? **Jude 23.**
- We will all have to give an account to God- **Ro.14:10-12; 1Cor. 4:10-15; 2Cor. 5:10; Heb. 4:13**

Parable #17: The Barren Fig Tree

Reference: Luke 13:6-9

Theme: True Repentance will show forth Visible Fruit, without it comes Judgment

Context: Jesus Expounding on Luke 13:5, "But unless you repent, you too will all perish."



Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' " "Sir," the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'"

Luke 13:6-9

I believe this parable was explicitly speaking to the nation of Israel, but it also has tremendous implications and application for us today as well.

A. The Characters

A Man

I believe this is speaking of God the Father who is the creator and owner of all things in the universe. The vineyard represents the nation of Israel.

Psalms 24:1-2

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.

The Fig Tree

- Is often used as a metaphor for the Jewish people in the Bible.
- Often times the Bible mentions both the vine (grape vine) and fig tree together.
 - o **1 Kings 4:25; Joel 2:22; Micah 4:4.**
- When Jesus was talking about His Second Return at the end of the Great Tribulation period in **Matthew 24:27-31**, the context is speaking to the nation of Israel at that time and in the future.
- Jesus used the fig tree as an illustration that points to signs or evidence of His imminent return.
 - o **Matthew 24:32-33; Mark 13:28-29; Luke 21:29-30.**
- We are to keep our eyes on Israel as a sign post to the timing of the end of this age- **Luke 21:28.**

Keeper of His Vineyard

Speaking of Jesus who came to earth, taking on physical form as the Son of Man according to John 1:11, *"He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him."*

- The central truth to this parable is Jesus' attempt to call the people of Israel back to repentance.

B. A Fig Tree with no Fruit

A fig tree is a fruit-producing plant which could be either a tall tree or a low-spreading shrub. The size of the tree depended on its location and soil. The blooms of the fig tree always appear before the leaves in spring. When Jesus saw leaves on a fig tree, He expected fruit to be there- **Mark 11:12-14, 20-21.**

Matthew 21:18-19

Early in the morning, as he was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, “May you never bear fruit again!” Immediately the tree withered.

Figs were eaten fresh (**2 Kings 18:31**), pressed into cakes (**1 Samuel 25:18**), and used as a poultice (**Isaiah 38:21**). Jeremiah used the fig tree as a symbol of desolation- **Jeremiah 8:13**. It also signified security and hope for Adam and Eve (**Genesis 3:7**), the 12 spies- **Numbers 13:23**.

- A fig tree requires three years before it will start producing fruit.
- There were usually two crops of figs a year.

The advantages this fig tree had in this parable, by being planted in a vineyard is that it was exposed to better soil and personal cultivation in contrast to those that grew in the wilderness on their own. So there was no excuse for this fig tree to be barren- **Romans 2:17-24; 3:1-2; 9:1-5.**

- The Jewish people had great advantages, being God’s covenant people.
- Since God called Abraham, Genesis 12:3, *“all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”*

Exodus 19:5-6, “Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

The Israelite nation was expected to bear fruit by leading righteous lives and by communicating God’s truth to the other nations of the world.

Isaiah 49:6, “I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.”

- Unfortunately the Jews failed in that calling to bring God’s covenant message to the Gentiles.
- For centuries Israel struggled with idolatry, trying to be like the nations of the world.
- Then they went to the other extreme, became legalistically religious and despised the Gentiles.
 - o Like Jonah, was indifferent to their fate- **Jonah 4:1-11.**
- As a result, they never fulfilled their God ordained mandate to be a light to the nations.
- So Jesus as the keeper of Israel comes to earth as their Messiah to call them back to repentance.

Luke 13:7

“For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?”

- The three years could possibly represent the first three years of Jesus’ ministry to Israel.
- Jesus made it clear that He was initially called to the Jewish people first before the Gentiles.
 - o **Matthew 10:5-10; 15:24-28; Acts 3:26; Romans 2:9-11; 8:16**

C. One Last Chance

Luke 13:8

“‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it.’”

- Here we see Jesus as the Great Intercessor like Moses, standing in the gap- **Exodus 32:31-32.**
- Under the New Covenant Jesus is our Great High Priest, Mediator and Advocate to the Father.
 - o **Romans 8:31-34; 1 Timothy 2:1-6; Hebrews 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15; 7:11-28; 1 John 2:1-2**
- God’s ways under the Old and New Covenants was to give people more time to repent.
- When they failed to do so, judgment came- **1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 11:27-34; Revelation 2:20-23.**

In the parable when the keeper of the vineyard asks for one more year, that could be referring to the rest of the time Jesus had left until the crucifixion to call the people of Israel to repentance.

- It also reaffirms God’s mercy, longsuffering and patience with people- **2 Peter 3:8-9.**

So the fig tree represented the Jewish people at Jesus’ time. It had been planted and cared for, but was barren. Now, it was given one last chance. If the tree did not respond, it would be rooted out.

God’s heart is for all the peoples of the earth to be saved. If the nation of Israel was not going to do it, He would find someone else to do the job; God does not want anyone to perish- **1 Tim. 2:4; 1 Pet. 4:18.**

D. Repentance and Fruitfulness

- John the Baptist was very bold when he spoke the truth to the religious elite of his day.

Matthew 3:7-10

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

- Folks trying to pass themselves off as righteous as only having a religious veneer won’t cut it.
 - o **Matthew 15:1-9; Romans 10:1-4; 2 Timothy 3:5; Colossians 2:16-23.**
- So many perform lip service to God, but don’t know Him- **Mt. 7:21-22; Mark 7:6; Luke 6:46.**
- Like when Jesus went to the fig tree in **Matthew 21:18-19** which looked like it would have fruit, but upon closer examination found it fruitless- **John 5:39-40.**

Like John the Baptist, when Jesus began His earthly ministry, this is how it sounded in Matthew 4:17, *“From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.’”*

- Repentance from sin and turning to God always precedes salvation.

There must be a visible change in one’s life to validate true repentance and the work of God’s grace. When we get truly saved, there will be fruit or change in our lives as evidence of salvation.

Hebrews 10:26; 1 John 3:6; 5:18; Jude 4; Acts 26:20.

The subject of repentance (turning) from sin unto God is key to the Gospel message.

Matthew 3:8; Luke 5:32; 24:47; Acts 5:32; 20:21; 2 Cori. 7:9-10; 2 Timothy 2:25; Hebrews 6:1.

- Jesus said that we would know a tree by its fruit- **Matthew 12:33-37.**
- When we are born again, we become new creations in Jesus; a new species as something that never existed before- **John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15.**
- Our change is from the inside out, not putting on a religious mask, pretending to be religious.
- The reality of the New Birth which is the rebirth of the human spirit is the root of changed fruit.

This is the work of God, by His grace and through our faith, the Holy Spirit and incorruptible seed of God's Word imparts unto our spirit eternal life- **Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 3:14-15.**

E. Cut Off Through Judgment

Luke 13:9, "If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down."

Unfortunately Israel on the most part persisted in unbelief and rejected Jesus as their Messiah as it is till this day. The people of Israel rebelled against the Romans, so in 70 AD the General Titus came and destroyed Jerusalem and scattered the people- **Luke 19:41-44; 21:5-6, 20-24.**

- We have been talking a lot about the Jewish people's bareness and rejection of Jesus.
- But what about the Church of Jesus Christ, do we run the same risk- absolutely, **1 Peter 2:9-10.**

The Jewish nation did not bear fruit in preaching the gospel to the nations, so Jesus gave it to the Church in the Great Commission- **Matthew 21:43-44; Luke 20:16.** Notice the response of the people to this:

Luke 20:16-18, "When the people heard this, they said, 'May this never be!' Jesus looked directly at them and asked, 'Then what is the meaning of that which is written: The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.'"

- Jesus was quoting **Psalms 118:22**, when it comes to truth there are two responses.
- We can break our selves upon the rock of truth in repentance and be saved- **Acts 2:38; 3:19.**
- Or reject the truth and it will crush us in judgment- **John 3:36.**
- For the time being, Israel has experienced a hardening for the Gentiles to be reached- **Romans 11**
- Jesus is referred to as the vine and we are the branches connected to him- **John 15:1-8.**
- If we do not stay in fellowship with Jesus through obedience to His Word, we too will be cut off.

Every living fruit-tree is in some measure fruitful; though some bring forth more fruit, some less, yet all should bring forth something. Like Jesus, we too should pray for God's mercy upon barren Christian fig trees to bear fruit, to minister to and cultivate fruitfulness through the Word of God and prayer.

- There is always a greater expectation with greater grace and light from God's Word.
- It is a sad commentary when those who enjoy the privileges of the Gospel, and yet do nothing at all to honor God, by living right and consistently reaching out to others with the Gospel.
 - o **Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 John 2:15-17.**
- Bottom line, judgment comes on those who don't repent and bear fruit.

Parable #18: The Wedding Feast Invitation

Reference: Luke 14:7-14

Theme: Whoever Exalts Himself will be Humbled and he Whoever Humbles Himself will be Exalted

Context: On a Particular Sabbath, Jesus went to Eat at the House of a Prominent Pharisee



When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: “When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, ‘Give this man your seat.’ Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you,

‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Luke 14:7-11

The key to understanding this parable is to take note of the audience Jesus was with at the time. He was at the house of a prominent Pharisee and surrounded by the religious elite.

- They had a proven reputation for being proud, self-absorbed hypocrites- **Matthew 6:2.**
- In Luke 14:1, concerning Jesus it states, “...*he was being carefully watched.*”
- Jesus had asked them a couple of questions in verses 3 and 6 concerning healing a man on the Sabbath and they remained silent- not a very friendly crowd.

A. Preoccupation with the External

When it came time for the dinner guests to take their seats at the table, it was not a surprise that they were all jockeying and scrabbling to get the best seats of honor.

- Their definition of one who was worthy of greater honor no doubt was tied to their religious piety, age, financial position and standing in the religious community.
- It was typical of human nature to follow a cast system or pecking order of importance.
- In reality it was a vain pursuit for significance that esteems the outward appearance rather than what is in the heart- **1 Samuel 16:7; Galatians 2:6.**

2 Corinthians 5:12

We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart.

- When people get caught up in these petty games of comparison it reveals insecurity and fear.
- Prejudice of any kind is a great example of this- particularly racial prejudices.
- Folks are notorious for being superficial about judging people on mere appearances.
 - o 2 Corinthians 10:7, *"You are looking only on the surface of things."*
- Thankfully in Jesus, we have been delivered from such foolish exercises- we are all equal!
- There should be no division in the Body of Christ- **Romans 15:5; 1 Cor. 12:25; Ephesians 4:3.**

Galatians 3:26-28

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

It seems that only two things come from making comparisons with other people. Either we will be lifted up in pride due to our perception of being better than someone else or we will feel inferior because we think we are not good enough.

2 Corinthians 10:12, 17-18

We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. But, "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord." For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

B. Selfish Ambition

Luke 14:8, "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor..."

In the parable Jesus was exposing the selfish ambition of the Pharisees, but this revelation is also meant to be a warning for us today.

- Those trying to get the better seats at the banquet were posturing themselves for greater honor.
- At the heart of selfish ambition is pride, this is what Satan was guilty of- **1 Timothy 3:6.**
- **James 3:13-18** explains this matter perfectly, and he was talking to Christians at the time!
- Too often we are more interested in promoting ourselves or our own agenda rather than Christ's.
- Paul provides an excellent commendation to Timothy concerning his devotion to others.

Philippians 2:20-21

I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

- At the heart of Christian values is love, humility and servant hood.
- Jesus exemplified it in His life, death, burial and resurrection; He commands us to do the same!

Philippians 2:1-4

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

- When we are honoring others above ourselves, we would allow them to get the better seat.
- This way of life extends beyond mere social politeness and common courtesy.
- As children of God, we are to exhibit His nature of love and give ourselves to others for their benefit and blessing even at our own expense.

Romans 12:9-10

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

So Jesus in the parable gives us some great wisdom. To prevent from being humiliated in front of everyone, don't push yourself forward in front of others, but put others first and you will be honored. Matthew 19:30, *"But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first."*

Luke 14:11

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

C. Do Not be Conceited



Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Luke 14:12-14

When it comes to ministering to the poor, the homeless, drug addicts and the outcasts of society there is a certain disgust and repulsion at their appearance, smell and behavior- **Jude 22-23.**

Romans 12:13, 16

Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

- The Bible strictly condemns be partial and showing favoritism- it is a form of evil judging.
- God does not do it so neither should we- **Romans 2:1; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25.**
- **James 2:1-10** provides some very strong language about this very thing, particularly when we make a distinction between the poor and the rich- it's called sin.
- Sadly, even Christians often times fall into this trap of spiritual immaturity and carnality.
- The Corinthian church was guilty of this with serious ramifications- **1 Corinthians 11:17-34.**

1 Timothy 5:21

I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.

Parable #19: The Lost Sheep

Reference: Matthew 18:10-14; Luke 15:1-7

Theme: The Eternal Value of Human Beings is Sacred to God

Context: Jesus using Little Children as an Example of Humility to Enter into the Kingdom of God



“What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost.”

Matthew 18:12-14

A. The Value of Human Life

In the beginning of this chapter Jesus was talking about little children and remarking about their meekness and humility. These dispositions are necessary ingredients for repentance and salvation.

Matthew 18:1-4, “At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: ‘I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.’”

- Little children are considered the weakest and most helpless of society.
- In comparison to an adult, society looks down on them as insignificant while they are young.
- Jesus corrects that worldly mentality, and warns that causing a little child who believes in Jesus to sin, would be better for them to be drowned in the sea.

Matthew 18:5-7, “And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come!”

- Who can measure the value of a person? **Matthew 10:29-31; 12:11-12.**
- Whether a person is still in the womb or a full-grown adult, they are equally important.
- First of all, human beings have been created by God and in the image of God- life is sacred.
 - o **Genesis 1:26; 9:6; Hebrews 12:9.**
- Second, we are spirit beings who will live for all eternity- **Acts 24:15; 2 Th. 1:8-9; Rev. 14:11.**
- Finally, our greatest worth is measured by the cost God paid to redeem us back to Himself.
- He became flesh and lived among us, died for our sins and was raised again- **John 3:16-17.**

B. Jesus is the Good Shepherd

1 Samuel 17:34-35

But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it.

