

Devotional Studies in the Gospel of Luke

HARVESTING DEEP TRUTH FROM SOME OF GOD'S GREAT TEACHERS:

Ironside, G. Cambell Morgan, Edersheim, Kelly, Coates, Mitchell, Darby, Grant,
MacIntosh, Marsh, McGee, Morris, Ryle, Scofield, St. John, Trench, Westcott

Old Harvesters Bible Study

Volume II

*"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me
cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27).*

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X. HIS AUTHORITY

Questions on Luke 8:4-40

FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

REVIEW: Luke 7:11-8:3 by reading the passage and the Lesson 9 Notes, looking up all Scripture references.

MEMORY:

REVIEW: Luke 19:10; 24:19; 2:49; 3:21-22; 4:14; 5:32; 6:435; 7:22-23

LEARN: Luke 8:18

1. What blessed your heart as you reviewed Luke 7:11-8:3?
2. List the main events and topics of that passage.

I. HIS WORD PRODUCES THE HARVEST

READ: Luke 8:4-15; Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Isaiah 6:9-10.

DO QUESTIONS: 3-9.

READ NOTES: Pages 3-7.

3. The Lord Jesus often used parables. Why? What is a parable?
4. What details do the Matthew and Mark accounts add to the parable?
5. Think about the spiritual meaning of the parable. What does each thing represent? Is the parable about different kinds of

seed? Explain.

6. Give a practical example of each type described here, perhaps from your own experience or that of friends.

7. Do you have a tendency to be like any of these types?

8. How, specifically, this week can you avoid being the wrong type and how can you do what verse 15 says?

9. In verse 10, there is a quotation from Isaiah 6:9-10. What is the context of the quotation from Isaiah? Is God saying that He really does not want some people to understand His Word? Explain. (See also 1 Corinthians 2:9-10, 14.)

II. HIS WORD LIGHTS THE ROAD

READ: Luke 8:11-21

DO QUESTIONS: 10-11

READ NOTES: Pages 7-9

10. Verses 16-18 contain strong warnings. Think about this in reference to yourself. How can what you have be taken away from you and how can you prevent this?

11. What does Mark add that Luke omits? (Mark 4:21-25)

III. HIS WORD FORMS THE FAMILY

READ: Luke 4:19-21

DO QUESTION: 12

READ NOTES: Pages 9-10

12. How does verse 21 fit in with the whole passage, especially verses 11-21?

IV. HIS WORD STILLS THE STORM

READ: Luke 4:22-25; Matthew 8:23-34; Mark 4:35-5:20

DO QUESTIONS: 13-15

READ NOTES: Pages 10-13

13. The two incidents are put side by side in the three gospels. Do you see any connection between them? Explain if you do.

14. Think of verses 22-25 in terms of stormy circumstances in your life. How does this incident encourage you to change your attitudes?

15. In verse 25, "What manner of" can be translated "from what country." The same phrase is used in 2 Peter 3:11 and 1 John

3:1. Do you see any spiritual and/or practical application? (See also Leviticus 18:2-4.)

V. HIS WORD FREES THE CAPTIVE

READ: Luke 4:26-40

DO QUESTIONS: 16-19

READ NOTES: Pages 13-15

16. What was the man of Gadara like before and after his meeting with Christ?

17. What interesting details do Matthew and Mark add to the incident at Gadara?

18. Why did the Gadarenes tell the Lord Jesus to leave their country?

19. What did the healed man want to do? What did the Lord Jesus tell him to do? Can you apply this to your heart in any way?

(Personal): What is the Lord saying to you in this section? Has your heart been drawn closer to the One who stills the storms and changes lives? What kind of ground are you?

X. HIS AUTHORITY

(Luke 8:4-40)

*Who is wise? Let him give heed to these things;
and consider the loving kindnesses of the Lord! (Psalm 107:43)*

***What boat can sink when Thou, dear Lord, art in it?
What heart can faint that resteth on Thy will?***

—Amy Carmichael
Gold Cord, p. 258

A bumper sticker reads, "Wise men still seek Him!" Who are today's wise ones? They are like the people we have been looking at in Luke's Gospel, people who justify God by hearing His Word and staking their lives upon it. The foolish of the world have always looked away from Him in disbelief. But the wisehearted seek Him still.

All through Luke we have the contrast, and now the Galilean ministry of Christ has reached a turning point. No longer will the Lord speak in plain language to the crowds. He will teach in parables and leave them unexplained. Only to puzzled disciples who seek Him will He unfold the meanings of parables. To the wisehearted He will give more light. Thus Christ turns to these and begins the new phase of His work.

The homely scenes of Luke have followed one upon another, and we come now into the eighth chapter. Over against a backdrop of Galilean texture stands the commanding figure of Christ. He speaks and the words have penetrating force. If we have ears to hear them today, they will reach into our lives and meet each need.

We shall be convinced that *His authority, His Word* alone can

I. PRODUCE THE HARVEST (vv. 4-15)

II. LIGHT THE ROOM (vv. 16-18)

III. FORM THE FAMILY (vv. 19-21)

IV. STILL THE STORM (vv. 22-25)

V. FREE THE CAPTIVE (vv. 26-40)

Galilean lake, shores, and distant mountains form the background. The people throng around Christ, and He speaks to them in two parables. Before hearing the two parables of this chapter and viewing the interconnected scenes, we should answer questions about parables themselves: What are they? Why did Christ use them?"

What Is a Parable?

A parable is formed from the materials of daily life to illustrate heavenly truth.

"For earth and heaven are twin-parts of His work. . . . As the same law prevails in them, they form a grand unity

MEMORY (Luke 8:18): Therefore take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.

in their relation to the Living God” who reigns over all (Edersheim, p. 582).

Secondly, the parable in every part must present the complete picture of the spiritual truth to which it points. Every part of it must contribute to the whole. Not only in one feature but in its whole bearing, it has its counterpart in the spiritual reality.

To summarize, then, a parable is an illustration which (1) is taken from everyday life, which (2) points to a spiritual reality or truth, and which (3) in every feature points to the spiritual counterpart.

Why Did Christ Use Parables?

From this time on, Christ did not speak to the multitudes without parables (Matthew 13:34). When His disciples asked Him why, He gave a twofold reason (Matthew 13:10-17). The parable was given as a test of the hearer: (1) If he had no real interest in the truth, he would go on his way, paying no further attention. (2) If he was concerned, he would ask the meaning and receive the explanation.

“So the Lord Jesus used this parabolic teaching in order to make clear things that He wanted them to understand and to challenge them. But where there was no exercise of soul, the parables would only serve to harden them” (Ironside, p. 243).

Now we look at the two parables in chapter eight and the events which follow.

I. HIS WORD PRODUCES THE HARVEST **(vv. 4-15)**

One day, the Lord Jesus with His disciples goes out from the house in Capernaum to the lovely lakeshore region. The crowds find Him there and throng around Him. As they press Him to the water’s edge, He boards a fishing ship and sits down to speak to them in parables (Matthew 13:1-2).

“We can almost picture to ourselves the Savior seated in the prow of the boat, as He points His hearers to the rich plain over against Him, where the young corn, still in the first green of its growing, is giving promise of harvest” (Edersheim, p. 586).

The Lord begins to speak about seed, soils, and harvest-time. Perhaps even as he talks they can see a sower out on one of the distant slopes.

Leaving the village where he lives, the sower goes out to the fields to sow his seed. In that day he might sow it by hand or he might put the seed into a sack with holes and lay the sack on the back of his ox, guiding the animal up and down the field. In this way the seed falls, some of it on the footpath, to be picked up quickly by the birds; some of it on rocky ground, where roots cannot go deep; some among brambles, which choke out the new growth; and much upon good ground, to produce an abundant harvest.

The Lord readily catches attention with an illustration like this. The people can relate to it. But will they want to understand

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its significance? He calls upon them to think about it: *He who has ears to hear, let him hear!* The true disciple has ears like that. When he does not understand, he goes to the right source for the answer. *His disciples question Him as to what this parable might be (v. 9).* Christ has just said to them, while you have the opportunity to hear, by all means *listen*.

The hearer has a responsibility. Christ underlines this fact with a quotation from Isaiah, fully given in Matthew 13:14-15, partially here in Luke. There the people had closed their eyes and hardened their hearts to God's Word; and the Lord allowed them to remain in that hardened state. We are reminded of God's dealings with Pharaoh who broke his promise to Moses after the early plagues were terminated. His repeated willful hardening of his heart became a fixed hardening (cf. Exodus 8:32; 9:12). It is the hearer's responsibility *not* to harden his heart against the Word and will of God (Psalm 95:7-11; Hebrews 3:7-8).

The multitudes, like their Jewish leaders are doing just that—willfully continuing to be deaf and blind to the person and work of Christ. Indeed, they are blaspheming God by ascribing His work to the devil (Luke 11:14-36). Because of this sin, they have become spiritually insensitive. They hear the outward form of the teaching, but they cannot perceive its inner truth.

The parable normally would arouse the interest of people and open their minds to receive the truth, but it has the opposite effect now and becomes the judgment of God upon their stubborn blindness. In fact, this first parable teaches just this; and

it is therefore the key to all parabolic teaching (Mark 4:13). It warns them not to harden their own hearts, lest God move in judgment to fix the hardness there.

Christ explains the parable to those who ask. He Himself is the *Sower*, and He is going forth to sow; He is beginning a new work.

“Israel had been God's vineyard, planted once and enclosed and nurtured by God's unforgetting love,” yet had failed to bring forth fruit. Now there would be a new work in new fields and a new kind of plant (Grant, p. 137). See Isaiah 5:1-7; Romans 11:25.

“There is not now the planting of vines or fig trees, but what better suits the character of work among the Gentiles—the broadcast sowing of seed . . . John 12:24” (Grant, p. 137).

His work is to cast the seed. The field can be the best kind of ground; but if there is to be new life, the seed must be sown. He is the Sower who goes forth to sow His seed.

8:11. The seed is the Word of God.

No seed is so fertile and potentially fruitful as this seed. It is *“my Word,”* He says in Isaiah 55—seed for sowing. It will not return empty, but it will accomplish that for which it is sent (Isaiah 55:10-11). It will produce the abundant harvest which the sower expects. Abundant, life-giving power is in this seed.

But the seed *tests the soil*, measuring how receptive it will be. Hearing, considering

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the spiritual ramifications, thrusts an urgency on the hearer. The fault does not lie with the seed if there is no fruit. It does not lie with the Sower who scatters the seed or the speaker who heralds the message. His appeal, even the appeal of the Sower, can be frustrated by a hardened heart.

So this becomes a parable about the different kinds of ground—various heart responses to the Word of God. So the Word of God *tests our hearts*. Every truth in His Word must be either accepted or rejected; like seed sown in different soils, the Word enters hearts of the hearers (Mark 4:15).

“Three sorts of ground were disappointing: the wayside—trampled; the rock—no depth of earth; the thorns—choking” (Morgan, p. 109).

Look at each of these three.

(1). **The footpath**, hard, trampled by the traffic of the world—this is the hard, unreceptive heart. The truth has been given to the conscience. But the “god of this world,” represented by the *birds* in the parable, quickly blinds the mind (2 Corinthians 4:2-4). Conscience commends the truth, but that is not faith **“in which always the personal will is concerned. Conviction is not acceptance. The soul may tremble, Felix-like, before the truth, and yet refuse it (Acts 24:22-26). The seed after all lies outside; and now comes Satan’s work—the god of this world blinding the minds of those that believe not, Satan catching away that which was sown in the heart, but which the heart has not accepted”** (Grant, p. 138).

(2). **The bedrock** covered by a little

soil, hardpan—this is the one who responds emotionally, *with joy*, but superficially. There is no full apprehension. He does not count the cost, and he follows along for awhile, but falls away *in the time of temptation*.

(3). **The thorny ground**—the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life choke out the growth of the seed. **“Life will hold just so much, and these people fill their lives with so many things that there is no room for spiritual fruit”** (Morris, p. 152).

Thorns are a symbol of the curse of the old creation (Genesis 3:17-18); and the old nature will hinder growth in us, too. Fruit is no good if it is not ripened and mature. Immature fruit or no fruit at all—this is the disappointing result of seed falling upon three kinds of unreceptive ground.

I should ask myself, what kind of ground am I? After hearing a message, do I ask what the Lord has in it for me? Is there a superficial enjoyment of the Word, but no godly exercise of heart—surface enthusiasm, but not a real work in the heart?

What are the things that would hinder the work of the Spirit, that would choke out new growth?

I should always be asking, “How am I hearing the Word of God?”

It is not all hopeless. The trampled footpath, the hard ground, can be broken up. Rocks can be broken. Thorns can be pulled out. The desert can blossom like a rose.

“So those who go out, bearing precious seed, shall come again, bringing

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their sheaves with them; and they go out knowing that there will be all kinds of hearers, but they are never to speak of any as hopeless” (Morgan, p. 109).

There is great hope that the seed will fall on good ground, and Luke has in mind an abundant harvest—one hundredfold (v. 15). We should not consider anything less than this, either.

The seed falling into the *honest and good heart* lodges in the heart **“exercised in self-judgment, for everyone is dishonest until he repents and acknowledges that he is a sinner. A good heart appreciates goodness as seen in the Friend of sinners”** (Coates, p. 106).

“Holding it fast” means treasuring the Word in our hearts and obeying it. The result is *“fruit with steadfastness,”* consistent growth and fruit-bearing.

“The fruit here spoken of is the fruit of the Spirit. Repentance toward God, faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ, holiness of life and character, prayerfulness, humility, charity, spiritual-mindedness—these are the only satisfactory proofs that the seed of God’s word is doing its proper work in our souls. Without such proofs, our religion is vain, however high our profession. It is no better than sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Christ has said, ‘I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit’ (John 15:16)” (Ryle).

If we cherish the Word of Christ, this will be our goal—much fruit for God.

His Word received by willing hearts produces an abundant harvest. There will be fruit for God. Here also is a testimony for all to see, shining like a light.

II. HIS WORD LIGHTS THE ROOM **(vv. 16-18)**

A fruitful life is a testimony to a darkened world. The Christian is meant to shine in the world like light: Men see and wonder at the life that produces the fruit of the Spirit—*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control* (Galatians 5:22-23). These things are the exact opposite of the works of darkness (Galatians 5:19-21).

“Now it is the property of light to be utterly distinct from darkness. The least spark in a dark room can be seen at once. Of all things created, light is the most useful. It fertilizes. It guides. It cheers. It was the first thing called into being. Without it, the world would be a gloomy blank. Are we true Christians? Then behold again our position and its responsibilities!” (Ryle).

Now Luke gives the parable of the lamp to illustrate this truth. This is the kind of lamp made of metal or pottery “which many of us have often seen in pictures or in museums, the bowl of which is filled with olive oil, and a wick protrudes through the spout. When this wick is lighted, the lamp is placed upon a lampstand, or in some other prominent position, in order to illumine the house” (Ironsides, p. 249).

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No one hides the lamp under a container or a bushel basket or under a bed.

“No one lighteth a lamp and puts it under a bushel; but supposing he does, what will happen? One of two things: Either the bushel will put the lamp out, or the lamp will set fire to the bushel” (Maclaren as quoted in Morgan’s *Matthew*, p. 49).

The container and the bed stand for hindrances. The container, used for measuring, may indicate the cares of the business world. The bed may remind of sloth and laziness.

“Many Christians, I fear, have hidden their lights under a bushel. They have allowed their business to so occupy them that they have failed to witness for Christ as they should. . . . I am always so thankful when I hear people say of some of my brethren who are engaged in various commercial lines, ‘I have known Mr. So-and-So for years, and I could trust him anywhere; he carries his Christianity into his business.’ This is letting one’s light shine for God in his daily life. A professed Christian who tries to carry on his business without giving Christ the rightful place in his life is a failure.

“Now the bed, of course, speaks of taking one’s ease. Have we not known many like that? They are interested in the things of God so long as those things do not interfere with their own comfort. . . .

“It is so easy to hide one’s light under the bed and excuse oneself on the ground of physical weariness. Many might have far more active participation in the things of Christ if it were not

for slothfulness. . . .

“It is a shame that Christians are so slack in manifesting devotion to Christ. In studying Chinese years ago, I noticed that one of the Chinese characters for ‘evil’ is made up in this way: the upper part is for that which is secondary, and the lower part is the ideogram for ‘heart.’ The meaning is that when that which is highest is given secondary place, it results in evil. May we not all challenge our hearts as to whether we give Christ the first place and make the things of God our immediate aim; or whether, after all, we think first of our own comforts and put the things of God in secondary place” (Ironsides, pp. 250-252).

We need to live in the light of the Judgment Seat of Christ. In that day *“nothing is hidden that shall not become evident, nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light”* (Luke 8:17).

When we stand before Christ, *“each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work”* (1 Corinthians 3:13ff; cf. 1 Corinthians 5:10).

We should keep this day before our eyes and let it affect how we live.

The warning is solemn, tying this parable with the previous one. We are to “take care how we listen” (v. 18).

8:18. “Therefore, take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.”

MEMORY (Luke 8:18): Therefore take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.

“If we use what God gives, it will increase. . . If we do not, we will lose even what we think we have. This is total loss” (Morris, p. 153).

We can be spiritual paupers and remain unconscious of the condition. The Laodiceans were examples of this, saying, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” when in God’s sight they were “wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked” (Revelation 3:17-18). Such is the one who does not hear and heed the Word of God. It is a serious warning.

***“For we must share if we would keep
That good thing from above:
Ceasing to give, we cease to have;
Such is the law of love.”***

— R.C.Trench
quoted in MacDonald, p. 214

How do we hear the Word of God? Does it come to us in its final authority? The measure of what we will have to give to others is governed by the measure in which first we feed on Christ.

Christ illuminates the one who heeds His Word. His Word shines forth through this one to all who are in darkness. At the same time, Christ is bringing us into a new relationship with Himself.

III. HIS WORD FORMS THE FAMILY (vv. 19-21)

Seed sowing produces a new generation. The one who heeds His Word and does it comes into a spiritual relationship which is closer than any natural tie. Yield-

ing by faith to the authority of Christ brings one into the very household of God (Ephesians 2:8, 19). Luke now uses an incident to illustrate this fact and thereby summarizes the two parables.

As the Lord is teaching, He is interrupted with the news that His relatives, unable to press through the crowd, are wishing to see Him. He graciously uses the untimely break to drive home His point: Who are My relatives?

8:21. “My mother and My brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”

What words of encouragement these are to every believer. It cheers our hearts to hear Him express such tender affection for His true disciples. We are more precious in His eyes than we are in our own.

“Mark how He speaks of every one who does the will of His Father in heaven. He says, ‘the same is my brother, and sister, and mother’ (Matthew 12:50 KJV). What gracious words these are! Who can conceive the depth of our dear Lord’s love toward His relations according to the flesh? It was a pure, unselfish love. It must have been a mighty love, a love that passes man’s understanding.

“Yet here we see that all His believing people are counted as His relations. He loves them, feels for them, cares for them, as members of His family, bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh (Ephesians 5:30”. (Ryle)

The Word of God forms us into His family.

MEMORY (Luke 8:18): Therefore take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.

Those born into His family by faith bear the likeness of the Lord Jesus. His purpose is that we should more and more be conformed to His image.

Circumstances of life and the study of His Word and obedience to Christ are all meant to conform us to Himself, to make us more like the Lord Jesus (Romans 8:28-29; 2 Corinthians 3:18). The new generation is morally like Christ. His kin have the mind of Christ.

Hearing His Word and doing it describes the life of the bondservant. It expresses the mind of Christ, who did always those things that pleased the Father (John 8:29). We are to "let this mind be in us" (Philippians 2:1-15). It means serving Christ with a heart of love, like the little band of women at the beginning of this chapter in Luke. To *do* His Word is to minister to Christ.

"The world can understand good works, but to do something purely to minister to Him is another matter. For instance, He said, 'Do this in remembrance of Me.' That act of love means very little to the world, but it means much to Him" (Coates).

The bondservant of Christ gladly chooses this kind of life.

If we choose this kind of life, we will meet opposition. Satan's forces will be hurled against us to deflect us from this course. But even Satanic opposition must yield to the authority of Christ. This is what He will next teach His own disciples.

IV. HIS WORD STILLS THE STORM (vv. 22-25)

**"Master, the tempest is raging! The billows are tossing high!
The sky is o'ershadowed with blackness; No shelter or help is nigh;
Carest Thou not that we perish? How canst Thou lie asleep,
When each moment so madly is threat'ning a grave in the angry deep?"**
**"The winds and the waves shall obey My will.
Peace, be still! Peace be still!
Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed sea, or demons, or men, or whatever it be,
No water can swallow the ship where lies the Master of ocean and earth and skies;
They all shall sweetly obey My will;
Peace, be still! Peace, be still!
They all shall sweetly obey My will;
Peace, peace, be still."**

— Mary A. Baker

The Lord and His disciples are crossing the lake in the boat. From the high eastern mountains, one of those frequent, violent windstorms has suddenly swept down upon them, waves swamping the ship. Meanwhile, the Lord is sleeping. Experienced Galilee boatmen though they are, the disciples have never seen a tempest rage like this one. In panic, they cry to the Lord for help. He arises and rebukes the storm with a word. Immediately the surface is as smooth as glass, reflecting sun and cloudless blue. Now he turns to His own with gentle reproof. *"What has happened to your faith?"*

MEMORY (Luke 8:18): Therefore take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.

“What a vivid picture we have here of the hearts of thousands of believers! How many have faith and love enough to forsake all for Christ’s sake and follow Him whithersoever He goes, and yet are full of fears in the hour of trial! How many have grace enough to turn to Jesus in every trouble, crying, ‘Lord, save us,’ and yet not grace enough to lie still, and believe in the darkest hour that all is well. Truly believers have reason indeed to be ‘clothed with humility’” (Ryle).

We see both Christ’s humanity and deity in this incident. He was asleep when the storm descended. At His word, the storm went to sleep. Only God has this power.

It is evening of that day of new teaching. With parables the Lord has probed hearts about the kind of response they give to His Word. How do they hear and receive His teaching? What kind of soil does the seed find in their hearts? Now we may perceive **“the internal connection between the teaching of that day and the miracle of that evening.”** We learn that response to His teaching always depends upon one’s view of His Person. How we see Him affects how we hear His Word. On this day, teaching and miracles are intertwined; and both are quite novel—**“the teaching by parables, and then the help in a parable”**—and both show that everything depends **“on the view taken of the Person of the Christ”** (Edersheim, pp. 600-01).