- The greatest responsibility of a shepherd is to guard and take care of the sheep at all costs.
- If a sheep was missing or hurt, the shepherd was personally responsible to pay restitution.
- Jesus is our Good Shepherd as beautifully described in Psalms chapter 23 & 1 Peter 2:25.
- As Jesus was being arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, His concern for the disciples was very evident- **John 17:12; 18:9.**

John 10:11

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

- A shepherd’s job is to feed, care and protect the sheep. A shepherd analogy is attributed to a pastor, who watches over the flock of God- **John 21:15-17; 1 Peter 5:1-4.**
- Jesus gave Himself as a ransom for all mankind- **Mark 10:45; 1 Timothy 2:6.**

Matthew 9:36

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

So when Jesus described the shepherd with the hundred sheep and one goes missing, we can understand the passion, love and devotion of the shepherd to go to great lengths to retrieve that lost sheep.

- Through this parable we see the heart of God and His unwillingness that any be lost.
- It also shows the faithfulness of the Lord when we fall away, that He comes after us- **2Tim. 2:13.**
- The context of Jesus talking about little children being just as significant as adults.
- All people are valuable and precious to God and are of eternal worth and value.
- In God’s eyes we were worth dying for, we should be forever grateful for that.

John 10:27-30

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”

- We should also rejoice in the “Keeping” power of God- **Philippians 1:6; 2:13; Eph. 2:10.**

1 Corinthians 1:8-9

He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

Jude 24-25

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Parable #20: The Lost Coin

Reference: Luke 15:8-10

Theme: The Passion of God to Seek and Save the Lost

Context: Jesus was Ministering to Tax Collectors and Sinners and the Pharisees Murmured about it



“Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Luke 15:8-10

A. The Judgmental Pharisees

What prompted Jesus to give the parables of the “Lost Sheep” and the “Lost Coin” was the Pharisee’s critical and judgmental attitude toward sinners.

Luke 15:1-2

Now the tax collectors and “sinners” were all gathering around to hear him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

- Jesus had already pointed out on many occasions that the Pharisees were the worst sort of sinner; claiming to be righteous when they were anything but that.
- That is very dangerous place for a person to be, because they see no need to repent.
- The purpose of the Law was to identify sin and show our need for a Savior from sin.
 - o **Romans 5:12-14; 7:1-13; 8:3-4; Gal. 3:15-25; 1 Timothy 1:8-11; Hebrews 7:18-19.**
- The Pharisees however, watered down the law to suit themselves, so they could keep their own personal version of the law and proclaim their own self-righteousness.
 - o **Matthew 15:1-9; Mark 7:9; Romans 10:1-4; Colossians 2:8.**
- They neglected the most important aspects of the Law, justice, mercy and faithfulness.
 - o **Matthew 12:7; 23:23.**

Matthew 5:20

“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

- Basically the non-religious sinners know they are not perfect; they sin and do wrong- admit it.
- There is more hope for them, because a prerequisite to salvation is a repentant heart from sin.
 - o **Matthew 11:20; 21:32; Luke 13:1-5; 16:30; 18:9-14; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 26:20.**

B. God Wants All People to Be Saved

The silver drachma coin the woman lost in this parable was worth a day's wages, which infers she was poor and could not afford to lose it. So she did whatever it took to retrieve it.

Remember the story about Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector who wanted to see Jesus. He climbed a sycamore-fig tree, waiting for Jesus to pass by. When Jesus saw him, he called him down.

Luke 19:5-7

When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'"

- Tax collectors were collaborators with the Romans and so were hated by the people.
- They were compensated by charging more tax than what was required and kept the difference.
- Yet this man repented of cheating according to verse 8 and was willing to pay restitution.

Luke 19:9-10

Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

In this parable of the lost coin, Jesus was conveying the heart of God, that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all come to repentance and be saved. He is wooing the lost to come to Him.

Acts 17:26-27; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 6:1-2; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 3:20.

Ezekiel 18:23

"Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?"

- No matter how wretched and rank the sinner is, Jesus died for us all- **John 1:29; 1 Tim. 1:15-16.**
- Again, Jesus came for the express purpose to die for the sins of the whole world.
 - o **John 3:16-21; Romans 5:6-8; 1 John 2:2.**
- Our attitude should be the same, to be passionate about seeking out sinners to be saved.
 - o **2 Corinthians 5:18-21; Hebrews 2:1-4; 1 Peter 4:17-19; Jude 23.**
- This also applies to Christians who have fallen away from the Lord into sin.
 - o **Galatians 6:1-2; James 5:19-20; 1 John 5:16-17.**

When the woman in the parable finally found her lost coin, she was ecstatic and called her friends together and rejoiced- just like in the parable of the lost sheep.

- Notice that heaven is no different, when a sinner comes to God and repents- party time!!!

Luke 15:7

"I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

Luke 15:10

"In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Parable #21: The Prodigal Son

Reference: Luke 15:11-32

Theme: When we have Committed Grievous Sins and Fallen Away, Forgiveness and Restoration Awaits

Context: Jesus Continues to Illustrate the Heart of God in Reconciling the Fallen to Himself



A. Divided the Inheritance

The context is Jesus addressing the judgmental Pharisees of their assessment of other Jews, who being in their estimation less worthy than themselves. Yet all have sinned and fallen short- **Romans 3:23**.

- This is a beautiful story that depicts the mercy, love and faithfulness of God to His people.
- There is a lot of truth to be had with this parable so we will take it verse by verse and examine it.
- The father in this story represents the Father God.
- The younger brother represents the tax collectors and sinners mentioned in **Luke 15:1**.
- The older brother represents the Pharisees and religious folks.

Even though Jesus was addressing the Jews, the children of Abraham, the story could also be applied to backslidden Christians who fall away, repent and are restored back into fellowship with the Lord today.

Luke 15:11-12

Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.”

An heir was entitled to claim his share of an estate during his father’s lifetime if he wished to do so. The eldest son could claim two thirds; the other children would divide the rest- **Deuteronomy 21:17**.

- Since the father in this story had two sons, the younger son received 1/3 of his father’s estate.
- The amount of the inheritance the younger son received was most likely quite significant.
- Yet the older son decided to remain faithfully at the side of his father and continue to serve him.

B. Wasted the Inheritance

Luke 15:13

“Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.”

- A “distant country” in the Jewish mind would be the Gentile nations.
- That infers being subject to and complying with their culture and customs- against the Lord.
 - o **Exodus 19:5-6; Dt. 14:2; 26:18-19; 2 Kings 17:15; Ezra 9:1-2; Psalms 135:4.**
- Jewish people like the Church were given a mandate not to be yoked together with unbelievers, because of how it influences and corrupts good character- to be a peculiar or special people.
 - o **1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1; 1 Timothy 5:22; 1 Peter 2:1-12.**

The Jewish people under the Old Covenant like Christians under the New Covenant have an inheritance from God that is sacred and precious. It is to be valued and guarded and not treated casually.

Proverbs 4:23; 2 Corinthians 1:18-22; 4:7; Ephesians 1:3-14; 2 Timothy 1:14; 2 Peter 1:3-11.

Matthew 13:52

He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

- As believers in Jesus Christ, we can’t use grace as a license for immorality- **Jude 4.**
- Christianity is not a game to be trifled with, there are consequences to persisting in disobedience.
 - o **1 Cor. 5:1-5; 6:9-11; 11:27-32; Galatians 6:7-10; 1 Timothy 1:20; Hebrews 10:26-31.**
- What’s important to see, is that the young man did not waste all his inheritance in his home town.
- Notice that he set off or wandering off by himself to a distant place- no accountability.
- The snare was being on his own, outside the protection of his family, where he was tempted.

Hebrews 10:25

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

- The Greek word for “squandered” is diaskorpizo, which means, “to disperse, scatter abroad or to waste.” The word conveys reckless abandonment, spending without any regard for the future.
- The words “wild living” literally means, “Living without saving anything” **Proverbs 20:21.**
- Referring to disorderly behavior; a perpetual orgy of parties, prostitutes and wine- **Luke 15:30.**
- He could not try this at home amongst family and friends; they would have intervened in order to stop him from that kind of destructive behavior.

1 Corinthians 15:33-34

Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God — I say this to your shame.

In this picture of the prodigal son, we see a man who has wandered far away from home and has become easy pickings for the world to entice, ensnare and rob him of everything of value in his life.

- Yes, Christians are susceptible to such things as the prodigal son, we must take warning.
 - o **1 Cor. 10:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:11; 1 Timothy 5:15; 2 Timothy 4:10; James 4:1-10.**

C. Hitting Rock Bottom

This picture is so typical of sin, it looks so appealing and leaves the impression that it will never stop being fun and pleasurable. However, pleasure is just the bait on the hook, very short lived.



“After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.”

Luke 15:14-16

Consider Moses, who grew up as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, he had the world at his finger tips. Yet he understand that the pleasures of this world are only temporary, and chose to live by faith – reward!

Hebrews 11:24-26

By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.

The law of diminishing return in regards to sin, is that the high or climax of each pleasurable experience is slowing diminished until there is no pleasure found at all, and ends in the death of the victim.

- This is best seen in addiction, particularly drug addiction that enslaves millions.
- Addiction becomes so bad when people hit the bottom, life sustaining activities like eating and sleeping is neglected. As a result, the person will soon die of exhaustion or malnutrition.

The early stages of addiction are characterized by tolerance and dependence. After a drug binge, an addict needs more of the substance to get the same effect on mood or concentration and so on. This tolerance then provokes an escalation of drug use that engenders dependence. A need that manifests itself as painful emotional and, at times, physical reactions if access to a drug is cut off. Both tolerance and dependence occur because of frequent drug use.

- Biblical pleasure and joy comes from God and is protected by His commands.
- Sin is the exploitation, corruption and perversion of God’s plan for pleasure and enjoyment.
- Satan uses it as a hook for slavery and bondage- **John 8:34; Romans chapter 6.**

Psalms 16:11 NKJV

You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

After the prodigal son had spent all his inheritance, matters grew worse, a famine hit the land so everyone was in need and were unable to help him- he was destitute, no money, no shelter and no food.

- In desperation, he was able to find some employment, feeding pigs.
- He was so hungry, even the pig's nasty food looked good to him- he was starving.
- Apparently he was not allowed to eat it, Jesus said that no one gave him anything.
- Since Jesus was speaking to Jews, this point is significant.
- Pigs are unclean under the Mosaic Dietary laws, and Jews are forbidden to eat or keep them.
- So this job represented the most loathsome and despised of all jobs to have.
- It represents the deepest degradation and stinking cesspool of filth that sin brings in our lives.
- Have you ever noticed that the shame, guilt, condemnation and suffering sin brings to people is never disclosed in the original temptation as the consequence for sin- **Jude 23.**

2 Peter 2:21-22

It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."

"Pods" the Pigs were Eating

The pods of the carob tree, or locust tree. They were long beans, sweet to the taste, and were often part of the diet of poor people. From six to ten inches long and one broad, laid inside with a gelatinous substance, not wholly unpleasant to the taste when thoroughly ripe. Still a common food for swine to eat in places like Ionia, Syria, and Rhodes.

- People without God and hope, are living in physical and spiritual pig sty- **Ephesians 2:11-13.**
- That is where Satan wants them to be, humiliated, suffering and dying. The devil hates God and the only way he can get back at God is to oppress mankind, but that's why Jesus came- free us!
 - o **Acts 10:38; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8.**

D. Finally Comes to His Senses

Luke 15:17-19

"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.'"

The phrase "came to his senses" infers that he was formerly in a state of major deception and derangement, having been carried away in such a flood of dissipation and debauchery- **Ecclesiastes 9:3.**

- Having hit rock bottom, he begins in honestly examine the reality of his situation.
- The first step to recovery is to admit that we have a problem and need help.
- When he left as a son it was "Give me..." with a selfish demand, now it's humble pie.
- Hired servants in Bible times had a harder lot than slaves; their employment was more uncertain.
- Whereas slaves could at least be assured of food and shelter since they were considered property.

- The term “heaven” is in obedience to the 3rd commandment, not to use God’s name in vain (**Exodus 20:7**), so the Jews would substitute other names so as not to accidentally blaspheme.
- Notice that man’s sin is not just against other people, but the greatest offense is against God.
- Out of desperation the prodigal son formulates a plan to humble himself and beg for mercy.
- He considers his betrayal of the family values as a forfeiture to his right to be called a son.

E. The Father’s Great Compassion

Luke 15:20-21

“So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’”

What is interesting is that the Father was ready and willing to receive his wayward son since the time he left home, knowing the toll sin and depravation would have on him.

- Even though the father was willing to reconcile his son, the boy had a free will to exercise.
- He had to choose for himself life or death- **Deuteronomy 30:19-20**.
- When we fall away from God, we are the ones to come back to Him in repentance.
- We are the ones who are to confess our sins unto a loving and forgiving Father God- **1 John 1:9**.
- When we need help, we are the ones to come to His throne of Grace- **Hebrews 4:16**.
- That is how our faith operates as we draw near to God; our faith releases God’s grace- **Eph. 2:8**.

James 4:8-10

Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

- What a beautiful picture, when the son comes back, his father immediately ran out to meet him.
- Before the son had a chance to make his confession, he was embraced and kissed.
- The kiss represented affection and reconciliation; to dispel any doubts the son may have had.
- The father made no speeches, “Well I told you so didn’t I...” no condemnation, shame or guilt.
- This point was important for the Pharisees to grasp, that God accepts repentant sinners.
- When God forgives He removes the very memory and existence of it- as thou it did not happen.
- All because of the precious blood of Jesus, someone had already paid for all our sins.

Psalms 103:12

“...as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

Micah 7:19

You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

Hebrews 8:12, “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

Hebrews 10:17-18

Then he adds: “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.” And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

F. Kill the Fattened Calf



“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.”

Luke 15:22-24

- This incredible act of love and restoration had nothing to do with deserving anything.
- It had everything to do with mercy, which God extends to anyone who repents from sin.
- No doubt the prodigal son was in rags, having lived with the pigs- he probably stank!
- Self-Righteous or rich folks don’t realize how desperate their needs are- **Revelation 3:17-18**.
- Notice he gets the best robe, reserved for honored guests, brand new clothing like this in ancient times were hard to come by, and were very expensive.
- The robe, an exterior garment is symbolic in the Bible for righteousness- **2 Corinthians 5:21**.

Isaiah 61:10, “I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness.”

- Rings in Bible times were very significant, they represented wealth, position and dignity.
 - o **Genesis 41:42; Esther 8:2; James 2:2**
- For the prodigal it meant complete restoration as a son back into the family, with all the rights and privileges that he had formerly lost.
- Servants often times did not wear shoes, by the father commanding that sandals be put on his feet meant that he was to be treated as a son, and not as a servant.

The fattened calf was held in reserve for special occasions, when an honored guest should come and they could create a feast in a hurry. This was no small event, they spared no expense to celebrate his return.

- Remember in the parables of the lost sheep and coin, the natural reaction to finding that which was lost is to celebrate, so it is in heaven when sinners repent- **Luke 15:7, 10**.