This night, they are “in *the* ship,” the definite article of Mark 4:36 marking it as the well-known boat which always carried them. It might be that belonging to the

sons of Jonas or Zebedee—**“the well known boat, which was always ready for His service, whether as pulpit, resting place, or means of journeying. . . . In the stern of the ship, on the low bench where the steersman sometimes takes rest, was pillowed the head of Jesus. Weariness, faintness, hunger, exhaustion, asserted their mastery over His true humanity. He, Whom earliest apostolic testimony proclaimed to have been in ‘the form of God,’ slept. . . .”**

Always in the Gospel records **“every deepest manifestation of His Humanity is immediately attended by the highest display of His Divinity, and assuredly, no narrative could be more consistent with the fundamental assumption that He is the God-Man”** (Edersheim, pp. 599-600).

“And there arose a great storm. . . . he arose. . . . and there was a great calm” (Mk. 4:37-39).

“We know that the disciples need not have been afraid, they need not have disturbed our Lord’s rest; but something I had never thought of before came to me yesterday, as I pictured that tossing boat and those frightened men and the resting Lord. Do we never do just what they did? He is resting in His love, in the silence of love.

“Do not we, His lovers, sometimes break into the sweetness of that silence with a fear, a cry that is almost ‘Carest Thou not?’

“No one paragraph, even in our Bible, shows life as a whole. There are other aspects, I know, but this, which is

MEMORY (Luke 8:18): Therefore take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.

perhaps the very innermost—the heart of the heart of love—is something we are meant to look at often, and far more, to live.

“There is a silence which can be only met by silence. ‘Silence is not a gap to be filled. It is the greatest of all preparations, and the climax of all adoration.’

He will be silent in His love.

Surely towards God silence becometh my soul,

Surely towards God be thou silent, my soul.

“Let the storm beat as it will outside; within, let there be peace, so that undisturbed He may rest in His love (Zech. 3:17 margin).”

“And now this translation which is quite fresh to me: ‘He will renew thee with His love.’ Are they not dear words? ‘He will rest in His love.’

“‘He will renew thee with His love’”

—Amy Wilson Carmichael
Edges of His Ways pp. 142-43).

Thou art the Lord Who slept upon the
pillow,
Thou art the Lord Who calmed the fu-
rious sea,
What matter beating wind and tossing
billow
If only we are in the boat with Thee?
Hold us in quiet through the age-long
minute
While Thou art silent and the wind is
shrill;
Can the boat sink while Thou, dear
Lord, art in it?
Can the heart faint that waiteth on Thy
will?

—Amy Wilson Carmichael
Gold Cord, p. 258

When the Lord boarded that ship, “*Himself* and His disciples,” He knew just what He was doing. He knew all about the storm that was coming. He put Himself into that position intentionally—to be with them in it. We need to know the Person who is with us. As for the disciples, the previous events had been enough to show who He was, and yet they thought that they could drown with Him in the boat.

“A dreadful storm burst upon Stephen, but he had no thought of perishing. His last hour was one of calm and holy triumph, though there was no intervention outwardly on his behalf (Acts 7:54-60). . . .

“His servant Peter had learned the lesson when he slept in prison (Acts 12). A great storm was then breaking on the little ship, for James had been killed with the sword and Peter was put in prison with every probability, humanly speaking, of being put to death.

“But such was his confidence in the Lord that he slept, though there was no sign as yet of any divine intervention on his behalf. . . .

“Such is the Lord’s tender compassion that He often quiets a storm, as He did in the Scripture before us. He will assuredly not fail in consideration for our weakness, but He would like our hearts to be filled with the consciousness of what we have in *Himself*.

“He will not always change the circumstances, but He overrules them for the good of His saints, and in view of His testimony” (Coates, pp. 108-09).

He Himself is with us in the storm.

MEMORY (Luke 8:18): Therefore take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.

“In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not” (Isaiah 30:15).

“The Lord would not have us to doubt that He is with us. It is said of Israel that they tempted Jehovah by saying, ‘Is Jehovah among us or not?’ If we say that, we tempt Him; we have called His love in question. Some of the last words of the Lord to His own were, ‘These things have I spoken to you that in Me ye might have peace’” (Coates, p. 108).

“But be of good courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

May we then be held in quiet “through the age-long minute.”

V. HIS WORD FREES THE CAPTIVE (vv. 26-40)

The boat reaches the other side of the lake, and the education of the disciples continues.

They touch shore in the region of Gadara, or Gerasa. There they meet again violent Satanic opposition. They land in the late evening. The moon casts pale light upon the weird scene—the naked, howling demoniac coming at them from the tombs, the herd of swine feeding on the high cliffs steeply shadowing the shoreline.

All of this is a picture of the intense spiritual darkness of the natural man. Man is under the authority of darkness and resistant to the message of redemption. Like this bound one, man is under the shadow of death. He has a lawless freedom—

nobody could bind the demoniac—and utter restlessness. He is bent on self-injury and self-torture. So is the natural man—captive to his own lusts.

Only the Word of Christ can free the captive. The demons are forced to recognize the power which is greater than theirs. The only hope for deliverance—in Gadara and in our lives—is the “*exceeding greatness of His power*” (*Ephesians 1:19*). This is His mighty resurrection power which works in us. “*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death*” (*Romans 8:2*). And the law of sin and death no longer has a claim.

The result is that the man is transformed. The restless one is resting, sitting. The one who was naked is now clothed. Just so do we wear the righteousness of Christ as a garment—only the best robe for the prodigal. And he has spiritual intelligence. He is in his right mind; he can see conditions as God would have him see them.

The demonic beings, real beings, who had usurped control over the man’s mind and tongue and actions, forced the Gadarene into violence. He had the strength to break the chains and terrorize the entire community. Caged in this man were enough demons to destroy nearly 2000 pigs (*Mark 5:13*).

Modern critics accuse the Lord of a casual disregard for the property rights of other people. But these Jews had no legal right to keep swine. The eating of pork was forbidden by the law.

Look at the attitude of the city. Two thousand swine or one soul? They said it was too big a price. They loved sows more than souls. They ask Him to leave. This is

MEMORY (Luke 8:18): Therefore take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.

just like the world, which is troubled by the presence of Christ. They were used to the power of Satan and did not want to pay the price of Jehovah's presence. The cost was too great. But what is the cost of disobedience? Much higher.

**Rabbi, be gone!
Thy powers bring loss to us and ours.
Our ways are not as Thine;
Thou lovest men, we swine.**

**Oh, get Thee hence, Omnipotence,
And take this fool of Thine!
His soul? What care we for his soul?
What good to us that Thou hast made
him whole,
Since we have lost our swine?**

**And Christ went sadly.
He had wrought for them a sign
Of Love, and Hope, and Tenderness di-
vine;
They wanted—swine.**

**Christ stands without your door
and gently knocks;
But if your gold, or swine, the entrance
blocks,
He forces no man's hold—He will de-
part,
And leave you to the treasures of your
heart.**

--John Oxenham
Bees in Amber, p. 56

"A man is delivered from the demons by Jesus; and a community is delivered over to its greed by Jesus, because it refused Him. He left them" (Morgan, p. 114).

The Lord would not continue there. As

He enters the ship, the healed man implores to go with Him, but Christ sends him home. That is the hardest place to witness. He might have asked, why should I be driven back from my new happiness?

"So, perhaps, should we have reasoned and spoken. So too often do we reason and speak, as regards ourselves or those we love. Not so He Who appoints alike our discipline and our work. To go back, now healed, to his own, and to publish there, in the city—nay through Decapolis—how great things Jesus had done for him, such was henceforth to be his life work. In this there would be both safety and happiness" (Edersheim, p. 614).

39. And he departed, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

Later, when the Lord returned to Decapolis, He found a welcome. The healed man had prepared the way for Him (Mk. 7:31-37). Such is the result of the testimony of one captive set free by the Word of the Lord!

**HIS AUTHORITY, HIS WORD,
ALONE CAN:**

**--PRODUCE FRUIT IN MY LIFE
--ENLIGHTEN MY UNDER-
STANDING
--BRING ME INTO HIS FAMILY
--CONTROL ALL MY CIRCUM-
STANCES FOR GOOD
--FREE ME FROM BONDAGE**

DO I BOW TO HIM?

MEMORY (Luke 8:18): Therefore take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.

“Who is wise? Let him give heed to these things; and consider the loving kindnesses of the Lord!” (Psalm 107:43).

“Furnishing SEED to the sower and BREAD to the eater: so shall my WORD be!” (Isaiah 55:10-11).

MEMORY (Luke 8:18): Therefore take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.

XI. RICHER BY THE DOZEN

Questions on Luke 8:41-9:17

FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Share something that blessed your heart from the notes of the last lesson.
2. Give the main events of this section (Luke 8:41-9:17) with references.

I. A DOZEN YEARS

MEMORY (optional): Review Luke 19:10; 24:19; 2:49; 3:21-22; 4:14; 5:32; 6:45; 7:22-23; 8:18.

LEARN: Luke 9:23-24

DO QUESTIONS: 3-10

READ: Luke 8:41-56; Matthew 9:18; Mark 5:21-43; Lev. 15:25-27

READ NOTES: Pages 18-24

3. What details do Matthew and Mark give that Luke omits?
4. Consider the woman. What was her condition as far as the law was concerned?
5. How does her condition physically and her response to the Lord picture our condition spiritually? (See Heb. 11:6; 1 John 1:7,9).
6. Why do you think the Lord brought her

into the public eye?

7. Death and sleep: Can you find other places in Scripture where death is compared with sleep?

8. Some teach that when we die, our souls sleep until the Lord's second coming. Can you disprove this teaching from Scripture?

9. What did the Lord Jesus say Jairus's daughter needed after she was raised from the dead?

10. What spiritual application from these two miracles do you see? (See Rom. 6:4; Eph. 2:5; 1 Pet. 2:2; 5:2.)

II. A DOZEN MEN

READ: Luke 9:1-11; Matt. 10:15; Mark 6:7-13

DO QUESTIONS: 11-15

READ NOTES: Pages 24-26

11. Before the Lord sent His disciples out, what did He instruct them to do?

12. What do you think was the reason be-

MEMORY (optional): Luke 9:23-24: And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it."

hind each instruction?

13. Is there someone to whom you should witness and carry out some of these instructions? Explain.

14. Why was Herod perplexed?

15. What answers are suggested to the question as to who the Lord Jesus really is? Can you give a reason which might lie behind each of these three suggestions by the people?

III. A DOZEN BASKETS

READ: Luke 9:12-17; Matt. 14:13-21;
Mark 6:32-44; John 6:1-14

DO QUESTIONS: 16-19

READ NOTES: Pages 26-28

16. What details do Matthew, Mark and John include that Luke does not?

17. What lessons do you learn from this incident?

18. Contrast the attitude of the Lord Jesus and that of His disciples.

19. Are we to think only of physical food? Compare John 4:32; 6:22-59; Jer. 15:16; Job 23:12.

John 4:32—

John 6:22-59—which see.

Jeremiah 15:16—

Job 23:12—

MEMORY (optional): Luke 9:23-24: And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it."

XI. RICHER BY THE DOZEN

(Luke 8:41-9:17)

*“Test me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts,
if I will not open for you the windows of heaven,
and pour out for you a blessing,
that there shall not be room enough to receive it
(Malachi 3:10).*

When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources,
Our Father’s full giving is only begun.

—Annie Johnson Flint

*“. . . able to do exceedingly abundantly above all
that we ask or think” (Ephesians 3:20).*

God counts. By His numbering system He orders His universe. He measures space, time, and life spans. He numbers stars and sparrows. He counts your hairs and teardrops—every single one. He rewards one cup of cold water given in His name. He appreciates one word of thanks. He writes it all down in His account book. God counts because He cares.

God shows His care for you by numbering the things about you. He takes note of each need, for He delights to meet it. God is the only one who really understands you. He alone puts two and two together and comes up with just the solution right for you. His resources are unlimited. He opens up the storehouses of heaven to meet your needs, one by one. God counts everything

about you because He cares for you.

The Word of God teaches us how God counts things. In Scripture, God gives spiritual values to numbers: Three is the number of God. Six is the number of man. Seven is the number of perfection. Twelve is the number of government, etc. (For a fuller treatment of the subject, see Grant’s *Numerical Bible*, vol. 1, pp. 8-23.) In the Bible, God’s numbers have lessons for us. If we can learn to count the way He does, we can learn to live the way He wants us to live. Numbers are significant. God uses them to show us practical things about heaven and earth. Numbers are important in the Bible.

God wants you to understand His arithmetic. He gives you this capacity in order to study both His creation and His Word.

MEMORY (optional): Luke 9:23-24: And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”

“Every law of nature tends to express itself in terms of arithmetic; while astronomy preaches it to you from the starry spheres, the plants in the arrangement of their leaves and the division of their flowers, the animal kingdom shows its partiality among its different tribes for different numbers, the crystal talks mathematics to you from the windowpane.

“Why should not a law of numbers pervade Scripture also, and link God’s work and His Word together—or show His Word also to be His work?”

“And remember, nothing more simply expresses *mind* than these arithmetical series. I find a dozen stones in a line exactly three inches apart, and I say this is the work of *mind*. And the Eternal Mind would thus make itself manifest to the minds of His creatures” (Grant, vol. 1, pp. 10-11).

Take the number *twelve* as an example. In Scripture, this number indicates *government*. See this, for instance, in the New Jerusalem, the seat of God’s future government. Here there are *twelve* gates, *twelve* foundations, and the unit of measure in every direction is *twelve* thousand furlongs (Revelation 21:12-17).

God will govern the earth through *twelve* apostles, who will sit upon *twelve* thrones judging the *twelve* tribes of Israel (Matthew 29:28). Thus in the Bible the number *twelve* is often associated with *government*. God’s *dozen* means God’s *government*.

This number twelve is prominent in Luke 8:41-9:17. Luke mentions a dozen years, a dozen men, and a dozen baskets.

He shows Christ in control, concerned with the needs of people, providing abundantly beyond what anyone asks or dreams.

At the end of a dozen years He brings two lives to a new beginning. He sends a dozen ordinary men to places where He wants them to go, and He empowers them to do extraordinary things. He fills a dozen wicker baskets with leftovers to show that His provision is more than enough for all.

He takes twelve years, twelve men, twelve baskets and shows Himself to us as the Lord of our times, our places, our means. *In God’s hand*, a dozen makes a lot of difference.

Consider the details of the passage under the following headings:

***I. A DOZEN YEARS
and New Beginnings
(8:41-56)***

***II. A DOZEN MEN
with New Power and Purpose
(9:1-10)***

***III. A DOZEN BASKETS
More than Enough for All
(9:11-17)***

These are just ordinary situations. But Christ in the glory of His grace comes in, and common things are transformed. He will do the same for us today. Ordinary people like ourselves, beholding Christ, will be transformed from one degree of glory to another, by the Lord the Spirit. We who have trusted in Christ shall be to the praise of His glory (2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 1:12).

MEMORY (optional): Luke 9:23-24: And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”

***I. A DOZEN YEARS
and New Beginnings
(8:41-56)***

“Thou crownest the year with thy goodness” (Psalm 65:11)

Two intertwined healings form one narrative. In each Gospel account of the healings of Jairus’s daughter and the woman with the hemorrhage, the two miracles form one event. We turn to Edersheim (pp. 616-17) for the description:

“On the shore at Capernaum many were gathered on the morning after the storm. It may have been, that the boats which had accompanied His had returned to friendly shelter, ere the storm had risen to full fury and had brought anxious tidings of the storm out on the Lake.

“There they were gathered now in the calm morning, friends eagerly looking out for the well-known boat that bore the Master and His disciples. And as it came in sight, making again for Capernaum, the multitude also would gather in waiting for the return of Him, Whose words and deeds were indeed mysteries, but mysteries of the Kingdom. And quickly, as He again stepped on the well known shore, was He welcomed, surrounded, soon ‘thronged,’ inconveniently pressed upon, by the crowd, eager, curious, expectant. It seemed as if they had been all ‘waiting for Him,’ and He had been away all too long for their impatience.

“The tidings rapidly spread, and reached two homes where His help was needed; where, indeed, it alone could now be of possible avail. The two most

nearly concerned must have gone to seek that help about the same time, and prompted by the same feelings of expectancy.

“Both Jairus, the Ruler of the Synagogue, and the woman suffering these many years from disease, had faith.”

Jairus comes just as the Lord is speaking a parable to the people. We learn this from Matthew’s Gospel (Matthew 9:14-18). He is speaking the parable of the wine and the wineskins: The new message of the Gospel cannot be contained by the rituals of Judaism. Now comes the interruption of the parable, and the narrative which follows is parabolic. The two events which are now related are connected with one another; they throw light upon one another; and they illustrate the parable which the Lord has been speaking.

Continuing the education of His disciples, the Lord uses the events which follow the parables. In Luke chapter 8, after the parables of the seed, we have four incidents—each case beyond human aid—the storm, the demoniac, the hemorrhage, the dead girl. Christ speaks the word of power, and meets the whole range of human need. He rebukes the storm and the heart condition of the disciples, showing them His authority over circumstance.

Next, He delivers the one possessed by Satan, and He would teach His disciples to recognize His authority over the enemy. Satan would snatch away the seed, but Christ frees this one from the power of darkness. Christ is demonstrating the power of the Gospel to meet the total need of man.

The whole range of life is represented here—man, woman, child. He illustrates

MEMORY (optional): Luke 9:23-24: And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”

what He can give—deliverance from Satan, cleansing from defilement, resurrection life. Thus Christ is educating His disciples and preparing them to take the message of salvation.

In the pair of miracles which conclude the chapter, we have an illustration of two aspects of salvation—God’s side in the work of Christ and man’s side in the laying hold by faith. Just as Christ is speaking about the new wineskins for the new wine, the representative of Judaism comes to Him for help. Jairus, whose name means “Enlightener,” in the darkness of despair comes to the Lord, falls at His feet, beseeching Him to heal his sick child.

This man is a ruler of the synagogue, probably the very one built for the people by the centurion of great faith. Jairus’s faith is not the equal of the centurion’s. The centurion had said, “I am not worthy that You come to my house; just say the word and my slave will be well.”

“This man’s faith did not rise to that level. He asked Jesus into his house. I refer to it in order to observe that Jesus went. He went immediately. He did not stand for any particular type of faith. If faith is there, He will respond to it” (Morgan, p. 115).

Now at this time, the crowds are pressing the Lord along the road and blocking His way so that He can hardly move. Luke says that the crowd is “thronging” Jesus—almost strangling Him as He moves toward Jairus’s house. Then comes the woman with a twelve-year history of hemorrhage. She approaches the Lord from behind and in faith reaches out to

touch the tassel on the end of the square garment which was thrown over the left shoulder and hung down the back (Numbers 15:38-41).

With its cord of blue, this was a reminder to the Jews that they were to look at the color of heaven and to remember to live on earth as a heavenly people. Worn by the Lord Jesus, it reminds us of the One from heaven who came down to meet the need of earth. The woman reaches out to Him in faith.

According to Leviticus 15:25-27, this woman for twelve years had been ceremonially unclean, excommunicated from the temple—the place of the altar—and symbolically from communion with God. But at this time Jewish tradition had added to the law:

“The segregation of this woman, or any woman or man so suffering, according to the Mosaic law, was hygienic; but a false conception of the nature of the disease had created a tradition by which she was divorced from her husband, shut out from her family, ostracized by society, and treated as a pariah” (Morgan, pp. 115-16).

All human help had failed. Mark tells us what Doctor Luke omits, that she had consulted many physicians and suffered at their hands and wasted all her money on them. Humanly speaking, her situation is hopeless.

“She makes contact with the living Christ, and He does not let her go. The fringes of His garment are very long; His grace reaches out to her” (Moule).

MEMORY (optional): Luke 9:23-24: And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”

Her healing is neither unconscious nor unwilling on His part. It is caused by her faith, not by her touch (“*Your faith has made you whole.*”)

“And the question of Jesus could not have been misleading, when ‘*straightway*’ He ‘*turned Him about in the crowd and said, Who touched My garments?*’ That He knew who had done it, and only wished, through self-confession, to bring her to clearness in the exercise of her faith, appears from what is immediately added: ‘*And He looked round about,*’ not to see *who* had done it, but ‘*to see her that had done this thing.*’ And as His look of unspoken appeal was at last fixed on her alone in all that crowd . . . ‘*the woman saw that she was not hid,*’ and came forward to make full confession.

“Thus, while in His mercy He had borne with her weakness, and in His faithfulness not disappointed her faith, its twofold error was also corrected. She learned that it was not from the garment, but from the Savior, that the Power proceeded; she learned also, that it was not the touch of it, but the faith in Him, that made whole—such faith must ever be of personal dealing with Him. And so He spoke to her the Word of twofold help and assurance:

‘Thy faith hath made thee whole—go forth into peace, and be healed of thy scourge’” (Edersheim, pp. 628-29).

He calls her daughter. She has become a child of God. Man’s side in this is the touch of faith. God’s side is the touch of peace, bringing assurance to her heart, that she has received from God cleansing and

restoration to the place of communion.

“Brief as is the record of this occurrence, it must have caused considerable delay in the progress of our Lord to the house of Jairus. For in the interval the maiden, who had been at the last gasp when her father went to entreat the help of Jesus, had not only died, but the house of mourning was already filled with relatives, hired mourners, wailing women, and musicians, in preparation for the funeral” (Edersheim, p. 629).

“And yet, in the delay, however impatient Jairus may have felt, he heard that this woman had been completely healed by making contact with Jesus. This must have had its effect on what immediately followed” (Morgan, p. 117).

This message comes that the child has died, and right away the Lord says to Jairus, “*Fear not, only believe, and she shall be made whole.*” This is the word which Jairus has just heard the Lord speak to the woman. Perhaps this witness strengthens his faith.

Now they reach the house and hear the dismal sounds of preparation for an eastern funeral—wailing, weeping, and the melancholy sound of the mourning flutes. All of this breaks “with the dismal discord on the majestic calm of assured victory over death” with which Jesus enters the house of mourning (Edersheim, p. 629).

His first act is to exclude all unbelief. Then with great tenderness He takes her by the hand and speaks the quickening word, “*Little Lamb, arise!*” The Word of Christ gives her life.

MEMORY (optional): Luke 9:23-24: And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”

In all of this the Lord shows consideration for the child in practical details. He is concerned that when she is raised from death she will not **“find herself the center of a gaping crowd”** (Morris, p. 161), and after she gets up, He tells them to feed her.

“While all this took place literally just as it is written here, it is also a wonderful picture which depicts the way in which those who are dead in trespasses and sins are brought into life through Christ.