G. The Disgruntled Older Brother

Luke 15:25-30

“Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’”

Meanwhile back at the ranch, the older brother hears music and dancing, unaware that his wayward brother has returned, upon hearing the news he refuses to join in on the festivities.

- So the father pleads with him, but there is no consoling the disgruntled and bitter son.
- I suppose from a natural point of view, the older brother had a good point to make.
- He had been loyal to his father and vocalized his perceived injustice of it all.
- The words, “all these years I’ve been slaving for you” denotes self-righteousness & entitlement.
- However, mercy is not about fairness, getting what we deserve- well all deserve going to hell.
- Remember the context was Jesus addressing the religious Pharisees, who are represented by the older brother in this parable- obedient to the law but lacking in love and mercy.
- Legalism, which is rooted in pride has a harsh way of dealing with moral failures in other people.

The comment the older brother made, “this son of yours” is a pure expression of contempt, not willing to call the prodigal his own brother.

- What mattered to the father was that his younger son was reconciled, safe and sound.
- In other words, material things are of little value in contrast to the value of a human soul.
 - o **Matthew 6:26; 12:12; 16:26; James 5:19-20.**

H. It’s Already Yours

Luke 15:31-32, “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

- This point the father is making is really important, “...everything I have is yours.”
- In other words, it’s your own fault if you did not take hold of the benefits of your own inheritance. If you ever wanted something, it was already yours for the taking- **John 16:24.**
- This is how it is for so many Christians, they have a glorious covenant with better promises.

Unfortunately they have not been taught correctly, misled into thinking that all of their inheritance is in heaven, which they cannot touch until they leave this earth.

- However we do have the firstfruits or deposit of our inheritance right now in this life to enjoy.
 - o **Romans 8:23; 2 Corinthians 1:18-22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:3-14; 2 Peter 1:3-4.**
- We have been blessed with so much to be a blessing and enjoy God’s goodness now!
 - o **Psalms 34:8-10; 35:27; Mt. 7:9- 11; Acts 20:35; Ro. 8:32; James 1:16-17; 1 Tim. 6:17.**
- So many Christians have been religiously indoctrinated instead of New Testament taught.
- They have been fed an ideology of false humility and a poverty mentality. That does not mean we should go to the other ditch and become selfish, conceited and arrogant either- there’s a balance.

Psalms 23:5, “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.”

The table of the Lord is overflowing with God’s provision and blessing for all of His children to enjoy **Matthew 7:27.** It’s not a mark of humility to sit at the table and just eat a slice of bread and then criticize your brother sitting next to you who is digging in and enjoying all of God’s bounty.

The older brother could also represent the faithful Christian who has served the Lord for years. When they see uncommitted Christians getting healed and they aren’t it chaffs them. Like the older brother, they blame God for not giving them anything. However, in God’s Kingdom we don’t earn or deserve anything from the Lord, it’s all received by grace through faith and is available to all to ask and receive.

Parable #22: The Shrewd Manager

Reference: Luke 16:1-15

Theme: The Measure of Faithfulness is Consistent in Small and Large Areas in Life

Context: In the Beginning of Luke Chapter 15, Jesus had an Audience of Tax Collectors, Sinners and Pharisees who all dealt with and Understood the Dynamics of Money



Jesus told his disciples: “There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. So he called him in and asked him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.’ “The manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I’m not strong enough to dig, and I’m ashamed to beg— I know what I’ll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.’ “So he called in each

one of his master’s debtors. He asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ “‘Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,’ he replied. “The manager told him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.’ “Then he asked the second, ‘And how much do you owe?’ “‘A thousand bushels of wheat,’ he replied. “He told him, ‘Take your bill and make it eight hundred.’”

Luke 16:1-7

A. White Collar Crimes

Jesus was a master at taking the culture, customs and surrounding environment of the time, things people understood and create a parallel or bridge in order to explain the principles of the Kingdom of God.

- The term “White Collar” crimes refers to educated professionals who steal from companies using subtle means like fudging numbers, paying themselves perks- taking company property.
- The steward of the rich man was obviously dishonest and embezzling from the very beginning.
- The implication is that he was regularly pilfering from his master’s assets for his own gain.
- This reminds me of what Judas Iscariot did, one of Jesus’ original 12 disciples.
- Mary, the sister of Lazarus took some very expensive perfume and poured it on Jesus’ feet.
- Judas was upset that the perfume was not sold and given to his charge so could steal from it.

John 12:4-6

But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, “Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.” He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

So this dishonest manager was likewise helping himself to his master’s money and someone finally caught him. As a result, his master was going to fire him once he had given an account of things.

In Bible times, a steward through the power of attorney officially represented his master. He could at his discretion set the amount for rental payments and other charges; those decisions were legal and binding. The master could not later dismiss them or alter the deal that the steward had made.

- This manager was crafty, since he was already dishonest in little things, now he was going to be dishonest on a much grander scale- he was looking after himself and his own interests.
- Point being, little sins in the beginning leads to greater ones down the road.
- One act of cheating will require many more in order avoid detection- a slippery slope.
- Using his power and position, he slashed the debts of his master's debtors to win their favor.
- He knew once he lost his job, those he helped would be obligated to come to his aid.

B. Acted Shrewdly

Luke 16:8-9

“The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.”

It is important to note that the master commending the dishonest manager was not Jesus condoning the dishonest acts of the steward.

- Jesus was just pointing out the way the world deals with each other; cheat, lie and steal.
- However, the people of light are not to act in this manner- **1 Corinthians 6:1-11.**
- The way of the world is to use wealth to buy friendship, that is the only hope they have.

Proverbs 13:11

Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow.

C. Being Faithful

Luke 16:10-12

“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?”

The audience (tax collectors, sinners and Pharisees) Jesus was speaking to were notorious for corruption. So the central theme to this parable is about being truthful and faithful to God.

- The use of material wealth is a great test of character.
- Those who cannot use it wisely are not entitled to spiritual responsibilities entrusted to them.
- The Pharisees were entrusted with the Word of God to keep it and teach it to others.
- On the most part, they failed miserably- **Luke 11:46, 52; 13:15-16.**
- Instead they used their position of responsibility to exploit other people of money.
 - o **2 Corinthians 2:17; 1 Timothy 3:8; Titus 1:7,11; 1 Peter 5:2; 2 Peter 2:3, 14.**

Jesus was warning people that they can't act shrewdly with God and think they can get away with it. It's folly for folks to play games with God, who knows our hearts and minds better than we do.

- So it is required of us to be faithful and honest to God in our repentance and turning to Him.
- We can't be like the dishonest steward who made plans, struck deals and maneuvered his way in a manner that would be most advantageous for himself.
- Obviously the Lord can see that kind of guile and duplicity- **James 4:1-10.**

D. It's Either All God or Nothing At All

Luke 16:13-15

"No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight."

Jesus comes to the bottom line of this parable, we can't have one foot in the world and another one in the Kingdom of God- it's an all or nothing proposition.

Revelation 3:15-16

I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm — neither hot nor cold — I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

- Cultural Christianity is such a scourge in our Western civilization- the allure of affluence.
- Many of us compartmentalize our lives into rooms, this one is for family, this one over here is for career, that one is for hobbies and this other one is for church.
- Jesus wants to be more than just one slice in the pie of our lives- He is to be the whole pie.
- The parable of the Sower in the case of the "weeds" exposed the deceitfulness of wealth and desire for other things that come in and choke the Word of God- **Mark 4:18-19.**

Matthew 6:33-34

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

- Money, which represents material things can be such an enticement- **1 Timothy 6:6-12, 17-19.**
- The Lord does not mind His children being rich, to have a full supply.
 - o **Deuteronomy 8:18; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Philippians 4:19; 1 Timothy 6:17.**
- He just does not want us to be covetous, materialistic and greedy which is idolatry.
 - o **1 Corinthians 5:10-11; 6:10; Ephesians 5:3-5; Colossians 3:5.**

Note: In **Luke 16:19** there was a true story that Jesus had narrated about a rich who had died and went to hell. This was not a parable, there was no simile, figure of speech being used- "The Kingdom of God is like..." or "The Kingdom of Heaven is as." The story was directed towards those who were rich as tax collectors or religious figures, and fits in the whole context of the these two chapters- 15 & 16.

Parable #23: The Persistent Widow

Reference: Luke 18:1-8

Theme: Unlike the World System God is Quick to Provide Justice and Protection for His People

Context: Justice in Bible times was Often Times Subject to Corruption and Bribes



Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’ “For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually wear me out with her coming!’” And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

Luke 18:1-8

In verse one Jesus immediately expresses the central truth of this parable, that when we are in trouble we should pray and then trust God for the answer- **James 5:13-20**.

A. The Unjust Judge

The common perception and practice in ancient times was that justice was often perverted by the rich to exploit and oppress the poor and disadvantaged- **James 2:1-7**.

James 2:6

But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?

- Even though human justice at best is tainted and limited, all authority and justice ultimately comes from God and has been instituted in human society to protect the helpless- **Ro. 13:1-7**.
- Because of Satan being the god of this world system and the sinful nature in men, anything good from God ends up being corrupted and perverted.
- The unjust judge having no regard for God clearly translates into having no regard for man either.
- In Bible times, judges were directed to show special attention to widows- **Isaiah 1:17; Jer. 22:3**.
- Typically they were defenseless, poor and liable to be oppressed- **1 Timothy 5:9-16**.

B. The Widow

Luke 18:3, “And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’”

- Widows were on their own and by themselves, without family to protect and provide for them.
- This widow woman was not asking for punishment or revenge for her adversary.
- She was simply asking for justice to be done; by being protected from exploitation.
 - o Romans 12:14, “*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.*”
- In verse four it states that the judge, “*For some time refused.*” But this woman would not give up
- It was the widow’s persistence that finally wore the judge down to do his job in the first place.

The phrase in verse 5, “...so that she won’t eventually wear me out with her coming!” The Greek word *hupopiazō* literally means, “lest she give me a black eye.” The Greek word may mean either “to annoy,” or “to damage reputation,” to tease or annoy into compliance.

- The lesson learned in this parable is that persistence, perseverance and endurance is key.
 - o **Romans 5:3-4; Hebrews 6:10-12; 10:32-39; 12:1-2; James 1:3-4; 5:11; Rev. 3:10.**
- Whether it’s prayer or living for God, we can’t faint, grow weary or quit.
 - o **Galatians 6:9-10; 2 Timothy 2:11-13.**

Realize that Satan knows this about human nature (impatience), so he will try to hold things up in order to discourage us by giving up.

- Delay does not mean denial.
- When we become impatient and give up, we are defeated.
- Either spiritual warfare or human wills causes unforeseen delays in the answer- **Daniel 10:12-14.**

For example, when Daniel prayed he was immediately answered, but the devil detained the answer for a period of 21 days. When we pray in line with God’s will, He hears and answers- **1 John 5:14-15.**

C. Faithful God

Jesus is making a contrast between God and the unjust judge, often times we make the mistake of drawing unfair comparisons between man and God, who is in a class all by Himself! **Numbers 23:19**

- The unjust judge was motivated by selfish reasons in verse 5, in order not to be bothered.
- God is motivated by eternal love, affection and devotion for His people who call out to him.
- We never have to draw into question the goodness of God to act on our behalf to bring justice.
- The Lord is more than able to defend and protect us from evil- **2 Timothy 4:16-18.**
 - o **Acts 12:21-23; 26:14; Romans 12:17-21; 16:20; Revelation 2:16; 3:9.**
- Jesus is not advocating repetitious praying which the pagans do- **Matthew 6:7-8.**
- The prayer of faith only needs to ask once and then thank Him for the answer.
 - o **Mark 11:22-23; John 15:16; 16:23-26; James 1:5-8; 5:14-16.**
- Faith is what pleases God in prayer, not begging or whining- **Hebrews 11:6.**

I like what Jesus says at the end of this parable in verse 8, “*However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?*” It’s talking about persistence in believing, not asking to wear God down.

Parable #24: The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Reference: Luke 18:9-14

Theme: Whoever Exalts Himself will be Humbled, and Whoever Humbles Himself will be Exalted

Context: Jesus was Confronting the Religious Elite Concerning Self-Righteousness



To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men — robbers, evildoers, adulterers — or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Luke 18:9-14

A. Self-Righteous

We tend to pick on the Pharisees, and no doubt they were misguided, but they really do represent fallen man’s propensity to justify themselves through the religion of pride and man-made works based systems.

Isaiah 64:6

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.

- The truth is, the Law of the Covenant or the 10 commandments can never bring righteousness.
- It’s because of the sinful nature we inherited from Adam’s fall, we were born with a sin nature in our body which ensnares us at the age of accountability and throughout our lives as well.
 - o **Romans 7:1 – 8:4; Galatians 3:21-22; Hebrews 7:11, 18-19; 8:7-8.**
- Thankfully one day we will receive a new glorified body and death will be swallowed up in life.
 - o **Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Corinthians 15:35-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.**
- So what was the purpose of the law?
 - o To identify what sin is- **Romans 7:7-13.**
 - o To reveal that we are sinners without hope- **Galatians 3:19-23.**
 - o To point us to the Savior from sin, Jesus- **Galatians 3:24-25.**
- If we as humans could live a perfect life than sure, obeying the law with the commandments would declare us righteous on our own account- problem is all have sinned- **Romans 3:9-31.**

The problem with the Law is, if we break just one commandment, it’s the same as breaking them all!

James 2:8-11.

- So trying to obtain righteousness through the law is an all or nothing proposition- **Ro. 2:25-29.**

- Sin is spiritual crime, when we do the crime, we have to do the time, damnation- **Romans 6:23.**
- It would be like a convicted murderer condemned to death wanting to undue his condemning sentence by starting to be a good person and being nice to people- it's too late!
- So the whole premise of self-righteousness through works based system of religion is total folly!
- Unless someone who is innocent, and had never sinned takes our place to be judged- Jesus!
 - o **John 1:29; Hebrews 4:15; 7:22-28; 9:11-15, 24-28; 10:10-14, 19-23; 1 John 2:2.**
- The allure of self-righteousness is strong, even for those who have been saved by faith in Jesus.
- The temptation to fall into the trap of legalism and religion is an ever present danger to us.
 - o **Acts 15:1- 5, 19-20; Romans 4:1-16; Galatians 2:11-16; 3:1-14; 5:1-12; Col. 2:16-23.**
- Since the sinful nature makes it impossible to obey the law, there remains two clear choices.
- Either submit to God's solution to the sin problem: faith in Jesus alone- **Galatians 2:16.**

Or we come up with our own set of man-made rules that we can keep and declare ourselves to be a good person or righteous- **Matthew chapter 23; Mark 7:1-13; Luke 11:37-53; 1 Corinthians 8:1-3.**

The problem being, man's idea of perfection is not the same as God's standard. Besides, what about all the sins we have already committed in the past, who is going to pay for them? God can't ignore them.

- Consider Cain and Abel in Genesis chapter four.
- Abel obeyed God and brought a blood sacrifice to atone for sin.
- Cain disobeyed God, did his own thing and brought the work of his hands- crops from the ground
- God rejected Cain's offering because it was his own way- that was the birth of religion.

This is what the Jews did, they rejected Jesus as their Messiah over their own brand of righteousness. **Romans chapter 10.**

Proverbs 16:25

There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

So the opening to Jesus' parable is prefaced as follows in verse 9, *"To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else..."* The sin of pride comes from legalism!

- Notice in verse 11, *"The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself..."*
- When the focus is on ourselves we are in trouble- become conceited, self-absorbed and proud.
- Lucifer's original fall was due to pride, notice how many "I's" are used in **Isaiah 14:12-15.**
- Satan was the original narcissist; egocentric and vain on account of his beauty- **Ezekiel 28:11-19**
- It's no wonder he continues to push his religion of self-worship and pride in the world today.

B. Godly Repentance

Luke 18:13

"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'"

Tax collectors were Jews who were employed by "Publicans" who were wealthy non-Jews, contracted by the Roman government- often times backed by military force.

Since tax collectors were Jewish, they understood the life, customs and culture in Israel and would use that knowledge to effectively extract taxes from the people; as a result they were considered traitors.

- More than that, they were allowed to gather more taxes than what the government required, and then pocket the excess amount; classified as sinners- **Mt. 9:10-13; Mark 2:15; Luke 3:12-13.**
- Jesus however had no qualm with accepting and eating with them- **Mark 2:16; Luke 19:9.**
- He even chose a tax collector to be one of His 12 disciples, “Matthew” in **Matthew 9:9.**
- Jesus was showing that all who are repentant are accepted by God, no matter how ungodly.
- The apostle Paul is a great example of God’s mercy on wicked men- **1 Timothy 1:12-17.**

The tax collector in this parable knew he was a sinner and admitted it, he did not dare try to offer God any good works to prove he was worthy. His entreaty to God was a perfect model for all to follow.

Joel 2:13

“Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love...”

To “rend” means to tear or pull apart. In the ancient world, rending one’s garments was a sign of grief, despair, or sorrow. Signifying inward, spiritual repentance and sorrow or mourning over sinfulness.

- God’s primary requirement from sinners is “a broken and a contrite heart” **Psalms 51:17.**
- So before a person can be saved, there must be a rending or tearing of the heart in godly sorrow.
- When coming to God, there should be only one thing on their mind- “Lord have mercy on me!”
- The essence of repentance is to turn away from a life of sin unto God.
- The woman caught in adultery, Jesus forgave her but also told her to stop sinning- **John 8:11.**
- To continue living a life of sin and simultaneously claim to be a follower of Jesus is hypocrisy!
 - o **Matthew 3:7- 10; 1 John 3:7-15.**
- Going to church does not make us anymore a Christian than going to McDonalds makes us a hamburger, there must be fruit in one’s life to show the genuine result of being born again.
 - o **Mt. 7:15-23; 12:33-37; John 15:1-8, 16; Gal. 5:22; -23; Eph. 5:9; Col. 1:10.**

What is interesting is that John the Baptist’s ministry was all about preparing the people to receive their Messiah, Jesus through a baptism of repentance- **Matthew 3:11-12.**

Acts 3:19

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.”

- All throughout the New Testament, repentance and salvation from sin went hand in hand.
 - o **Acts 2:38-39; 5:31-32; 11:18; 17:29-30; 20:21; 26:20; 2 Peter 3:9.**
- Jesus likewise preached a message of repentance- **Matthew 4:17; Luke 5:31-32; 15:7; 24:47-48**
- In case you were thinking that repentance applied only to sinners coming to God- think again!
- The subject of godly repentance continues to play out in the life of Christians via sanctification.
 - o **2 Corinthians 7:8-11; Hebrews 6:1; Revelation 2:5, 16, 21-22; 3:3, 19.**
- Humility is central in godly repentance and in our Christian life as a whole.
- **Pr. 18:12; 22:4; Eph. 4:2; Php. 2:1-4; Col. 3:12; Titus 3:12; James 3:17-18; 1 Peter 5:5-6.**

So if we are going to get anywhere with God, there must be genuine humility expressed through a repentant heart to return to Him. This applies to everyone, saint and sinner alike- **James 4:1-10.**

Luke 18:14

“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Parable #25: The Workers in the Vineyard

Reference: Matthew 20:1-16

Theme: Many who are First will be Last, and Many who are Last will be First

Context: Jesus contrasted the Established Religious Elite (Pharisees) with His Disciples, Newcomers



“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. “About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. “He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing. About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long

doing nothing?’ ““Because no one has hired us,’ they answered. “He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’”

Matthew 20:1-7

A. Recruiting The Workers

- In this parable, I believe the owner of the vineyard is speaking of God.
- The vineyard or grapes speaks of lost humanity to be gathered into God’s Kingdom.
 - o **Mt. 9:37-38; 13:24-30; 21:33-46; John 4:35-38; Ro. 1:13; James 5:7-8; Rev. 14:14-16.**
- The workers are those who labor unto the Lord by ministering to people on His behalf.
 - o **1 Corinthians 3:5-8; Colossians 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; Hebrews 6:10.**
- The denarius represents the rewards and blessings for serving God faithfully.
- The Jews divided the day into 12 hours from sunrise (6:00 AM) until sunset (6:00 PM).
 - o Third Hour – 9:00 AM
 - o Six Hour – 12:00 PM
 - o Ninth Hour – 3:00 PM
 - o Eleventh Hour – 5:00 PM

What is interesting to note is that the landowner agreed to pay the first group of workers 1 Denarius, a Roman silver coin equivalent to one day’s wages of hard labor.

- This first wave of workers agreed to this specified wage.

Yet the landowner kept looking for more workers later on in the day, but instead of agreeing specifically to an amount for wages, he promised the following, *“I will pay you whatever is right.”* That took faith to accept!



B. The Gift of Eternal Life is the Same for All

Matthew 20:8-12

“When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’ “The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius. So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ‘These men who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’”

- At 6:00 PM in the afternoon, all the workers came to be paid their wages.
- I am sure that those who had only worked for 1 hour were surprised to get a whole day’s wages.
- Naturally, the first group who had worked all day expected more pay for having worked all day.
- They were comparing themselves with the other workers- they received what was agreed upon.

The religious Pharisees who lived all their lives for God in countless religious works, labored harder than anyone else, so in their own eyes expected more from God in return- **Philippians 3:2-16.**

Eternal Life (**Romans 6:23**) is a free gift offered to all regardless of how long they serve or what they do for the Lord. The thief on the cross had a few hours left to live, yet Jesus saved the man- **Luke 13:39-43.**

Romans 4:4-8

Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.”

In the beginning of chapter Nineteen, the Pharisees tested Jesus with a question and at the end of the same chapter Peter stated that they left all to Follow Jesus.

- In Matthew 19:30 Jesus makes the statement, *“But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.”*
- This is the same statement made at the end of this parable in **Matthew 20:16.**
- These narrative threads are connected even though they are divided by a chapter separator.
- The Pharisees and other religious leaders were considered the “Old Guard” or established order.
- The 12 disciples were fresh out of the masses in Israel, and considered new kids on the block.
- They were not educated, considered blue collar workers (tradesmen) as was Jesus- **John 7:15.**

Acts 4:13-14

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

- It has always been God’s style to choose lowly people in the eyes of the world to do His work.
 - o **Luke 10:21; 1 Corinthians 1:26-29**
- In this way, no one can boast or take the credit, all the glory and credit goes to God!
 - o **1 Corinthians 1:30-31; 2 Corinthians 10:17.**
 - o **1 Corinthians 1:29 NKJV, “...that no flesh should glory in His presence.”**

C. God's Sovereign Discretion

Matthew 20:13-16

“But he answered one of them, ‘Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

- So the first group who had labored all day received what was agreed upon.
- God has the right to bestow eternal life on all who come to him in repentance, regardless of their background or past deeds. We don’t earn salvation it’s a gift from God- **Ephesians 2:8-9.**

Going back to Matthew Chapter 19, a rich man had asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life in verse 16. Jesus answered the man based on the Old Covenant that they were currently living under.

- The young man Jesus was talking to happened to be very wealthy.
- To follow Jesus, He has made it clear to all that they must abandon all to follow Him.
 - o **Matthew 4:19; 8:22; 9:9; 10:32-39; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 14:25-33.**
- The rich man was unwilling to let go of his earthly riches.
- However, the 12 disciples of Jesus did leave all to follow the Lord, so Peter asks:

Matthew 19:27-30

Peter answered him, “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?” Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

What Jesus said in response to Peter’s question is outstanding. Yes there is a cost to follow Jesus, but it is a small price to be paid for all that we receive from God in this life and the life to come.

Romans 8:18; Hebrews 11:26; 1 Peter 1:3-9

- Of course it’s not about what we receive in return, but hey it’s so worth it to follow Jesus.
- His love is better than life, and in His presence is fullness of joy – **Psalms 19:11; 84:10.**

Psalms 63:3, “Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.”

- Everyone has a choice to make concerning eternal matters, we have a free will, we are not robots.
- However, God knows who will chose Him and who won’t in advance- called foreknowledge.
 - o **Acts 17:24-28; Romans 8:29; Romans chapter 9 and 11.**
- However, I don’t believe God makes that decision for us- that would be predestination.
- The Lord’s 12 Disciples had the benefit of those who had gone before them.
- So these men were born in Israel by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge- **1 Peter 1:2.**

John 4:38

“I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”

Parable #26: The Two Sons

Reference: Matthew 21:28-32

Theme: Obedience and Repentance is the Proper Response to Hearing the Gospel

Context: Chief Priests and Elders Question Jesus' Authority, having Driven out the Money Changers



“What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’ ‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. “Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go. “Which of the two did what his father wanted?” The first,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes

entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

Matthew 21:28-32

A. Obedience – Love For God

- What matters to God is simple obedience, and Jesus was driving this point home effectively.
- When we strip away all the ritual, formalism and religion of men what is left is lip service.
- Which is so shallow and superficial; faith without deeds is dead- **James 2:14-26.**
- God is all about reality, authentic, transparent, child-like faith- **Matthew 18:3-4.**
- It's so easy to get caught up in all the details of formalism that we miss the big picture of truth.
 - o **Matthew 23:23-24; Luke 11:27-28.**

James 1:27

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

- So the real question is how do we express the highest form of love for God.
- It's really quite simple, just do what He says, obey His Word in the Bible.
- What is it that delights the heart of God more than anything- when we walk in His truth!

3 John 4, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.”

- So the bottom line is, if we know and love God we'll do what He says for us to do- **1 John 2:3-6.**

1 John 5:2-3

This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.

B. The Son Who Said “No”

Matthew 21:28-29

“What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’ “‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.”

- So in this parable Jesus presents two sons, the first son represents the tax collectors/prostitutes.
- The second son represented the religious leaders at the time- the self-proclaimed righteous ones.
- The central theme of this parable is obedience to the Father’s will.
- With the first son there was a delayed obedience.

Initially the tax collectors and prostitutes rebel against God and start out living a life of sin and self-indulgence. When the first son said, “I will not” go, that was a blatant rejection of his father’s will.

- However later on the first son repented and changed his mind and obeyed and went.
- What matters the most is how we end out life, not how we started it- **Ezekiel 18:19-32.**
- If we die in our sins and reject God’s offer of eternal life, it’s too late, we are doomed.
 - o **John 8:24; 12:47-49; Hebrews 2:1-4; 1 John 5:11-12.**

John 3:35-36

“The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”

- The fruit of salvation is a transformed & changed life- **2Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:17- 5 :15; Col. 3:1-10**
- The work of God’s grace is self-evident in our lives or nothing happened- **1 John 3:7-15; 5:18.**
- John’s Baptism was a baptism of repentance- **Luke 3:3; Acts 19:4.**
- It was more than a symbolic gesture or wishful good intentions to be water baptized by John. It was to prepare the hearts of the people to receive Jesus as their Messiah- **1 Peter 3:18-22.**
- John explained clear expectations and practical examples of a repentant and changed heart; producing the fruit of changed behavior as explained in **Luke 3:7-14.**
- The point is, a real encounter with God produces corresponding change.

We need to be careful that we don’t fall into the other ditch of trying to earn or deserve our salvation from God which is impossible. **Romans 4:1-12; Galatians 2:1-16, 5:1- 12; 6:15.**

John 6:28-29

Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

This parable points out the good news that even the worst of sinners, God will grant them eternal life if they will repent and turn from their sin and place their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord- **1 Timothy 1:12-17.**

Romans 3:22-24

This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

C. The Son Who Paid Lip Service

Matthew 21:30, “Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go.”

- It is such a trap for us to think that just saying yes to God is the same and doing it.
- Speaking words is a very important principle in obeying God- **Deuteronomy 30:11-20.**
- The act of obeying God is preceded by believing God’s Word in our hearts- **Romans 10:5-17.**
- It becomes quite evident in Scripture, that God speaks His Word first, and then fulfills His every declaration- **Numbers 23:19; Isaiah 55:10-11; Luke 21:33; Mark 11:12-14, 22-23; Heb. 11:3.**
- So God never seems to do anything without saying it first, His Words are a creative force.

Hebrews 1:3 AMP

Jesus is the perfect imprint and very image of [God’s] nature, upholding and maintaining and guiding and propelling the universe by His mighty word of power.

- We get into trouble by paying God lip service to His commands and never follow through with actions that back up our words. That kind of faith in the Bible is called dead- **James 2:14-26.**
- This is what the Pharisees and religious leaders of Jesus’ day were guilty of.
 - o **Matthew 7:21-23; Mark 7:6-8; Luke 6:46-49.**
- It’s really a part of fallen human nature to blow smoke; empty promises with good intentions.

2 Corinthians 1:17-18

When I planned this, did I do it lightly? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say, “Yes, yes” and “No, no”? But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not “Yes” and “No.”

- A crucial aspect of integrity is to mean what we say and say what we mean- avoiding oaths.
 - o **Psalms 15:1-4; Matthew 5:33-37; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; James 4:13-17; 5:12.**
- It’s either God’s way or no way at all; it’s not all relative or subjective as people think.
 - o **Judges 17:6; Matthew 7:13-14; John 14:6; 1 Peter 4:17-18.**

D. The Son Who Paid Lip Service

Matthew 21:31-32, “Which of the two did what his father wanted?” “The first,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.”