“When a boy or girl puts his trust in the Lord Jesus, immediately he receives divine life; or, whether it be an adult, after years in which it has been demonstrated that the person is dead in trespasses and sins, when Jesus speaks and he hears the Savior’s Word, he is quickened into newness of life. But the young convert needs food in order to be strengthened and built up. . . . So today young Christians need the sincere milk of the Word that they may grow thereby” (Ironsides, p. 278).

The Lord charges them not to broadcast the miracle. He does this **“to keep them from letting the effect of this great blessing evaporate in vainglorious gossip. To thank God for it at home would be far more profitable than talking about it abroad”** (Plummer as quoted in Geldenhuys, p. 263).

Besides, such talk would engender much excitement and misunderstanding of what Christ came to do. They would seek to make Him king by force and to prevent Him from going to the cross.

“The full as well as the true knowledge that He was the Son of God could only come after His contest and suffering. And our faith also in Him is first of the suffering Savior, and then of the Son of God. Thus was it also from the first. It was through what He did for them that they learned Who He was. Had it been otherwise, the full blaze of the Sun’s glory would have so dazzled them, that they could not have seen the Cross” (Edersheim, p. 632).

In these intertwined miracles, Luke gives us a beautiful picture of our *so great salvation* and of the greatness of the Savior. We see Christ reaching out in grace to meet human need, to bring in *the acceptable year of the Lord*. He meets a woman at the end of a dozen years of failure and despair. He brings in cleansing from the defilement of sin, for He is the God who delights to bring us back to the place of communion with Himself, to revive and restore us to Himself. *“And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten”* (Joel 2:25).

He does what the law could not do (Galatians 3:23) for one cut off, alienated from the life of God. He brings in resurrection and the power to walk, to live a life pleasing to God. Habakkuk (3:2) prayed, *“O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known.”* Our God delights to answer such a prayer of faith just as He responded to the plea of Jairus.

His timing is perfect, for He is the Lord of time: Our times are in His hand. We see this, too, in the chapter—the exact timing of the Lord. Jairus and the woman come to-

MEMORY (optional): Luke 9:23-24: And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”

gether to the Lord. In the Lord's sovereign providence, Jairus is encouraged by the witness of the woman. We see two lives at the end of a dozen years. Were these wasted years? Not in the sovereign timing of the Lord. In His grace through them He demonstrates the fulness of His salvation.

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jeremiah 29:11).

Then we can be encouraged to pray in faith the words of this poem:

**My times are in Thy hand:
Father, I wish them there:
My life, my soul, my all, I leave
Entirely to Thy care.**

**My times are in Thy hand;
Why should I doubt or fear?
My Father's hand will never cause
His child a needless tear.**

**My times are in Thy hand,
Whatever they may be,
Pleasing or painful, dark or bright,
As best may seem to Thee.**

**My times are in Thy hand,
Jesus the Crucified!
The hand my many sins once pierced
Is now my Guard and Guide.**

— W.F. Lloyd, 1904
Hymns of Grace and Truth, p. 144

Two lives at the end of a dozen years in despair and death—but Christ has brought them to His own expected end. This end is a new beginning in the place of resurrec-

tion life. A dozen years ended in hopelessness. But He is the God of Hope. Because of the Person and Work of Christ, we can say with the Psalmist:

"Thou crownest the year with thy goodness!" (Ps. 65:11).

II. A DOZEN MEN with New Power and Purpose (9:1-10)

A dozen ordinary men have been chosen by the Lord for two purposes—to be with Him and to go for Him. They have been with Him, receiving His instruction and now they are to represent Him.

"The Lord had chosen them in chapter 6, and what follows in that chapter seems to emphasize the need that they should be like Jesus. That is, the Lord speaks of loving their enemies, doing good, and being sons of the Highest. They are to be like Him, as He says, 'Every one that is perfected shall be as his teacher.' It suggests the necessity of being like Him before any could be sent forth to represent Him. That is the idea of discipleship, not simply that we learn things, but we become as the teacher. The primary thought of God in creating man was that man might be in His image and after His likeness. . . . The disciples were to be like Him, to be as the Teacher." Then they can publicly express Him **"in the scene where He is unknown"** (Coates, p. 115).

Now the Lord calls the Twelve together to send them out into the harvest field (Matthew 10:1-5ff). These messengers are

MEMORY (optional): Luke 9:23-24: And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it."

for the most part Galilean fishermen. We are familiar with their deficiencies.

“Yet molded and energized by the Spirit of God, they did a work such as has never since been done. Doubtless there was a fitness so given to them, transcending all the power of the schools to accomplish since. It is remarkable, but with an exception or two, how little we know of this or of them. In the Gospels themselves we much more often have them held up as warnings to us, than for our imitation. In the Acts, where most we should expect to find them, only one or two—fewer than in the Gospels—are at all prominent. And even these soon pass from our sight, and scarcely even a fragment of tradition of them remains” (Grant, p. 116).

They are sent forth to preach *the kingdom of God*.

“The Kingdom of God is the Kingship of God, the sovereignty of God. . . . This Kingdom is not postponed. He reigns now, and our business is not to tell men that He is going to reign by and by. . . . Thus He sent them to preach what He preached. God reigns, and He is available to the human soul. . . . They are to herald this. A herald is always a representative of a king” (Morgan, p. 119).

“They were to take no supply, whether of money or clothing, as not going out into a heathen world but among those professedly owning God, with whose message they came . . . having a right, therefore, to expect the sustenance due to

His laborers” (Grant, p. 117).

The directions “about not taking staff, shoes, nor money-purse, exactly correspond to the Rabbinic injunction not to enter the Temple precincts with staff, shoes (mark, not sandals), and a money girdle. The symbolic reasons underlying this command would, in both cases, be probably the same: to avoid even the appearance of being engaged on other business, when the whole being should be absorbed in the service of the Lord. At any rate, it would convey to the disciples the idea, that they were to consider themselves as if entering the Temple precincts, thus carrying out the principle of Christ’s first thought in the Temple: *‘Wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?’*” (Edersheim, pp. 643-44).

The Lord’s instructions regarding what they were to do when people rejected their message were not incidental. Shaking the dust off the clothing and feet would leave the impression that the messenger was in dead earnest. His meticulous shedding of any speck of dust that might adhere to his person to remind him of the rejector would be in itself a final call to repentance.

Luke does not give details of the disciples’ missionary work, but he does give one result. The attention of the populace and the rulers of the people was turned to the Lord Jesus. This must be the aim of all true ministry and service; it must point to Christ.

We have the reaction of Herod to this word. He was disturbed, frightened, and his conscience over John the Baptist was pricked.

MEMORY (optional): Luke 9:23-24: And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”

But he “never sent for Jesus nor saw Him until our Lord was about to be crucified: Pilate sent Him to Herod. Though Herod had the opportunity to listen to one greater than all the prophets in the past, as our Lord designated John the Baptist, he went out directly into a lost eternity to face forever his sin. What a warning this is to those who persist in sin and turn from Jesus!” (Ironsides, pp. 283-84).

When the disciples returned, they were tired. Mark tells us that the Lord called them apart to rest awhile. We could heed this word today.

“If we would listen to Him and spend more time in His presence, it would be much better for us. It is sometimes said that it is better to burn out than to rust out. That is true, but it is still better to work and then rest, as He commanded. David the Psalmist said, ‘He maketh me to lie down.’ The Lord’s sheep do not seem to have that much sense! They need to ‘come apart and rest awhile.’ Sheep will do that very thing” (Ironsides, pp. 284-85).

The Lord takes them across the Lake to Bethsaida, and they give their report to Him, Mark tells us (6:30-31). They tell Him all things—their doings and doctrines.

“Every preacher will appreciate this latter point. Few experiences are more fruitful than going over our sermons, face to face with Christ after we have delivered them. In the telling we notice

the gaps in our logic, the shallowness of our thought, our crudities of expression and become aware of our lack of power. As we pour it all out, His kindly breath blows away the chaff from the wheat and perhaps we never preach quite so badly again” (Harold St. John, *An Analysis of the Gospel of Mark*, p. 70).

They were a dozen unremarkable men with an extraordinary message. Their message was Christ: He is King. The Kingdom is at hand. He is Savior. They went out with the authority of Christ: Against principalities and powers He is triumphant. They found their sufficiency in Him. All of their resources were in Christ. A dozen men—with a new power and a grand purpose—these were the first missionaries. Since then, many missionaries—ordinary people just like the Twelve—have gone forth. But the pattern does not change. Authority, resources, message remain the same. All is in Christ.

III. A DOZEN BASKETS and More than Enough for All (9:11-17)

The now well-known sail is speeding toward the other shore of the Lake. The crowds take note of the direction of the ship and follow on foot.

“As we picture it to ourselves, our Lord with His disciples, and perhaps followed by those who had outrun the rest, first retired to the top of a height, and there rested in teaching converse with them. Presently, as He saw the great multitudes gathering, He was *moved with compassion*

MEMORY (optional): Luke 9:23-24: And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”

towards them. There could be no question of retirement or rest in view of this. Surely, it was the opportunity which God had given—a call which came to Him from His Father. Every opportunity was unspeakably precious to Him, Who longed to gather the lost under His wings. It might be, that even now they would learn what belonged to their peace. . . .

“It was this depth of longing and intensity of pity which now ended the Savior’s rest, and brought Him down from the hill to meet the gathering multitude in the desert plain beneath.

“And what a sight to meet His gaze—these thousands of strong men, besides women and children; and what thoughts of the past, the present, and the future, would be called up by the scene! *The Passover was nigh*, with its remembrances of the Paschal night, the Paschal Lamb, the Paschal Supper, the Paschal deliverance—and most of them were Passover pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. These Passover pilgrims and God’s guests, now streaming out into this desert after Him; with a murdered John just buried, and no earthly teacher, guide or help left!

“Truly they were *as sheep having no shepherd*. The very surroundings seemed to give to the thought the vividness of a picture: this wandering, straying multitude, the desert sweep of country, the very want of provisions. A Passover, indeed, but of which He would be the Paschal Lamb. . . .” (Edersheim, pp. 678-79).

Here there is nothing that man can provide. Externally it is a desert—but all of the resources of Christ are there. Now we learn the character of God in grace toward

man, in contrast to the disciples.

The only measure to which the disciples can rise is “*send them away!*”

Yet Christ intends to minister through these very servants. He says, “*Give them to eat.*”

They take stock.

Do we have anything good to set before people—to satisfy them in spiritual drought and sorrow? What we have is Christ, and He is enough. He is the living Bread which came down from Heaven. Bread is God’s supply to strengthen the heart of man. All that we need for service and living is provided in Christ. There is a famine in the world and spiritual hunger in the hearts of many. There is ample provision in Christ.

The disciples brought their own scanty provision to Him. He told them to make the people sit down, and they obeyed.

“We can picture it to ourselves, what is so exquisitely sketched: the expanse of ‘grass,’ ‘green,’ and fresh, ‘much grass;’ then the people in their ‘companies’ of fifties and hundreds, reclining, and looking in their regular divisions, and with their bright many colored dresses, like ‘garden beds’ on the turf. But on One Figure must every eye have been bent” (Edersheim, p. 683).

“He blesses and breaks, and puts it back into His disciples’ hands to distribute; and they distribute it all; and there is more than enough for all the multitude. How good to know that out of that insignificant quantity there is positively enough for everyone there; yea, and more than enough: ‘twelve handbaskets full of fragments that remained’ over and above all that had been eaten!