- God is not partial nor does He show favoritism- **Romans 2:1-11; Ephesians 6:9; Col. 3:25.**
- God looks for repentance and obedience; by His grace and through our faith- **Rev. 3:3; 14:12.**
- So these religious folks rejected God’s way, as people do today- **Romans 10:1-4; Hebrews 2:1-4**

Luke 7:29-30

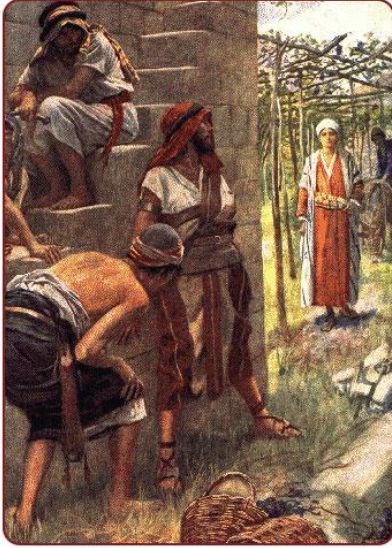
(All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus’ words, acknowledged that God’s way was right, because they had been baptized by John. But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God’s purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.)

Parable #27: The Wicked Tenants

Reference: Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-9; Luke 20:9-16

Theme: Produce the Fruit of Obedience or God will Find Someone Else to Get the Job Done

Context: Jesus was in Jerusalem Leading up to Calvary Addressing the Chief Priests and Elders



“Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. ‘The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said.

“But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” “He will bring those wretches to a wretched

end,” they replied, “and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.”

Matthew 21:33-41

A. Israel, God’s Treasured Possession

- Allow me to provide a little background concerning the nation of Israel.
- The landowner in this parable represents God the Father who promised at the Fall of man that a Savior would come and undo what Satan has done- **Genesis 3:15.**
- Judea’s climate was very favorable to planting vines and harvesting grapes.
- So the vineyard represents the theocracy of Israel that God has instituted as a special people, cultivated with love and care- **Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalms 80:8-16.**
- Israel was God’s Sovereign choice, to be a special people, His treasured possession for the expressed purpose of bringing the Savior of the world into the earth- Jesus.
 - o **Deuteronomy 26:18-19; Psalms 135:4.**

Exodus 19:5-6

“Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

- It all began with Abraham, whom God had called to be Israel’s great Patriarch and founder.
- A covenant of blood was made that guaranteed God’s promise of a salvation for all people.
 - o **Genesis 12:1-5; 17:1-16.**
- It would be through Abraham’s descendents, Jesus being born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago that all the nations of the earth would be blessed- **Genesis 18:18-19; 22:15-18.**

It was clear to Abraham from the beginning that God had called him from the land of the Chaldeans (**Acts 7:4**), present day Iraq to the land of Canaan, present day Israel to establish a people in a land by which Jesus, the Lamb of God would come and take away the sins of the world- **John 1:29**.

Galatians 3:8-9

The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

John 8:56-59

“Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.” “You are not yet fifty years old,” the Jews said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!” “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

B. To be A Light Unto the Gentiles

Matthew 21:33-34

“Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.”

This parable was a scathing indictment of the Jewish nation’s failure to preach the gospel to the nations; as their sacred duty and calling they failed in this regard. However, they did succeed in preserving the Word of God (Scribes) delivered to them down through the centuries- **Acts 7:38; 1 Peter 1:10-12**.

- The beginning of Israel’s history as a nation was a rough one. As far as the first generation is concerned, even though God brought them out of Egypt, they could not let go of Egypt.
 - o **1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Hebrews 3:4-11.**
- Israel was created as a theocracy, where God would be their King, and judges would guide them, but they wanted to be like other nations around them- **1 Samuel chapter 8; 12:12.**
- It became clear that idolatry was going to become a huge problem for them.
 - o **Joshua 23:6-8; Leviticus 18:24-28.**
- As a result they prostituted themselves to foreign gods and betrayed the Lord countless times.
 - o **Judges 2:17; 8:27-33; 1 Chronicles 5:25; 2 Chronicles 28:1-4; Jer. 7:30-31; 19:1-5.**
- Even in the Church we can be guilty of committing spiritual adultery with the world as well.
 - o **1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; James 4:1-10; 1 John 2:15-17.**
- Stephen who was stoned by the Jews offered a dire summary of Israel’s history- **Acts chapter 7.**

A few hundred years before Jesus’ incarnation into the earth, the Jewish nation finally became fed up with idolatry and had a revival to return to the Covenant and Law of Moses in pure form.

- Unfortunately they went from one extreme (Worldliness) to the other (Legalism).
- They resented how the Gentile nations around them had influenced them, though no one forced them to worship idols.
- As a result, they hated and despised them and would have nothing to do with them.
- This also included the Samaritans, half Jews and half Gentiles, but Jesus reached out- **John 4:7-9**
- Even Peter needed a vision to preach the gospel to the Gentiles since there was such a great bias and prejudice against them- **Acts chapter 10.**

Acts 11:1-3, “The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him and said, ‘You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.’”

- Well hello, this is what Israel was called to do, bring salvation to the rest of the world.
- When Paul explained to his own countrymen God’s call on Him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, they tried to kill him and almost succeeded.

Acts 22:21-23

“Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’” The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, “Rid the earth of him! He’s not fit to live!” As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air,

When Jesus as a baby was being presented to the Lord in Jerusalem, there was a righteous and devout man named Simeon that took Jesus in his arms and among other things made this statement about Him: Luke 2:32, “*...a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.*”

John 12:46

I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

- Even though the Apostle Paul was raised in a strict sect of the Pharisees, God dealt with Him about His heart for the nations and made Paul an apostle to take the gospel to them.
 - o **Acts 26:1-23; Romans 11:13; Galatians 2:8; Ephesians 2:11-13; 3:1-13.**
- Paul always had a special passion for the People of Israel too- **Romans Chapter 9 & 11; 10:1.**
- Quoting **Isaiah 49:6**, Paul expresses his frustration for Jewish stubbornness- **Romans 2:5-11.**

Acts 13:46-48

Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: “We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us: “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.” When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

- There were attempts to make Jewish proselytes of the Gentiles to a limited degree.
 - o **Acts 2:10; 6:5; 13:43.**
- “Proselytes of the Righteous,” Who wholly embraced Judaism, were baptized, circumcised, observing all the rituals and regulations of the Mosaic law and temple worship/sacrifices.
- “Proselytes of the Gate,” or those who approved of the Jewish religion and renounced pagan superstitions and observed some rituals, but were not circumcised or baptized.

Jesus condemned such attempts of the Pharisees in converting Gentiles- doing more damage than good. Recruiting Gentiles to swell their ranks for monetary reasons; would not instruct them or train them in the law. So they continued in full open display, pagan indulgences- known as the “scabs of Israel.”

- This kind of hypocrisy even became evident amongst the Gentiles- **Romans 2:17-24.**

Matthew 23:15, “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.”

C. Israel, Rejected God's Purpose for Themselves

Matthew 21:34-39

When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. “The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said. “But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.”

Numerous times in the Old Testament, the Lord sent prophets to warn them of their backslidden ways, but they would ignore the warnings and judgment would come by being turned over to their enemies.

After awhile they would repent and God would restore their peace and prosperity, but forget God once again and the vicious cycle of sin, warning, judgment, repentance, restoration would repeat over again.

Luke 11:47-51

“Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who killed them. So you testify that you approve of what your forefathers did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs. Because of this, God in his wisdom said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.’ Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all.”

Matthew 23:37-39

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Acts 7:51-53, “You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.”

- So we see a long trail of blood and murder in Jewish History. God would send His servants to call His people back to repentance, but instead they persecuted and martyred many of them.

**1 Samuel 22:18; 1 Kings 19:10; 22:24; 2 Chronicles 24:20-21; 36:16; Nehemiah 9:26;
Jeremiah 20:1-2; 37:15; 38:6; 44:4-6**

Hebrews 11:36-38

Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

Why Would the Jewish People Reject their Messiah?

1. Mistaken Identity

On the most part the Jewish nation rejected Jesus as their Messiah or Savior as a result of mistaken identity. They thought to themselves, “who is this guy Jesus, He is not the one we learned about at the synagogue, who would come and free us from the Gentile nations and restore the glory of Israel!”

- When the people heard Jesus speak about His crucifixion, they just could not accept it. The people were divided, some thought he was mad and others believed in Him- **John 10:1-39.**

John 12:30-34

Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. The crowd spoke up, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ will remain forever, so how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this ‘Son of Man’?”

- They mostly did not recognize Him as they thought He should have been in their own minds- a triumphant king who would defeat the Romans and usher in the Millennial reign.
- They expected the King of kings, but received a Suffering Servant. Yes Jesus would come as a King, but first as a Lamb- **Luke 17:22-25; John 1:29; Revelation 5:6; 19:11-21.**
- Their Messiah being crucified on a cross was too much for them to take. This reality proved to be a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles- **1 Corinthians 1:18-24.**
- But all throughout the Old Testament, prophetic Scriptures were very clear on this matter.
 - o **Psalms chapter 22; Isaiah 50:4-7; 52:13-15; Chapter 53; Luke 24:44;**

John 3:14-15

“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”

Luke 24:25-27

He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

- So the key issue here is all about timing, the greatest need for man was to remove our sins, but when people fail to see this need, Jesus becomes an offensive thing- “what, me a sinner?”
- As a result, their Messiah for most them, just passed them by without being recognized.
 - o **Luke 19:44, “...because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”**

Matthew 16:1-4

The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven. He replied, “When evening comes, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,’ and in the morning, ‘Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah.” Jesus then left them and went away.

The Sign of Jonah

The greatest sign of all for all mankind, was Jesus dying for our sins, and triumphing over death, hell and Satan through His resurrection from the dead in three days- **Ephesians 1:17-23**.

Matthew 12:40-41

“For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

- The root problem is unbelief, they refused to accept what the Scriptures wrote about.

John 5:45-47

“But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?”

In the story of the rich man who went to hell, he pleaded with Moses, who was in Abraham’s bosom, a compartment adjacent to hell where the rich man was, to send back Lazarus to his brothers and warn them of the torments of hell.

Luke 16:29-31, “Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’ “No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ “He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

- That is exactly what happened, the majority of the Jews rejected the resurrection of Jesus.
- Interesting thing, Muslims believe Jesus was a great prophet but could not be the Son of God. The thought of God being crucified on a cross is an absurd notion to them.

The irony of it all, is that when Jesus was risen from the dead, the Jewish leaders fabricated a story that the disciples of Jesus had stole his body away, and bribed the guards accordingly.

- Sad to say they got their money’s worth, that lie is still believed to this very day among the Jews.

Matthew 28:11-15, “While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble. So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.”

Just after the day of Pentecost, Peter preached the gospel to a great crowd of people, and he referenced **Psalms 16:8-11** concerning the resurrection of Jesus from the dead; 3,000 were saved - **Acts 2:22-41**.

- The resurrection of the dead is a key point to the Gospel message, without it we are not saved.
 - o **Acts 4:2; 17:32; 23:6; 24:21; 1 Corinthians 15:1-34; Hebrews 6:2; 1 Peter 3:18-21.**
- Jesus prepared His disciples on many occasions that He would die and be raised again.
 - o **Matthew 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19.**
- Jesus being raised on the third day- **Luke 18:31-34; 24:7; Acts 10:40; 1 Corinthians 15:4.**

2. Out of Envy

Mark 15:9-10, “Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?” asked Pilate, knowing it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him.”

- There was no pleasing the religious leaders of Jesus’ day, they rejected John the Baptist and Jesus’ testimony because it exposed their hypocrisy- **John 7:18-35.**
- In this parable, Jesus revealed the true motive of the religious leaders.

Matthew 21:37-38

“Last of all, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said. “But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’”

- These religious leaders knew the Old Testament backwards and forwards.
- God so loved the world that He sent Jesus, who came to His own and rejected Him-**John 1:11-13**
- When Jesus had resurrected Lazarus from the dead, they really began to feel threatened.
- They were more concerned about their position of power, money and prestige.
- In their greed they conspired against the Lord, knowing who He was, just to stay in power.

John 11:47-54

Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. “What are we accomplishing?” they asked. “Here is this man performing many miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, “You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.” He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. So from that day on they plotted to take his life. Therefore Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the Jews. Instead he withdrew to a region near the desert, to a village called Ephraim, where he stayed with his disciples.

- Even when the Apostles were performing many miracles they were jealous again- **Acts 5:12-21.**
- Paul encountered more jealousy from the Jews as he preached the gospel- **Acts 13:45; 17:5.**
- This jealousy was proof that the religious leaders knew that God was not with them, but with the believers as evidenced by the signs/wonders- **Mark 16:20; Acts 2:22; 5:34-42; Hebrews 2:3-4.**

Matthew 21:39, “So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.”

- “Cast him out of the vineyard-” Jesus was crucified on Mount Calvary, outside of Jerusalem.
- The ultimate betrayal occurred in front of Pilate when the Jews chose Caesar over Jesus.
- As Adam and Eve sinned, we can’t blame the Jews, we would have done the same thing.

John 19:14-16

It was the day of Preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour. “Here is your king,” Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!” “Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked. “We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered. Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus.

3. The Mystery

- God in His wisdom, left out some critical facts concerning the timing of the end of the world.
- Based on the knowledge the Jews had of Daniel's 70 weeks time table (490 years), they were right on schedule for the end of the world to come during Jesus' time- **Daniel 9:20-27**.
- This makes sense why even after the resurrection the disciples thought the end had come.

Acts 1:6-8

So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

It was revealed to Daniel by the Archangel Gabriel, that 'Seventy Sevens' or in other translations 'Seventy Weeks' were decreed for the people of Israel to end all things for the world. Each week is equivalent to 7 years, so this amounts to 70 times 7 years = 490 years. According to **Daniel 9:25**, this prophetic clock began ticking when the decree was made while Israel was in captivity- for them to return to Jerusalem and rebuild it. The first decree was made by the Persian King Cyrus in 538 B.C. in **Ezra 1:1-2; Isaiah 44:28; 45:13**. But it was not until 444 B.C. Persian King Artaxerxes sends Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem- **Nehemiah 2:1-9**.

- * Jeremiah prophesied that Israel would be in captivity for 70 years- **Jeremiah 25:1-12; 32; Daniel 9:1-2**
- * 458-444 B.C. Persian King Artaxerxes sends Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem- **Nehemiah 2:1-9**.
- * "Seven Sevens" or 49 years transpire while Jerusalem is rebuilt- with streets and a trench in trouble.
- * "Sixty-Two Sevens" or 434 addition years are added to the previous 49 years until Jesus' crucifixion.
- * "The Anointed one cut off" refers to the crucifixion of Jesus around 30 A.D.
- * "Destruction of the city and sanctuary" occurs in 70 A.D. by the Roman general Titus.
- * Church Age or Dispensation of Grace- this mystery has been in effect for 2,000 years and counting.
- * The future Tribulation Period and the Anti-Christ = one 'seven' = 7 years

From the issuing of King Artaxerxes's decree to rebuild Jerusalem until the crucifixion of Jesus, 483 years had transpired.