MEMORY (optional): Luke 9:23-24: And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”

“Thus there is actually more left than they had had at the beginning; and this is constantly the way of spiritual increase, scattering and yet increasing. Would that we all and always remembered it. . . .

“Every particle of truth we have brings with it corresponding responsibility, proportionate privilege, and opportunity of greater gain. ‘To him that hath shall more be given, and he shall have abundantly; and from him that hath not, even that which he hath’—hath and hath not, hath as if he had it not, without practical use or advantage—‘shall be taken away’” (Grant, p. 157).

Passover comes at the beginning of the Jewish year, and it opens the way for all the blessings which follow. This is what Christ our Passover pictured as He gave thanks and broke the bread. Jesus “took . . . and . . . blessed, and brake, and gave. . . My body, which is broken for you.”

Broken pitchers—and the light shone out.

**Broken box—and the ointment was
poured forth.**

Broken bread—and the hungry were fed.

**A broken Body—and the world was re-
deemed.**

**As Thou was broken, O my Lord, for me,
Let me be broken, Lord, for love of Thee.**

Amy Wilson Carmichael

Christ takes up the little and multiplies it to any extent. He opens up His heavenly storehouse and pours out a blessing that there is not room enough to receive it. He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think. He opens His hands to us—*they are filled with good (Psalm 104:28).*

“From the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year’ (Deuteronomy 11:11-12)—much is folded up in that. The day of the week, the hour of the day, every minute of the day, not one is outside His care—‘a land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year’—and so ‘it drinketh water from the rain of Heaven.’ It need never thirst” (Carmichael).

**‘FOR OUT OF HIS INFINITE
RICHES IN JESUS,
HE GIVETH, AND GIVETH, AND
GIVETH AGAIN!’**

— Annie Johnson Flint

“My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus!”

MEMORY (optional): Luke 9:23-24: And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”

XII. DOWN IS UP

Questions on Luke 9:18-50

FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

REVIEW: Luke 8:41-9:17 by reading the passage and the Notes, looking up all Scripture references.

What blessing did you receive from the notes?

MEMORY:

REVIEW: Luke 19:10; 24:19; 2:49; 3:21-22; 4:14; 5:32; 6:45; 7:22-23; 8:18; 9:23-24.

LEARN: Luke 9:25-26.

READ: Luke 9:18-50 in two different versions, noting interesting variations. Write down a few differences in the two translations. Note the flow from Herod's question, the interconnections, the revelation of who He really is, the instructions to the disciples.

1. List the main events of this section with references.

I. GAIN BY WAY OF LOSS

READ: Luke 9:18-26.

DO QUESTIONS: 2-10

READ: Pages 31-37

2. What question did the Lord Jesus ask

(v. 20) and why? What answers are given? Give a reason which might lie behind each (verses 7, 8 and 19).

3. What is Peter's answer and how did he know this? (See Matthew 16:17; 11:25-27; 1 Corinthians 2:14) Is there any difference in the way we acquire spiritual truth now? Explain.

4. How would we answer an unbeliever who asked who Jesus is?

5. How would we answer if the Lord should ask us, "Who am I to you today?"

6. Would you like to know Him better in some ways? Explain. How can you know Him better?

7. After Peter's confession in v. 20, the Lord gives the disciples what kind of instruction and information (see verses 21-26)? Why do you think He did this?

8. Think about 9:23-26.

9. What is our "cross?" (Think what the cross meant to Christ and what self is. See also Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:3-6; 15:3 etc.)

MEMORY: (Luke 9:25-26): For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

10. What does it mean in practical terms for you to take up your cross today and follow Christ (verse 23)? What do you discover to be the main obstacles in your path? What will you do to remove these obstacles?

II. GLORY THROUGH THE CROSS

STUDY: Luke 9:27-36; 2 Peter 1:16-18; Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8.

DO QUESTIONS: 11-16

READ: Pages 37-43

11. What details do the other gospels give about the transfiguration that Luke omits?

12. What were Moses and Elijah talking about on the Mount?

13. Which disciples were with Christ on the mount? On what two other occasions were these three with Him? (Luke 8:5; Matthew 26:37)

14. Think of the impact of the transfiguration upon Peter. What do you think he probably learned from the experience (or should have learned)?

15. Study 2 Peter 1:16-18. How can you be an eyewitness of His majesty? How would this affect your life and what change would it make? (See also 2 Corinthians

3:18; 1 John 3:1-3).

16. Think about verse 35. On what other occasion did the Father say the same thing? (Luke 3:22) How does this thought draw your heart out to the Lord Jesus?

III. GREATNESS IN HUMILITY

STUDY: Luke 9:37-50.

DO QUESTIONS: 17-21

READ: Pages 43-46

17. What seems to be wrong with the disciples in this whole section? Pray about this and ask the Lord if He sees any of this in your life.

18. Meditate on verses 46-48. What is the secret of greatness?

19. How can we be great in the eyes of Christ today?

20. Compare Luke 9:49-50 with Luke 11:14-23. What did the Lord Jesus mean by His reply in 9:50? How might this apply in my dealing with people I come in contact with? (See 1 Corinthians 12:13)

21. Luke 11:23 seems to contradict Luke 9:50. Does it? What did the Lord Jesus mean? (See 2 John 7-11)

MEMORY: (Luke 9:25-26): For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

XII. DOWN IS UP

(Luke 9:18-50)

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. . . . He that is least among you all, the same shall be great" (Luke 9:23-24, 48b).

**But all through life I see a Cross,
Where sons of God yield up their breath:
There is no gain except by loss,
There is no life except by death,
And no full vision but by Faith,
Nor glory but by bearing shame,
Nor Justice but by taking blame;
And that Eternal Passion saith,
"Be emptied of glory and right and name."**

Amy Carmichael
Gold Cord, p. 51-52

Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9)

The way of the cross leads home. This is the trailway blazed for us by the Lord Jesus. It winds all the way down into the valley of death before it takes us up to the mountain heights of glory. This path is God's reversal of the world's direction. On His map, down leads up!

Down is not the popular path. Successful men of the world are moving in another direction. They talk about upward mobility. Their feet are on the rungs of the ladder of success. It does not matter how many hands they step on as they push up

past other climbers. They are ambitious. They must get to the top. Those who don't make it they call "the losers." Who wants to be one of them?

Certainly not the disciples. But now in Luke the Lord begins to point them down that other trail, the one that He will blaze for them. In a few days He will set His face toward Jerusalem and the cross. He shows this direction to the few who say they will follow Him all the way. He tells them plainly that it is the path of suffering, shame, and death—before the glory. But

MEMORY: (Luke 9:25-26): For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

they cannot bear to look. Their gaze is focused on the top of the world, where they think the winners sit.

Throughout this section of Luke, the Lord corrects their vision. He patiently shows them who the real winners are. He defines success and greatness.

Again and again He points them to His cross—their road to glory. May we too allow Him to point us in that direction. As we study this section again, may we see more clearly how the down path leads up to the throne. This is what the Lord would show us today; for loss is still the way of gain, and the cross is the only path to glory, and choosing the lowly road is the only sure way to greatness.

The losers of this world are the winners with God. This, then, is how we divide the section:

I. GAIN BY WAY OF LOSS
(*Luke 9:18-27*)

II. GLORY THROUGH THE CROSS
(*Luke 9:28-36*)

III. GREATNESS IN HUMILITY
(*Luke 9:37-50*)

I. GAIN BY WAY OF LOSS
(*vv. 18-27*)

By asking them three questions, the Lord makes His disciples face a new pathway:

9:18. Who do the people say that I am?"

The Lord has traveled with His disciples two days' journey northward from the Lake up into the foothill country of

Caesarea Philippi.

"The situation of the ancient city (1,147 feet above the sea) is indeed magnificent. Nestling amid three valleys on a terrace in the angle of Hermon, it is almost shut out from view by cliffs and woods. 'Everywhere there is a wild medley of cascades, mulberry trees, fig trees, dashing torrents, festoons of vines, bubbling fountains . . . and the mingled music of birds and waters'" (Edersheim, quoting Tristram, *Land of Israel*, p. 586).

"It had been needful to leave Capernaum. The Galilean Ministry of the Christ was ended, and, alike the active persecutions of the Pharisees from Jerusalem, the inquiries of Herod, whose hands, stained with the blood of the Baptist, were tremblingly searching for his greater Successor, and the growing indecision and unfitness of the people—as well as the state of the disciples—pointed to the need for leaving Galilee" (Edersheim, Vol. II. pp. 74-75).

So they come into a Gentile area, Caesarea Philippi—"stamped thus doubly with the assertion of the power of the world rulers, the Caesars and the Herods, there where Israel should have been sole possessor of the land. . . . Israel is but as a wanderer among the nations now. Her doom is upon her, although not as yet fully carried into effect; and the world which is uniting with her in the rejection of the one hope of deliverance must still be left for Caesar and Herod to divide between them.

MEMORY: (Luke 9:25-26): For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Out of it God is going to separate a people for Himself, and in the overabounding of divine grace to give them an inheritance in heaven. But this they are to reach by His own pathway of suffering in the world, the fellowship of His sufferings being the fit training for fellowship upon the throne and in the glory” (Grant, *The Gospels*, pp. 166-67).

Just before the Lord begins to question His disciples in order to lead them toward this pathway, He is praying—alone and with His disciples nearby.

“That is an incidental revelation of the plane of the prayer life of our Lord. There is a sense in which it is true that our Lord always prayed alone. He always prayed apart; He never really prayed in the fellowship of His disciples. They never moved on His level of prayer. He prayed on a different level. We never pray without having to come to God recognizing our need of some mediation that will admit us to Him. We never pray without a deep sense that we must come on the basis of His mercy, pity, and compassion. Jesus never came that way. He never came in prayer to God needing a mediator between Himself and God. He never came in prayer to God on the basis of Divine mercy or pity. He talked with God familiarly. His was the praying of perfect fellowship” (Morgan, p. 122).

The Lord is concerned about who the ordinary people say He is, not the rulers and men of prestige. He cares about the people.

“Then they told Him, and they only told Him the best things they had heard” (Morgan, p. 123).

“We are probably correct in supposing that popular opinion did not point to Christ as literally the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets who had long been dead. For, although the literal reappearance of Elijah, and probably also of Jeremiah, was expected, the Pharisees did not teach, nor the Jews believe in, a transmigration of souls. Besides, no one looked for the return of any of the other old prophets, nor could any one have seriously imagined, that Jesus was, literally, John the Baptist, since all knew them to have been contemporaries. Rather would it mean, that some saw in Him the continuation of the work of John, as heralding and preparing the way of the Messiah, or, if they did not believe in John, of that of Elijah, while to others He seemed a second Jeremiah, denouncing woe on Israel and calling to tardy repentance; or else one of those old prophets, who had spoken either of the near judgment or of the coming glory; and, alas, in this also, that they did not view Him as the Messiah” (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 79).

The people give some degree of honor to Christ, but none apprehends the truth of His Person. Now He turns to the disciples with a far more personal second question:

But who do ye say that I am?

The *you* is emphatic. The Lord would bring them to personal confession. Peter, as spokesman for the group, acknowledges that He is *the Christ of God*. “Christ” means

MEMORY: (Luke 9:25-26): For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

“Messiah,” or “the Anointed One.” In the Old Testament, three persons were anointed—prophets, priests, and kings. Peter is confessing that He is the Messiah of God, our Prophet, Priest, and King.