- God stopped the prophetic clock leaving just 7 years left to be fulfilled by Israel at a future date.
- That won't take place until the future, during the 7 year Tribulation Period- **Daniel 9:27**.
- This mystery is referred to in **Luke 21:24** as, "The times of the Gentiles" or the Dispensation of Grace or the Church Age. The time we are living in now for the last 2,000 years or so.
- So Daniel's 490 years was cut short at 7 years for the dispensation of Grace to unfold.
- God kept this secret in order to keep Satan in the dark and so trap him, to his own doom!

1 Corinthians 2:6-10

We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"— but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.

- This mystery is what is revealed and is being played out in the Church of Jesus Christ today!
- **Ro. 11:25; 16:25; Eph. 1:9; 3:1-11; 5:32; 6:19; Col. 1:24-27; 2:2; 1 Tim. 3:16; Rev. 10:7.**

D. A New Hope Amidst Judgment

Matthew 21:40-41

“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,” they replied, “and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.”

The purpose of Jesus asking them this question was that they might condemn themselves, and admit the justice of the punishment that was soon to come upon them.

Ever since Genesis 3:15 and the fall of man, God’s activities has been centered around one thing- the redemption of mankind from the tyranny of sin, death and Satan- **John 10:10; Acts 10:38; 1 John 3:8.**

Mark 10:45, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

- The Jewish nation has failed in taking the Gospel message God had given them to the nations.
- God has always been interested in saving all of mankind- **1 Tim. 2:1-7; Heb. 4:1-2; 2 Peter 3:9.**

Diaspora- Dispersed among the Nations

This refers to the scattering (Greek- “To Scatter”) of the Jewish people among other nations. Throughout their history, the Jews have experienced many dispersions- some voluntary while others forced.

- Since the Jewish nation as a whole rejected their Messiah, judgment came upon them.
- Jesus knew this would happen and wept over Jerusalem in **Luke 19:41-44.**

Luke 21:20-24

“When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

- Within a short period of time (40 years) after the resurrection of Jesus, Jerusalem and the temple was completely destroyed in 70 AD, under the Roman general Titus.

1 Thessalonians 2:14-16

For you, brothers, became imitators of God’s churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to all men in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.

With the Early Church birthed at the Day of Pentecost and now the Jewish nation ended, God had established a new priesthood, a new holy nation in the Church of Jesus Christ, to take the Gospel to the world and fulfill the Great Commission- **Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; 1 Peter 2:9-10.**

E. Jesus the Cornerstone of a New Covenant

Matthew 21:42-43

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: “‘The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes’? “Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.”

The reference here is taken from building a house. The principal stone for size and beauty is that commonly laid as the cornerstone at the corner foundation of the building.

- The builders, speaking of the Jews rejected Jesus as the cornerstone of the New Covenant.
- They were not interested in the New but held onto the Old Covenant- **Luke 5:36-39.**
- This reference in **Matthew 21:42** is made elsewhere in the Bible- **Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:6-7.**

Psalms 118:22-24

The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

So what is the “Capstone” mentioned above? It is the uppermost stone in a building project, sometimes used to tie two intersecting walls together- **Zechariah 4:7.** As the top stone of a structure or wall, the capstone was the crowning point.

Ephesians 2:19-22

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

- Jesus is our cornerstone and capstone, the Head of the Body, His Church- **Colossians 1:18**
- It’s upon the rock, the revelation that Jesus is the Christ that the Church is to be built, not upon Peter as some may claim- **Matthew 16:13-19.**

1 Timothy 3:15-16

If I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.

The people of Israel were used to being a people of privilege, now that was taken away due to their disobedience and given to the Church, made up of born again people from all nations.

Acts 28:28

“Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!”

F. What to do with the Cornerstone

Matthew 21:44-46

“He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.” When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew he was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.”

- Jesus was quoting **Isaiah 8:14**, having also a parallel reference to **Daniel 2:34-35**.
- For all mankind, there appears to be two possible outcomes when dealing with Jesus.
- Fall upon the stone and be broken to pieces; this speaks of repentance. When admit we have sinned and accept Jesus as our Savior. He puts us back together as a new creation- **2 Cor. 5:17**.
- Or we can allow it to fall upon us in judgment when we reject Jesus- **John 3:36; 8:24; Heb. 2:3**.
- We only hurt ourselves when we resist or reject the Lord- **Acts 9:1-9**.

Matthew 21:44 AMP, “And whoever falls on this Stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom It falls will be crushed to powder [and It will winnow him, scattering him like dust].”

- That is, in the original, will reduce him to dust, so that it may be scattered by the winds.

“There is an allusion here, doubtless, to the custom of stoning as a punishment among the Jews. A scaffold was erected twice the height of the man to be stoned. Standing on its edge, he was violently struck off by one of the witnesses: if he died by the blow and the fall, nothing further was done; if not, a heavy stone was thrown down on him, which at once killed him.”

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So Jesus is speaking of the “falling” of the stone on his enemies. They who oppose him, who reject him, and who continued unbelief, will be crushed by him on the day of judgment, and perish forever.

G. Don’t Give up on the Jews

I don’t want you to be left with the impression that God has given up on the Jews. On the contrary, God in His mercy allows them to play a crucial role in God’s plan of redemption for mankind in the future.

- Sure, right now the Jews still reject Jesus as their Messiah and adhere to the Law - **2Cor. 3:13-16**
- But there has always been a remnant of Messianic Jews who have accepted Jesus.
- By reading Romans chapter 9 and 11 you will see God is not finished with Israel yet.
- In 1948, Israel became a nation once again as a prophetic sign that the end is near.
- When the Church of Jesus Christ finishes the Great Commission and is raptured out of the earth, Israel will once again take center stage for the seven year Tribulation Period.
- In Matthew Chapter 24 Jesus addresses end times events with Israel right in the middle of it.

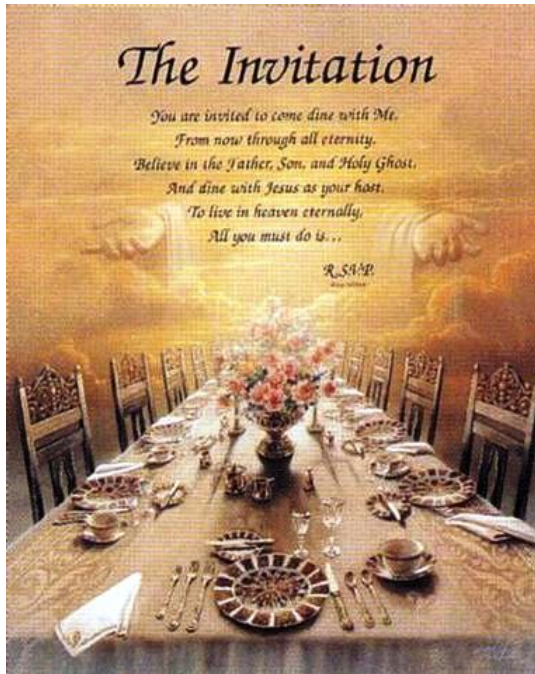
Thank God for the Jews and the nation of Israel, we should be regularly praying for the peace of Jerusalem- **Psalms 122:6**. They are still God’s covenant people; as Christians today, we have so much that we have inherited from them, so thank God for the good they have done- **Romans 15:26-27**. The real question now is, will the Church be faithful to God’s mandate given to us, to fulfill the Great Commission and preach the Gospel message to the world.

Parable #28: The Great Banquet

Reference: Matthew 22:1-14; Luke 14:15-24

Theme: Esteeming the Gospel Above Everything Else and Receiving His Righteousness

Context: A Continuation of the Religious Leaders Being Condemned and the Cost of Following Jesus



Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. “Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’ “But they paid no attention and went off — one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. “Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both

good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ‘Friend,’ he asked, ‘how did you get in here without wedding clothes?’ The man was speechless. “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

Matthew 22:1-14

This parable is quite similar in Matthew and Luke’s accounts; so I’ll expound on the differences.

- There’s also some parallels with the parable of the “Wicked Tenants.”
- The overarching theme concerning Israel’s overall rejection of the Gospel message.
- Remember the audience Jesus was speaking to at the time- the Jews under the Old Covenant.
- This parable like many other parables of Jesus, captures and describes the dynamics of the brief transitional period between the Old and New Covenants during Jesus’ 3 ½ years of ministry.

Luke 16:16

“The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.”

The above Scripture simply describes the attitude of the people pressing in on the move of God during the revival occurring under John the Baptist’s ministry; about 1 year in length- a very good thing!

- Folks did not want to be left out of what God was doing in the earth with the Messiah coming.
 - o Malachi 4:5-6; Matthew chapter 3; 11:7-15.

A. To the Jews First then to the Gentiles

Even though this parable was explicitly directed towards the Jews, the implicit application to us today is still just as valuable and relevant.

- In Luke's account, the parable is preceded by the following comment in **Luke 14:15**, eluding to the coming of the Messiah.
- The sad irony was that the banquet was already embodied in Jesus Christ for them to receive, but they could not see it due to their spiritual blindness.
 - o **Matthew 13:11-17; John 12:37-41; Romans 10:14-21; 1 Peter 1:10-12.**

Luke 14:15

When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God."

- The King in this parable represents God the Father and the Son is Jesus Christ.
- Servants are those during Jesus' time evangelizing the good news of the Kingdom to the Jews.
- The banquet speaks of salvation, the New Covenant, eternal life- being a born again child of God
- The people initially invited to receive the Kingdom were the Jews- **Mt. 10:5-8; Romans 1:16-17**

Why do the Jews get first shot at Salvation? It was through their lineage that Jesus came to the earth. They kept the Word of God persevered for centuries. Though their history had its ups and downs, they rightfully should hear the message of the Kingdom first, then the rest of the world.

Matthew 15:21-28; John 4:21-26; Romans 9:1-5; 15:25-27.

- It was Paul's custom when he reached a town, to reason with the Jews in the synagogue first, but most of the time they rejected the message- **Acts 13:14-52; 17:1-15; 28:17-31.**
- Don't get me wrong, God loves the whole world (**John 3:16**), and wants them to be saved as you will see in this parable, but Jesus goes to His people first.
- Just prior to Jesus being crucified, some Greeks wanted to see Him, showing that the time had come for the Church Age to start and take the Gospel to the world- **John 12:20-36.**

Romans 10:12-13

For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

I want you to notice that in this parable Jesus starts out by saying in Luke 14:16, "*Jesus replied: 'A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests.'*" In Bible times, some time before the actual banquet was given, invitations were sent to prepare the guests well in advance.

- This speaks of all the Old Testament prophecies that spoke of Jesus' coming- **Luke 24:25-27,44.**
- So the whole Jewish nation was invited and fully aware of the Kingdom of God in advance.
- There should have been no excuses of ignorance concerning this great event!

Luke 14:17, "At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'"

Again in ancient times, the custom was, once the banquet was ready, servants would span out and visit each of the invited guests, informing them the banquet was ready, and they were to come immediately.

B. Rejecting the Invitation

Luke 14:18-20

“But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’ “Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’ “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.”

- Jesus is describing the general tone or response of the Jewish nation to the invitation.
- Sadly they were as it is today for so many, distracted by other things in this life- too busy.
- Reminds me of the Parable of the Sower, where the seed of the Word fell amongst the weeds.

Mark 4:18-20, “Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.”

- Jesus told the disciples when they went out to invite people to receive the Kingdom of God, if they should reject it, to wipe off the dust of their town from their feet as a witness against them.
 - o **Matthew 10:14; 11:20-24; Luke 10:8-16; Acts 13:49-51.**
- In ancient times, to blow off going to a banquet one was invited to, would be a great insult.
- God the Father was inviting the whole nation to accept His invitation to receive eternal life through His Son- **John 3:14-16; 6:40; Romans 5:21; 6:23; 1 John 5:11-20, 20.**
- Instead they ignored and rejected God’s amazing offer- **Psalms 9:17; John 3:35-36; Heb. 2:1-4.**
- People in the world don’t have a guarantee of tomorrow or if there will be another opportunity in the future to receive Jesus if they keep putting Him off- **John 6:44; Acts 13:48; Hebrews 6:4.**
- As ambassadors of Christ we are to implore and plead with people to receive Jesus- **2 Cor. 5:20.**
- Delayed disobedience is the same as disobedience, today is the day of salvation.

2 Corinthians 6:1-2

As God’s fellow workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. For he says, “In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.” I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.

In Matthew’s Account we see a much darker response to the invitation- persecution & martyrdom.

Matthew 22:3-7

He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. “Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’ “But they paid no attention and went off — one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

- Jesus warned that His servants would be persecuted for telling people the Good News.
 - o **Luke 11:47-51; 21:12-19; John 15:18-21; 16:4.**
- The Jews rejection of Jesus turned into great persecution in the book of Acts.
- Too many to mention, here are a few- **Acts 4:21; 5:41; 7:57-60; 8:1-4; 9:1; 12:12; 13:50.**
- References to persecution continues all through the Epistles, from the Gentile nations as well.
 - o **1 Th. 3:7; 2 Timothy 3:12; Hebrews 10:32-39; 1 Peter 4:12-19; Revelation 2:10.**

John 15:22-25

“If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’”

- Certainly some in Israel accepted Jesus as their Messiah- **John 7:31, 8:30; 12:11, 42-43.**
- But on the most part, there was a national rejection of Jesus- **John 19:15.**
- As Jesus mentioned in **Matthew 22:7**, in 70 AD, Titus the Roman general destroyed Jerusalem and the temple along with a multitude of people in it- **Luke 19:41-44; 21:20- 24; 1 Th. 2:14-16.**

C. The Gentile’s Turn to Hear the Good News

Matthew 22:8-10

“Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.”

- The statement Jesus made in verse 8 is striking, “...*those I invited did not deserve to come.*”
- Sometimes people regard something as being free, as also being cheap or of little value.
- If someone personally paid a lot of money for something they would handle it with care.
- The value of Salvation and Redemption is based on the price Jesus paid for it, and the implications of spending eternity without it are beyond comprehension.
- To receive and participate in the New Covenant requires intense drive and desire for it.
- The parable of the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price illustrates this point.
- A casual or flippant attitude towards Eternal Life won’t cut it- **Matthew 10:34-39; Luke 9:62.**
- The context of this parable in Luke’s account supports this with the following- **Luke 14:25-35.**

Acts 13:46-48

Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: “We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us: “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.” When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

Acts 28:28, “Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!”

- Since the birth of Church is Acts 2, we are living in the “Times of the Gentiles-” **Luke 21:24.**
- Jesus has given to His Church a mandate to fulfill the Great Commission.
 - o **Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; Acts 4:1-8.**
- God has always wanted all men from every nation to be saved; to know and walk in the truth.
 - o **Acts 17:24- 30; Romans 2:4-11; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; 2 Peter 3:8-9; Revelation 7:9; 14:6.**
- So it is no surprise that this parable shows the Father’s heart for all of mankind- **Luke 13:28-30.**

Isaiah 45:22

“Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.”

D. Clothed in the Righteousness of Christ

Matthew 22:11-14

“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ‘Friend,’ he asked, ‘how did you get in here without wedding clothes?’ The man was speechless. “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

In ancient times it was common for nobility to provide their guests with special clothing to be worn specifically for the occasion. To refuse such a generous gift and honor was a great insult.

Genesis 45:22; 2 Kings 10:22; Esther 6:8; 8:15.

- Typically the gowns were long white robes, plainly identifying them as invited guests.
- White clothing in the Bible represents righteousness or righteous acts of people.
- Jesus Christ is our righteousness- **Romans 3:21-26; 1 Corinthians 1:40; 6:11; 2 Cor. 5:21.**
- White meaning free from blemish, stain or wrinkle, but holy and blameless.

Ephesians 5:25-27

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”

- Isn't it interesting that in Matthew's account of this parable, the banquet is a wedding banquet that a father was giving on behalf of his son.
- There will be a future Wedding Banquet during the Tribulation Period, at which time God the Father will present the Bride (all believers) to Jesus Christ- **1 Corinthians 6:17.**
- White linen is used in the New Testament to represent the Church of Jesus Christ-
 - o **Revelation 3:4-6; 19:7-9, 14**
- In this parable, extra sets of clothes were provided even for those who came off the street.
- So there was no excuse for this man not to have on his wedding clothes, which represented him trying to enter the Kingdom of God by his own good works- **Isaiah 64:6; Jude 23.**
- God's response to all those who reject His free gift of righteousness (wedding clothes) through faith in Jesus Christ is to be cast into eternal fire- **Revelation 20:11-15.**
- Going to church or being religious, does not make us a Christian or worthy of heaven, we must be born again- **Matthew 7:21-29; John 3:1-8; 2 Cor. 5:17; Galatians 6:15; 1 Peter 1:3.**

The statement Jesus made in Matthew 22:14, *“For many are invited, but few are chosen”* should not be used as some kind of proof text to support a Calvinistic view of predestination or Sovereign election.

Many are called, but few are chosen, because few are willing to count the cost and pay the price of surrender, obedience and consecration to the call of God. Whether that's for salvation, ministry or anything else God calls us to do- **Matthew 10:26-40; Luke 9:23-26; 57-62; 14:25-35; 2 Tim. 2:10; 4:6**

What I believe Jesus to be saying here is that all are called, but few choose to heed the call and accept the invitation. What constitutes being chosen by God is an individual's free will to receive Him- **John 1:11-13.** So we are all left with a choice to make, to choose our destiny with the free will God gave us. **Deuteronomy 30:19; Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 13:24-30; Romans 8:20.**

Parable #29: The Ten Virgins

Reference: Matthew 25:1-13

Theme: Keep Watch and Stay Alert, Because we don't know when Jesus will Return

Context: Jesus was Discoursing on End Times Events and What to Expect will Happen



“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. “At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ “Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ ““No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. “Later the

others also came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. ‘Open the door for us!’ “But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’ “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”

Matthew 25:1-13

The Scriptural setting of this parable finds itself surrounded by eschatology or end time teaching by our Lord Jesus. The primary audience Jesus was speaking to was the Jews about His Second Advent.

- The phrase Jesus makes in verse 1, *“At that time the Kingdom of Heaven will be like...”*
- *“That Time”* Jesus was referring to, is eluding to the manner in which Jesus returns in the future.
- It will be like a thief in the night, taking the world by total surprise.
 - **Matthew 24:26-35; Luke 17:22-25.**
- So Jesus is explaining the dynamics of His return back to earth to rule and reign- **Rev. 11:15-19.**
- Jesus gave more examples of how so many people will be taken by surprise, by comparing His coming with the past judgments of Noah’s flood, and Sodom’s destruction.
 - **Matthew 24:36-41; Luke 17:26-37.**

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

A. The Marriage Ceremony

Jewish weddings had two phases. The bridegroom went first to the bride's home to obtain his bride and observe religious ceremonies. Then he would take his bride to his own home to continue the festivities.

- I don't believe this parable is talking about the Church or the rapture, but I would like to briefly reference the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and the Bride of Christ.
- The Scriptures often uses marriage as an analogy to describe His return.
- The return of Jesus and receiving His Bride unto Himself is a precious revelation we hold dear.
 - o **Matthew 9:15; John 3:29; Ephesians 5:25-32; Revelation 19:7-9; 21:9-14.**
- As Christians, I believe that we are now engaged or pledged to be married to Jesus in the future.
 - o **Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28; 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13-14.**
- In Bible times, being pledged to be married was almost as binding as actually being married.
 - o **Exodus 22:16; Deuteronomy 22:23-29; Matthew 1:18-19.**
- Friendship with the world under Satan's dominion is considered spiritual adultery- **James 4:4-6.**
- The same language was used of Israel and her unfaithfulness to God by engaging in idolatry.
 - o **Ezekiel 6:9; 16:23-42; Hosea 1:1-2; Matthew 12:39-42.**

2 Corinthians 11:2-3, "I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ."

B. Having Oil in our Lamps

- Oil in the Bible is a symbol for the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon the people of God.
- Under the Old Testament, the prophet, priest and king were anointed to serve in an office.
 - o **Exodus 29:7; Leviticus 8:12; Judges 14:5-6; 1 Samuel 16:13.**
- Under the New Covenant, every born again believer has received an anointing- the Holy Spirit.
 - o **John 4:13-14; 14:15-17; Romans 8:15; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 3:16-17; 6:19-20.**
- Oil is often used as a symbol to represent the yoke destroying anointing ministered to the sick.
 - o **Isaiah 10:27; Mark 6:13; James 5:14.**
- The anointing is the power of the Holy Spirit in manifestation for ministry.
 - o **Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:18-19; 5:17; 24:49; John 7:37-39; Acts 1:8; 10:38.**

The primary point of the 5 virgins having the oil speaks of being prepared and ready and the others who did not acquire oil for their lamps were careless and foolish. A secondary application could be drawn from this parable, where those who had the oil could represent those who will be born again, as a result of having the Holy Spirit within them- **2 Corinthians 4:6-7.**

- Without the Holy Spirit within us, we would not be saved or be ready for the Lord's return.
 - o **Romans 8:9; 1 John 2:20.**
- In the parable, the words in verse 13, "*I tell you the truth, I don't know you*" are chilling words.
- There will be many people who will die in their sins, having never received Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Many of whom were very religious thinking they were right with God- deceived.
- **Pr. 14:12; Matthew 7:15-27; Luke 13:28; John 5:36-40; 8:23-24; Ro. 10:1-4; 1 Peter 4:17-19**

2 Timothy 3:5, "having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them."

C. Expecting and Prepared for His Return

Matthew 25:13, “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”

- This last sentence given by Jesus is the driving point of the whole parable.

Even though this parable speaks to the Jews during the Tribulation Period, and the Second Return of Jesus, it still has application to us in the Church today, as we wait for the catching away or the rapture.

1 Corinthians 15:35-58; 1 Th. 4:13-18.

- We too like the 5 virgins in this parable could find ourselves caught off guard and unprepared.
- No one knows the exact timing of the Second Advent, or the rapture of the Church.
 - o **Matthew 24:44, 50; Luke 12:40, 46; 1 Corinthians 15:35-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**
- But we can have a concept of it drawing near and being eminent.
 - o **Matthew 16:2-3; 24:32-35.**
- The message of staying sharp, alert and awake is mentioned throughout the New Testament.
- End times teaching is a very important aspect to our Christian faith- **Colossians 1:27.**
- It motivates us to stay faithful, diligent and obedient to the call and will of God for our lives.
 - o **Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1-8; Titus 2:13; 1 John 3:2-3.**

1 Thessalonians 5:4-8

But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

- The greatest danger for Christians today is to grow weary in doing good and give up.
 - o **Mt. 24:9-14; Galatians 6:9-10; 2 Timothy 2:1-13; Hebrews 6:10-11; 10:35-39; 12:1-4.**
- When Jesus gave the parable of the persistent widow, He made an amazing statement in reference to His returning. **Luke 18:8; 2 Chronicles 16:9.**

2 John 8

Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully.

- For Christians to fall asleep in the faith is to be caught up in the world system- distracted.
- It is a dangerous thing to have one foot in the world and one foot in the church.
- I'm talking about lukewarm or carnal Christians- **1 Corinthians 3:1-4; Revelation 3:16.**
- To persist in this state will render a person out of touch and oblivious to the Lord's return.
 - o **Romans 13:11-14; Revelation 3:3.**
- The wise and foolish servant in **Matthew 24:45-51**, showed the penalty of living in sin.
- Being asleep in the light, speaks of a spiritual dullness, apathy and lethargy.
- We are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, not mess with the things of God.
 - o **2 Corinthians 5:11; Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 12:28-29; 2 Peter 1:5-11.**

Mark 13:35-37

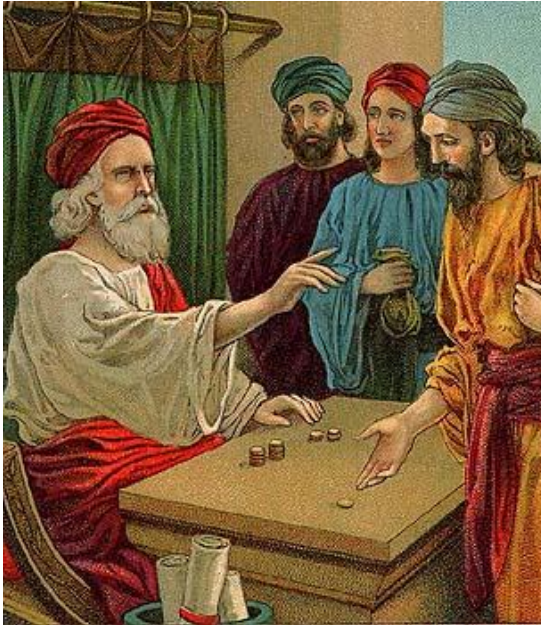
“Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back — whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”

Parable #30: The Ten Talents & Ten Minas

Reference: Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27

Theme: There is a Judgment or Accounting we Must all Face, the Criteria is Based on Faithful Service

Context: Folks were Thinking that the Kingdom of God or Millennium would come Immediately



He said: “A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas.’ Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘until I come back.’ “But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, ‘We don’t want this man to be our king.’ “He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it. “The first one came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned ten more.’ “‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’ “The second came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned five more.’ “His master answered, ‘You take charge of five cities.’ “Then another servant came and said, ‘Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of you,

because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.’ “His master replied, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? Why then didn’t you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?’ “Then he said to those standing by, ‘Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’ ““Sir,’ they said, ‘he already has ten!’ “He replied, ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away. But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them — bring them here and kill them in front of me.’”

Luke 19:12-27

The two parables of the “Ten Talents” and “Ten Minas” are very similar, so I have included them together, but they both still have some unique aspects that I will draw out for our discussion.

- Luke’s account was spoken before He got to Jerusalem and Matthew’s account was spoken after.
- The audience is the Jews, and the parable is most likely in reference to the Tribulation period of Matthew 24, and probably speaks of Tribulations saints (Jews/Gentiles) at the return of Jesus.
- However, there are universal principles of judgment and faithfulness to God that apply to us all.
- Jesus begins Luke’s account in reference to the people’s expectation concerning the timing of God’s Kingdom or Millennial reign being manifested on the earth immediately.

Luke 19:11

While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once.

A. Adam's Lease

Psalms 115:16, "The highest heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth he has given to man."

- By virtue of Creation in Genesis chapter one, the earth and the universe belongs to God- owner.
 - o **Psalms 24:1-2; 96:5; Isaiah 45:18.**
- When God created mankind, He gave them dominion and authority to rule over God's creation as the 'gods' of this world- **Genesis 1:26-28; Psalms 8:3-9; 82:6; John 10:34-35.**
- Unfortunately Adam turned over that dominion to Satan for the knowledge of evil- bad choice!
- **Genesis 3; Job 1:6-7; Luke 4:6; Ro. 8:19-21; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19; Rev. 12:9.**
- However, the period of time for man's dominion upon the earth was not to be indefinite.
- This concept of a probationary time frame for men and women to be born on this earth is what is coined as "Adam's Lease." Because man does not own the earth; his dominion is for a season.
- The time is short, this world in its present form is passing away- **1 Corinthians 7:29-31.**
- Even Satan and the demons realize this concept of a window of time- **Revelation 12:7-13.**

Matthew 8:29

"What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"

- Thank you Lord, this present evil time (**Luke 22:53**) is coming to an end!
- There is an end to sin and death; they will not perpetuate forever, Jesus will bring it to an end.
 - o **Daniel 9:26; Matthew 24:14; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28.**
- Jesus first came as a Lamb, but will return as a Lion to rule and reign.
- Jesus defeated Satan in his death, burial and resurrection 2000 years ago- **Colossians 2:15.**
- The devil is still for the time being, the god of this world system (**1 John 2:15-17**), but he has no dominion or authority over us- **Luke 10:19; Colossians 1:13.**

B. Millennial Reign of Jesus

In these passages: **Isaiah 11:1-9; 65:20-25** we see a glimpse of what it will be like in the Millennium.

- The Jewish Nation was anticipating the coming of their Messiah to usher in a 1,000 year reign.
- It would be a glorious time in Israel's history, the resurrection of the dead takes place, all her enemies are destroyed and the end of Satan's world system, sin and death- the end of the world.
- Based on Daniel's 70 weeks, 490 years, the end was at hand during Jesus time on earth.
- As a matter of fact, Jesus' crucifixion stopped the prophetic clock just 7 years short, yet to be fulfilled during the Tribulation Period in the future, just after we are raptured from the earth.
- But God had a surprise that no one knew about, it's referred to as the "Mystery" in the Epistles.
- God had a salvation plan for the rest of the world, not just the Jews- He wants all to be saved.
- When the Epistles refer to the "Mystery" it's not talking about something withheld from us.
- It's referring to truth hidden in the past, but now revealed in this Dispensation of Grace.
- **Ro. 16:25-27; Eph. 3:2-13; 5:22-33; Col. 1:24-29; 2:1-4; 1 Tim. 3:14-16; 1 Peter 1:10-12.**

Luke 21:24

They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Even after the resurrection, the disciples in the beginning misunderstood the timing of God's Kingdom. **Luke 19:11, 41-42; 24:21; John 18:36; Acts 1:6-8.**

- In Jesus' first advent, He came as a Lamb, but in the Second Advent He comes as a Lion.
 - o **John 1:29, 36; Revelation 5:5.**
- Jesus was the full embodiment of the Kingdom of God that He ushered in.
 - o **Matthew 3:1-3; 4:17; Luke 4:17-21; John 18:33-37; 1 Timothy 6:12-16.**

All that Jesus did is related to this claim that the Kingdom of God had dawned through His ministry.