To the Hebrews “the Messianic hope had a threefold significance. Messiah to the Hebrew meant the Prophet Who should bring forth a full and final revelation. Messiah to the Hebrew meant the Priest Who should exercise a redeeming mediation. Messiah to the Hebrew meant the King Who should rule and reign as absolute Monarch.”

“Now put the confession into comparison with other opinions. Some say John; some Elijah; some one of the prophets; but this Hebrew said, Thou art not one among others; Thou art the One to Whom all the others looked; The Christ of God—that was the confession. That was the great revelation. If we ever consent to place Him in the company of others, we insult Him and degrade Him. The Christ of God is out of the realm of comparison with all others. The Prophet, bringing the final revelation; the Priest, providing perfect redemption; the King, ruling absolutely” (Morgan, p. 124).

Uncertainty is caused by lack of conscious need. This is the problem the people have. It is the issue today. Do we own His Lordship? Christ would bring each one to the place of personal confession and then commitment.

Peter has entered into who Christ is, but he has not entered into how this is to be carried out. Now Christ will show them

His own pathway—the cross which leads to the crown. But first He charges them to *tell no man*.

“Why, you would have expected that He should have told them to spread the word around all over, and tell people everywhere just who He was! But it is too late for that. His ministry has been rejected. The hearts of the majority of the people are set upon their own way. They are not prepared to receive His testimony. Israel will receive Him as the Christ of God when He returns the second time. In the meantime they must reap the sad results of their unbelief. That was why He commanded the disciples not to say anything about it then. He was going on down to Jerusalem to die” (Ironsides, p. 291).

The Jews were looking for deliverance from Rome. They were ready to follow anyone who claimed to be Messiah. Had the Lord Jesus then been hailed as Messiah, “**people would have understood it as a political and military claim. They would have completely missed what He was teaching them”** (Morris, p. 169).

Even the disciples missed it until the resurrection and Pentecost.

The Lord now begins to explain something of what being Messiah really meant. He *must* suffer—what a wonderful must. He must suffer *many things*. He points now to the cross, but not to emphasize at this time the atonement aspect. It is the human side of His death, not the divine. His rejection is what He brings before them.

MEMORY: (Luke 9:25-26): For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

“The word rejected seems to be a technical term to denote rejection after a careful legal scrutiny held to see whether a candidate for office was qualified. It implies here that the hierarchy would consider Jesus’ claims but decide against Him. The one article in the expression the elders and chief priests and scribes [“the”] points to the fact that the three formed a single group in the Sanhedrin. There was, of course, only one high priest and the plural signifies all the members of the high-priestly families. It was the nation’s leaders who would be foremost in rejecting Him. Nor would this be merely a matter of words. He would be killed. Jesus left them in no doubt but that being Messiah meant a cross. But the cross is not the whole story. On the third day the Son of man will be raised. The resurrection was as certain as the crucifixion” (Morris, p. 169).

Looking back after these events, the disciples found these statements to be ever so clear. At the time the Lord first speaks about His rejection, however, Peter and the others are not prepared to accept the literal truth. It seems natural to them to think of this in a figurative sense.

“He was so constantly in the habit of using symbolic language, and had only lately reproved them for taking that about ‘the leaven’ in a literal, which He had meant in a figurative sense (Matthew 16:11-12), that it was but natural, they should have regarded in the same light announcements which, in their strict literality, would seem to them well

nigh incredible. They could well understand His rejection by the Scribes—a sort of figurative death, or violent suppression of His claims and doctrines, and then, after briefest period, their resurrection, as it were—but not these terrible details in their full literality” (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 86).

Now the Lord follows His statement about the cross to probe more deeply into their hearts and to show them the pathway of the disciple. He asks His third question:

9:25. For what is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose himself?

The Lord has “immediately followed the announcement of the cross with a reference to another cross, this one to be carried by His followers. There is, of course, a difference” (Morris, p. 170).

Our sufferings can never be atoning, and the meaning of the cross is not limited to the literal. But it is real. Those days they knew the torture which the Roman masters inflicted. They could expect to suffer the literal cross as well if they followed their Lord. They, and we, begin in this way: Let him deny himself. This involves a suffering no less acute. Only through the Spirit is it possible to deny oneself. We cannot take up the cross without denying self. We cannot say “yes” to Christ without saying “no” to ourselves. The disciples knew what taking the cross meant.

“When a man from one of their villages took up a cross and went off with a little band of Roman soldiers, he was

MEMORY: (Luke 9:25-26): For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

on a one-way journey. He'd not be back. Taking up the cross meant the utmost in self denial. This is Luke's first use of the word cross, and it comes with striking effect. Christ's follower has died to a whole way of life (cf. 14:27). Luke tells us that this is not something that can be finished and got out of the way: it must be done daily. So, says Jesus, will he follow me" (Morris, p. 170).

The Lord is speaking here of a real contest.

"In such a contest, to lose life would be to gain it, to gain would be to lose life. And, if the issue lay between these two, who could hesitate what to choose, even if it were ours to gain or lose a whole world?" (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 87).

"The question needs no answer: the impossibility to answer it is the answer" (Grant, p. 175).

For behind it all there is a reality—"a Messianic triumph and Kingdom—not, indeed, such as they imagined, but far higher, holier: the coming of the Son of Man in the glory of His Father, and with His angels, and then eternal gain or loss, according to our deeds (Matthew 16:24-27)" (Edersheim, p. 87).

It is through the world which crucified Christ that our pathway lies. He does not hold out any hope that this world or the path will ever change. We have to make up our minds to face it.

"And good it is to go back in thought to

times in which men in reality 'suffered the loss of all things,' and even 'counted them but dung that they might win Christ' (Philippians 3:8-9). There can be no question that the Christ they went after in that way seemed to them unspeakably glorious; and for us it will be well indeed if, being the same Christ, He shine as bright" (Grant, The Gospels, p. 175).

He Himself is our motive for going His way.

Taking any other pathway leads to eternal loss and judgment. This is soon to be pronounced upon the Jewish nation. **"The flames of the City and Temple would be the light in that nation's darkness, by which to read the inscription on the Cross"** (Edersheim, p. 88).

"The paragraph is rounded off with a mysterious saying. Some of those present will not taste of death before they see the kingdom of God. 'Taste of death' surely means 'die,' but it is not clear what the coming of the kingdom of God means in this context. ... Plummer notes seven possible interpretations of the words: the transfiguration, the resurrection and ascension, Pentecost, the spread of Christianity, the internal development of the gospel, the destruction of Jerusalem and the second advent. . . . The saying is complex and without further information it is impossible to be sure of the precise meaning intended" (Morris, p. 171).

The Lord gives us the only motive for taking the way of the cross: *for My sake* (v. 24). It means that I love Him. Taking

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the cross means that I deliberately prepare myself to take the lowest and most dishonored place that men can give as a reproach—because I am following One who had nothing but reproach here. *For my sake!* We may well ask, how much is there in my life that is simply for Christ's sake? He is our motive. The love of God manifested in Christ touches our hearts and constrains us (2 Corinthians 5:14). What am I prepared to give up that 'not I, but Christ, be honored, loved, exalted?' I must give up the whole system of things represented in "the world." Moses is an example of one who went this way. He refused and forsook Egypt. He might have had a great life there. But at best it would have ended in a pyramid. So he chose not to save his life. If we do not take this way, we become spiritual castaways (v. 25; 1 Corinthians 9:27). But my highest motive is not fear of judgment, but love of Christ. Who goes so far as even to wish to be

**Dead to the world and its applause,
To all the customs, fashions, laws,
Of those who hate the humbling
Cross?**

The one who loves the Lord Jesus Christ can speak this prayer of commitment:

**O Lord of love and Lord of pain,
Who, by the bitter Cross,
Dost teach us how to measure gain,
And how to measure loss—
Whom, seeing not, our hearts adore,
We bring our love to Thee;
And where Thou art, Lord, evermore
Would we Thy servants be.**

Amy Wilson Carmichael,
Gold Cord, p. 104

The prophecy of v. 27 reminds us of the promise of John 8:51: "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*"

"It is certain that shame will cast a shadow on the face of Christ when He looks at those of His professing people who in this life have fled from the offence of the Cross (Luke 9:26). . . . It is always a perilous thing to follow Christ, but it is much more dangerous not to do so. Many fear that they may lose their lives; they do not know that the real risk is that they may keep them!" (Harold St. John, p. 90).

II. GLORY THROUGH THE CROSS (vv. 28-36)

"After these sayings" they go up to the mountain of His transfiguration. There in the midst of the cloud of glory, all turns to the downward path which He will take to the cross. His voluntary way is down through the cross and up to glory.

"In view of all this, it is fitting that an interval of six days (Matthew, Mark) should intervene before the ascent of the mountain, or, as Luke puts it, about eight days, which might include the day of Peter's confession and the night of Christ's transfiguration?" (Edersheim, p. 92).

The Lord calls apart the three disciples who are most closely linked to Him in heart and thought.

"In all the most solemn transactions

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of earth's history there has been this selection and separation of the few to witness God's great doings. . . .

"Jesus, the Savior of His people, could not be quite alone, save in those innermost transactions of His soul: in the great contest of His first Temptation, and in the solitary communings of His heart with God. . . .

"But otherwise, in the most solemn turning points of this history, Jesus could not be alone, and yet was alone with those three chosen ones, most receptive of Him, and most representative of the Church. It was so in the house of Jairus, on the Mount of Transfiguration, and in the Garden of Gethsemane.

"There can scarcely be a reasonable doubt that Christ and His disciples had not left the neighborhood of Caesarea Philippi. According to an old tradition, Christ had left Caesarea Philippi, and the scene of the Transfiguration was Mount Tabor.

But (1) there is no notice of His departure, such as is generally made by Mark; (2) on the contrary, it is mentioned by Mark as after the transfiguration (9:30); (3) Mount Tabor was at that time crowned by a fortified city, which would render it unsuitable for the scene of the transfiguration.

Hence that *mountain* must have been one of the slopes of gigantic, snowy Hermon. In that quiet semi-Gentile retreat of Caesarea Philippi could He best teach them, and they best learn, without interruption or temptation from Pharisees and Scribes, that terrible mystery of His Suffering.

And on that gigantic mountain bar-

rier which divided Jewish and Gentile lands . . . amidst the solemn solitude and majestic grandeur of Hermon . . . what a background here for the transfiguration, what surroundings for the vision, what echoes for the voice from heaven!" (Edersheim, pp. 92-93).

Luke alone tells us that it was *to pray* that the Lord took them up the mount.

"To pray, no doubt in connection with those sayings . . . and the transfiguration, with its attendant glorified ministry and voice from heaven, was God's answer to that prayer. It is probably evening, implied not only in the disciples being heavy with sleep, but in the morning scene (9:37) which follows. It could not have been to one of the highest peaks of Hermon that the Lord ascended.

"Now to climb the top of Hermon is, even from the nearest point, an Alpine ascent, trying and fatiguing, which would occupy a whole day . . . and require provisions of food and water; while, from the keenness of the air, it would be impossible to spend the night on the top. To all this there is no allusion in the text, nor slightest hint of either difficulties or preparations, such as otherwise would have been required. Indeed, a contrary impression is left on the mind" (Edersheim, p. 94).

"There is only one road that leads from Caesarea Philippi to Hermon, and we cannot be mistaken in following it. First, among vineclad hills stocked with mulberry, apricot and fig trees; then,

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through cornfields, where the pear tree supplants the fig; next through oak coppice, and up rocky ravines to where the soil is dotted with dwarf shrubs. . . .