- His healings were manifestations of the presence of the Kingdom.
- Now that Kingdom is within our spirit, and is manifested in the earth through our faith.
 - o **Matthew 6:10; 18:18 Luke 10:18-19; 17:20-21.**

Matthew 11:12 AMP

And from the days of John the Baptist until the present time, the kingdom of heaven has endured violent assault, and violent men seize it by force [as a precious prize — a share in the heavenly kingdom is sought with most ardent zeal and intense exertion].

Luke 11:20 AMP

"But if I drive out the demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has [already] come upon you."

- Well it's now been about two thousand years and counting since the resurrection of Jesus.
- This Millennial reign begins with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ- **Revelation 20:1-10.**
- However, right now the Kingdom of God is a spiritual Kingdom in our spirit by the Holy Spirit who dwells inside of us- **Ro. 8:23; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19; ; 5:5; Eph. 1:3-14.**
- Yes, one day the Kingdom of God will be a visible one when Jesus comes in physical form to rule and reign from Jerusalem, which becomes the capital of the world- **Acts 1:6-11.**
- In the meantime we are to fulfill the Great Commission and be looking for His coming.
 - o **Matthew 6:10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; Revelation 22:20.**

Luke 17:20-21

Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."

C. Given a Stewardship

So in Luke's account of this parable, the man of noble birth Jesus was talking about, was of course Himself. Jesus going to a distant country was speaking of heaven, only to return- **John 14:1-4.**

Luke 19:12

He said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return."

- Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords, who is forever praised!
 - o **John 18:33-39; Revelation 17:14; 19:16.**

Luke 19:13

“So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas.’ Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘until I come back.’”

Matthew 25:15-16

“To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.”

- A “mina” is a measurement of weight, referring to about a pound of money- **1 Kings 10:17**.
 - o There are sixty minas in one talent.
- A “talent” is the heaviest unit of weight (60 lbs) in the Hebraic system; often used to weigh gold, silver, iron, bronze and other commodities- **2 Samuel 12:30; 1 Kings 20:39**.
- The overall principle is stewardship with God’s grace upon our lives.
- Matthew’s account makes a distinction as to the amount, *“according to his ability.”*

This is a rather important consideration, as it points to God’s fairness and justice in how He holds us accountable. The more we have been entrusted, gifts, ability, knowledge etc. the more accountable.

Luke 12:47-48

“That servant who knows his master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”

- Like the parable of the bad steward who wasted his master’s possessions- **Luke 16:1-14**.
- God is not unjust, He gives us the grace to do what He has called us to do.
- Each one of God’s children has been given a trust, God’s grace in gift form to serve others.
 - o Romans 12:6, *“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.”*
- Just reading **Romans 12:3-8**, it is clear all believers have been blessed to be a blessing.

1 Peter 4:10-11

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

Notice the wording in the above passage, “each one” means every Christian has something to invest in others. No one is exempt from serving others with the grace God has given to each one of us.

- Likewise, those called to vocational five-fold ministry- **Heb. 13:17; James 3:1; 1 Pet. 5:1-4**.
 - o Ephesians 4:7, *“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.”*

Luke 19:13 in the King James version states, *“Occupy till I come.”* Other translations state, *“Put this money to work,” “Do business till I come”* or *“Buy and Sell with these while I’m gone.”*

- The more modern translations infer doing business, to trade so as to increase the investment.
- In other words to improve one’s worth by investing it into others, making the most of God’s grace given to us. Produce as much fruit as possible and increase the return for God’s glory.
- That means we need to be busy about the Lord’s business- doing the Lord’s work, all of us!

D. Jews Rejected their King

Luke 19:14, “But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, ‘We don’t want this man to be our king.’”

Just a side note in Luke’s account, remember that this parable was spoken to the Jews at that time. The parable may have been taken from a page in history around Jesus’ birth concerning Herod’s son, Archelaus. He had went to Rome to inherit the kingdom which his father, Herod the Great, had left to him. However, His brother, Antipas, supported by many of the leaders among the Jews, protested the claim, and rejected his claim to the throne. The Jews, knowing his character (**Matthew 2:22**), being a chip off the old block, sent an embassy of 50 men to Rome, to entreat Caesar Augustus “not” to confer the title on him, but they failed. Archelaus “received” the kingdom, and reigned in Judea in the place of his father. So this historical fact was “fresh” in the memory of the Jews, and so makes this parable that much more personal. Jesus is illustrating the overall national rejection by the Jews of His Lordship.

John 19:14-16

It was the day of Preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour. “Here is your king,” Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!” “Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked. “We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered. Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus.

John 1:11-13

He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

E. Settling of Accounts

Luke 19:15-19

“He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it. “The first one came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned ten more.’ ““Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’ “The second came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned five more.’ “His master answered, ‘You take charge of five cities.’”

Matthew 25:16-23

“The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.’ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ “The man with the two talents also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.’ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”

- We are going to examine this portion of the parable in light of the Judgment Seat of Christ.
- The first two servants, based on their own hard work and industry multiplied God's grace.
- It's important that we don't fall into the trap of comparison; God is looking for faithfulness.

Example, suppose Billy Graham who has won countless people to Jesus, was only 60% faithful to the grace of God entrusted to him and you were 70% faithful to a lesser amount of God's grace given to you.

- Just for discussion sake, who would receive the greater reward?
- The one who was more faithful, we can't take credit for God's grace for it is a gift from God.
- The labor, consecration, sacrifice and hard work for the Kingdom is our contribution.

1 Corinthians 3:5-8

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe — as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor.

So the first two servants in this parable were rewarded according to their overall loyalty, faithfulness and labor, invested into the deposit entrusted to them to multiply their master's money on his return.

- We all start out with the same foundation when we receive salvation, Jesus- **Romans 12:3.**
- After that, it's a matter of individual choices that determine what we build on it.
- One day we will give an account of what we did with our lives for Jesus- **Romans 14:9-12.**
- The gold, silver and costly stones speaks of demonstrations of faith, hope and love.
- The wood, hay and straw speaks of carnal, selfish, and sinful behavior.

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

- There is nothing wrong with looking forward to rewards from God, if they were not good then God would not be offering them- **Revelation 2:7, 17, 26-29; 3:5-6; 3:11-13, 21-22.**
- There is something about overcoming in Jesus- **1 John 2:13-14; 4:4; 5:4-5; Rev. 21:7.**
- There are crowns to receive from Jesus- **1 Cor. 9:25; Php. 4:1; 2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12.**
- So while the world is striving for something temporary, we aspire for something eternal!
- Greatest reward of all is bringing people to Jesus and investing God's Word & love into them
- Sharing in the Lord's joy of faithful service- **Php. 1:21-26; 2:1-7; 1 Th. 2:19; Hebrews 12:2**

Revelation 3:11,

"I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown."

2 John 8

"Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully."

- These verses infer that we have something to do with our rewards.

2 Corinthians 5:6-10, “Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”

- The Judgment Seat of Christ is not to determine if we are saved or not.
- It's to give an account of our lives as Christians in His service; receiving of rewards or not.
- Worst case scenario, like in **1 Corinthians 3:15**, we pass through the fire and get nothing.
- I believe what we will be judged on will be in accordance to our obedience to the Word.
 - o **Jeremiah 20:9; 23:29; Luke 24:32; John 12:48; Hebrews 12:28-29.**
- The key for us today is to live with eternity in mind, concerning everything we do.
- **Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 9:22-27; Php. 3:12-21; 2 Tim. 4:6-8; Heb. 4:13; 1 Pt. 4:17-19; 1 John 3:3.**
- As Luke's account puts it, I believe we will be working for Jesus during His Millennial Kingdom on the earth, an amazing honor indeed- **2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 20:6.**

F. The Cost of Doing Nothing

Luke 19:20-27

“Then another servant came and said, ‘Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.’ “His master replied, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? Why then didn’t you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?’ “Then he said to those standing by, ‘Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’ “‘Sir,’ they said, ‘he already has ten!’ “He replied, ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away.’”

Matthew 25:24-29

“Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’ “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. “‘Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.’”

- Some Christians may be of the belief that doing nothing is better than doing the wrong thing.
- Better to do something imperfectly than to do nothing perfectly!
- According to Jesus' parable, doing nothing with our Christian life is highly discouraged.
- If we see Salvation as only fire insurance and nothing more, we are missing out on so much.
- Once we get saved, we have the privilege of sharing our faith with others and serving the Body of Christ with God's gifts and grace in our lives.

I suppose the third servant believed he was doing his master of favor by simply returning what belonged to him, “Well at least I did not lose or spend it on myself.”

- This servant had two issues in play here- fear and a prejudice against his master as unjust.
- There is a certain amount of ingratitude and defiance in what he said- wrong attitude.
- Satan has lied to multitudes, defaming God’s character as a angry and harsh God.
- God is a Good God, and always will be- **Psalms 34:10; 84:11; John 10:10; James 1:16-17.**
- Fear is such a snare to the soul, can paralyze our faith- **Proverbs 29:25; Hebrews 10:39.**
- This false perception cost him entering into the joy of his master- what a waste.

- The response of his master was a scathing rebuke as to his laziness and wicked disposition.
- Unfortunately this kind of reception is what many Christians will experience at the Judgment Seat of Christ instead of those beautiful words, “Well done thou good and faithful servant.”
- We have to be on guard against spiritual laziness, it will cost us- **Hebrews 6:11-12.**
- God is a good God, but He is also fair, holy and just and requires our obedience/faithfulness.

The master in this parable retorted, that the least this servant could have done, was to put the money he had received on deposit so he could receive it back with interest.

- At a minimum, Christians can at least act like a Christian and be a salt and light to the world.
 - o **Matthew 5:13-16; 1 Peter 2:11-12; 2 Cor. 9:13; 1 Th. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 3:7; 5:10.**
- Sadly, many out of fear hide their faith in secret and live double lives- **Revelation 3:16.**
- God will judge people not merely for doing wrong, but for not doing the right things.
- So there is no excuse for doing nothing for God, and not investing His grace into others.
- Finally, we see that God rewards those who are willing and obedient- **Isaiah 1:19.**

The fact that the master took the one mina or talent from the third servant, reveals that everything we have, we have received from God. So we can’t claim anything as our own- **Psalms 16:2; Acts 17:28.**

John 3:27, “To this John replied, ‘A man can receive only what is given him from heaven.’”

1 Corinthians 4:7

For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

- Jesus talked about the measure of consideration directed toward hearing the Word.
- How much we appreciate, value, treasure and willingly accept- hunger and thirst for it.

Matthew 5:6, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

- We are not saved by good works, but we are saved unto good works for God’s glory.
 - o **Romans 2:5-11; Ephesians 2:8-10; James 2:14-26.**

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

G. The Worthless Servant

Matthew 25:30, “And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Luke 19:27, “But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them — bring them here and kill them in front of me.”

There appears to be two different outcomes of the third servant who buried what was entrusted to them. I believe both potential scenarios actually exist for the backslidden Christian.

1. Life and Death Consequences

- In Matthew’s account we see a clear reference to those who are cast into hell.
 - o **Matthew 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; Luke 13:28.**
- There are those in this world who reject God openly, and those who profess to know God, but have never received Jesus as their Lord and Savior and so are not saved.
 - o **Jude 1:3-19; Revelation 2:20-23.**

1 John 2:19

They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

Yet is it possible for the servant in Matthew and Luke’s accounts, be referring to a follower of God? Having been affiliated with his master as we are with Jesus. This servant knew his master’s will, but instead disobeyed his directive. If so can Christians then lose their salvation as this servant did?

- Those who believe in “Once Saved Always Saved” would not interpret the servant being cast into darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth as a Christian becoming lost.
- However, there are too many Scriptures that speak to the contrary; it can happen and it does.
- Certainly God is the ultimate judge as to who will lose their salvation, but it’s a consequence as stated in Matthew’s account.

1 Cor. 5:1-5; 11:27-34; 2 Timothy 2:11-13; Hebrews 6:4-9; 10:26-39; 2 Peter 2; 1 John 5:16-17.

- There are Biblical principles for us to live by concerning godly fear- reverential respect.
 - o **Pr. 10:27; 8:13; Ro. 11:22; 12:9; 1 Cor. 15:2; 2 Cor. 7:8-12; Php. 2:12; Col. 1:23; 1 Tim. 4:16; 1 Pet. 4:17-19; 2 Pet. 1:5-10; Heb. 3:12-14; 12:28-29.**
- So we don’t use grace as a license to sin or play with the things of God- which is dangerous.
 - o **Jude 4; Revelation 3:16.**
- There is such a thing as church discipline; imperative in order to remain a healthy Church.
 - o **Mt. 8:15-17; Acts 4:36 – 5:16; 1 Timothy 1:20; 1 Cor. 5; 11:27-34; 2 Th. 3:15.**
- I am not at all inferring that all backslidden Christians will lose their salvation.
- We see in **1 Corinthians 5:1-5 and 11:27-34** that these Christians would die prematurely if they failed to repent, but least they would have gone to heaven.
- However those who are mature believers and know what they are doing when they renounce the Lord, there is no repentance for them- **Hebrews 6:4-9.**

2. Countless Put to Death

Luke 19:27

“But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them — bring them here and kill them in front of me.”

I believe this statement in Luke’s account could have two applications. Unfortunately Israel on the most part persisted in unbelief and rejected Jesus as their Messiah 2000 years ago, as most still do today.

- So the first application was in 70 AD when Titus, the Roman general came and destroyed Jerusalem, the temple, killed thousands and took the rest as slaves- **1 Thessalonians 2:14-16.**

Luke 19:41-44

As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace — but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”

Luke 21:20-24

When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

- The second application could apply to the Second Advent of Jesus when He separates:
 - o The sheep from the goats- **Matthew 25:31-46.**
 - o The wheat from the weeds- **Matthew 13:36-43.**
 - o The good fish from the bad fish- **Matthew 13:47-50.**
- What will happen when Jesus returns, to those who reject Him as Lord, is they are put to death. Those Tribulation saints who were not martyred go on living into the Millennium.
 - o **Matthew 24:40-41; Luke 17:34-35; Revelation 19:11-21.**

Matthew 13:51-53

“Have you understood all these things?” Jesus asked. “Yes,” they replied. He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.” When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there.