“As they ascend in the cool of that Sabbath evening, the keen mountain air must have breathed strength into the climbers, and the scent of snow—for which the parched tongue would long in summer’s heat—have refreshed them. We know not what part may have been open to them of the glorious panorama from Hermon, embracing as it does a great part of Syria from the sea to Damascus, from the Lebanon and the gorge of the Litany to the mountains of Moab; or down the Jordan valley to the Dead Sea; or over Galilee, Samaria, and on to Jerusalem and beyond it. . . .

“As the pale moonlight shone on the fields of snow in the deep passes of Hermon, so did the light of the coming night shine on the cold glitter of Death in the near future” (Edersheim, p. 95).

On that mountain He prayed.

“A new scene indeed for the old sin-stricken earth to witness; and the center of all its glory a Man in prayer! Such is the new Adam upon whom rests all the blessing of the new creation, and in this sign we read its permanence. Man is no more to lapse from God into a fancied but impossible independence; and the path of obedience is no more to be thought of as one of hard and servile drudgery when the Son of God has chosen it for His own.

“The glory that now alters the fashion of countenance and radiates from His

very garments (*dazzling, like lightning*) is His own proper glory, veiled in tenderness only to those to whom He has come to minister, that they might know Him better, as through a darkened glass we better see the sun.

“But He is not alone: for where He is must be the fruit of His work and the companions of His love. Two men are with Him, and appear in glory also; but they with a glory which is not their own. Moses and Elias (Elijah), the law-giver and the prophet, shine, as in fact they did, in His glory” (Grant, pp. 390-91).

John later speaks of this glory:

“We beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

In addition to His own intrinsic glory, which shines forth on the mount, He receives honor and glory from the Father. Peter speaks later of this:

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God, the Father, honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount” (2 Peter 1:16-18).

Moses and Elijah come to bear witness to His glory, and thus they give evidence

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of the fulfillment of their prophecy and of the One the Old Testament foreshadows. Moses, writer of the first five books (Deuteronomy 18:15-19), the Law, represents the inauguration of all things.

Elijah, preacher of repentance (Malachi 4:5-6), the Prophet, represents the restoration of all things. They mark the unity of Scripture in its testimony of Christ. They come to take the subordinate place, to pay Him *honor and glory*. All of this is a foretaste of the glory of Christ in His return to earth.

The three disciples nearly missed the glory because they were sleepy.

“It was but natural for these men of simple habits, at night, after the long ascent, and in the strong mountain air, to be heavy with sleep.

“And we also know it as a psychological fact, that, in quick reaction after the overpowering influence of the strongest emotions, drowsiness would creep over their limbs and senses” (Edersheim, p. 96).

“The heavy sleep was possibly the reaction from the six days of mental strain, in which they could not understand what He had been saying about going to Jerusalem to die” (Morgan, p. 127).

“They were heavy—weighted—with sleep, as afterwards at Gethsemane their eyes were weighted (Matthew 26:43). Yet they struggled with it, and it is quite consistent with experience, that they should continue in that state of semi-stupor, during what passed between Moses and Elijah and Christ, and

also be fully awake, ‘to see His glory, and the two men who stood with Him’” (Edersheim, p. 96).

We need to struggle against spiritual indolence, lest we too should miss the glory.

What is the topic of conversation that they heard?

“What was the theme? Oh, the wonder of it!

“They were speaking with Him of that which will be our theme all through eternity as we recall what He did for us—suffering and dying for us” (Ironsides, p. 302).

What is the central topic of eternity? His *departure*, literally, His *exodus*—the going from one sphere to another.

“His Exodus—outgoing—which He was about to fulfill at Jerusalem (v. 31)” (Edersheim, p. 97).

In Acts, Luke uses the contrasting term, *eisodos*, to designate His “incoming,” or the birth of Christ (Acts 13:24). His “exodus,” then, **“implies not only His decease, but its manner, and even His resurrection and ascension. In that sense we can understand the better, as on the lips of Moses and Elijah, this about His fulfilling that Exodus: accomplishing it in all its fulness, and so completing Law and Prophecy, type and prediction”** (Edersheim, p. 97).

Peter—*not knowing what to say (Mark)*—breaks in here. He would have done well to have kept silent.

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“Terribly like his would-be followers today, he would enshrine the saints alongside of Christ” (Grant, p. 177).

He would build *three booths*, making Christ on the same level with the two witnesses.

“In the confusion of their terror they knew not how otherwise to word it, than by an expression of ecstatic longing for the continuance of what they had, of their earnest readiness to do their little best, if they could but secure it . . . and themselves wait in humble service and reverent attention on what their dull heaviness had prevented their enjoying and profiting by, to the full. They knew and felt it: Lord—Rabbi—Master—It is good for us to be here . . . yet how to secure it, their terror could not suggest, save in the language of ignorance and semi-conscious confusion. They knew not what they said” (Edersheim, p. 98).

“The spirit might be willing, but the flesh was weak. . . . Even when they are awake, they are dazed and confounded. How much too of what we might see do we fail to see, not because of positive evil, and yet because of lack of energy to reach what is so near, yet so beyond us” (Grant, p. 390). We need to pray daily in this spirit, lest we miss the mark:

**From prayer that asks that I may be
Sheltered from winds that beat on Thee
From fearing when I should aspire,
From faltering when I should climb
higher,
From silken self, O Captain, free**

Thy soldier who would follow Thee.

**From subtle love of softening things,
From easy choices, weakenings,
Not thus are spirits fortified,
Not this way went the Crucified,
From all that dims Thy Calvary,
O Lamb of God, deliver me.**

**Give me the love that leads the way,
The faith that nothing can dismay,
The hope no disappointments tire,
The passion that will burn like fire,
Let me not sink to be a clod:
Make me Thy fuel, Flame of God.**

— Amy Wilson Carmichael
Gold Cord, facing p. 1

In the middle of His proposal—*while he was yet speaking*—Peter is stopped at once by an overwhelming spectacle. God acts to show that Christ has the pre-eminent place alone. *A cloud came and overshadowed them*—“**the well-known token of the Divine Presence as it had led Israel of old through the desert, and dwelt in the sanctuary**” (Grant, p. 177).

9:35. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, hear him.

No wonder the disciples were afraid.

“It was, in fact, the holiest of all unveiled. They stood where, only once a year, and with covering incense and atoning blood, the feet of the high priest alone might stand. And they were but men of the people, no sacrifice in their hand, no covering incense, and the glori-

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ous Presence, which had long been absent from the temple—nay, had never appeared since the captivity in Babylon—was indeed here” (Grant, p. 177).

The shekinah glory is here with them in fulfillment of all of the Old Testament ritual—in the Person of their own gracious Lord Jesus. The voice is the revelation of the Father’s love resting on the Son, to put Him in His rightful place in their hearts. They heard the voice, falling on their knees in awestruck worship.

“How long the silence had lasted, and the last rays of the cloud had passed, we know not. Presently, it was a gentle touch that roused them. It was the Hand of Jesus, as with words of comfort He reassured them: Arise and be not afraid (Matthew 17:7). And as, startled (Mark 9:8), they looked around about them, they saw no man save Jesus only. The heavenly visitants had gone, the last glow of the light-cloud had faded away, the echoes of Heaven’s Voice had died out. It was night, and they were on the Mount with Jesus, and with Jesus only” (Edersheim, p. 98).

Matthew tells us that the Lord commanded them to tell no one about it before His resurrection (17:4).

“After all, as yet even these favored disciples know little of what is implied by this glorious vision; and the rest seem not to have been prepared for it in any way, so that it is forbidden to be told them. It would not have given light, but dazzled” (Grant, p. 177).

One result of the vision is that after this, the disciples, unless with special reason, no longer called Him “rabbi,” teacher. Henceforth it was “Lord.” At the Last Supper, there was one noteworthy exception. The eleven said, “Lord, is it I?” Judas said, “Rabbi, is it I?” After the transfiguration, the disciples had a new reverence for the Lord Jesus.

Another result of the vision of His glory is that the hearts of the disciples were **“strengthened in view of the cross by the knowledge of the end before them. ‘The knowledge of His glory’ is given to sustain them by the way: ‘glory and virtue’ are linked together as principles of the divine calling; for ‘if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him’ (1 Peter 1:3; 2 Timothy 2:12)”** (Grant, p. 177).

“On Hermon the Lord and His disciples had reached the highest point in this history. Henceforth it is a descent into the Valley of Humiliation and Death!” (Edersheim, p. 101).

III. GREATNESS IN HUMILITY *(vv. 37-50)*

“Luke now brings together four short incidents in which he shows the disciples’ lack of faith, their slowness to learn, their pride and their intolerance. It is an impressive sequence and makes a sad conclusion to his Galilean section. The disciples have much to learn” (Morris, p. 173).

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First incident (vv. 37-43):
Their Faithlessness

The disciples must learn that no kingdom can be built by faithless men. This comes in through death and resurrection, the power and presence of Christ: *Bring thy son here* (v. 41). The power of Christ is the same in the valley as it is on the mountain top.

“What is that which confronts Him down there in the valley? A laddie, twisted, distorted, writhing, foaming at his mouth. What is the matter with him? He is demon possessed.

“Who is that boy? . . . an only son . . . In the valley an only begotten son of a man, demon possessed. Coming down from the mount the Only begotten Son of God. If He had never come down from the mountain that boy would have remained in that condition. But He came down. ‘Being found in fashion as a man’ . . . He has humbled Himself and come down” (Morgan, p. 128).

Why had the nine disciples failed to exorcise the demons? Their helplessness is explained privately in Mark 9:28-29. Theirs was a problem of lost spiritual power. We can learn from this, for we too are faced with human weakness and Satanic power. We need to put on the armor and to understand how to use the weapons of our warfare. We need the shield of faith. We must be praying always with all prayer and supplication (Ephesians 6:10-18). Unbelief is the secret of all weakness. This is one lesson taught here. If we are conscious that we do not believe as we might, we can roll our

unbelief on the Lord! Mark tells us that this is what the father of the boy did: *“Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief”* (9:24).

In the midst of divergent details between the narratives of the three gospels here, one thing stands out in which they are in accord.

This is when the Lord speaks of the faithless disciples in **“language of bitter disappointment and sorrow. . . . For one moment we have a glimpse into the Savior’s soul: the poignant sorrow of His disappointment at the unbelief of the faithless and perverse (twisted) generation with which He had so long borne”** (Edersheim, pp. 106-07).

Second Incident (vv.44-45):
Their Slowness to Learn

As the Lord Jesus journeyed back toward Capernaum,

“He was insisting again upon the necessity for the Cross. He had talked to them about it at Caesarea Philippi eight days before, and they were afraid. They went to the mount; they heard Moses and Elijah talk about it.

“They heard the voice of God saying, This is My Son, hear Him; and now they had seen that demon cast out; and as they traveled, He again told them that He must be *delivered up into the hands of men*, and charged them to let the words *‘sink into their ears’*” (Morgan, italics added, p. 128).

“They did not understand, however, for it was hid from them, we are told, and they perceived it not: and they feared to ask

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Him of that saying. Had they been in more intimate communion with Him, they would have doubtless turned to Him and asked for fuller information, and He would have given it gladly.

We notice as we go on through these records that there were times when there seemed to be no restraint, and the Lord was able to speak to them freely of what was in His heart; at other times, when He spoke of His death and resurrection, there seemed to be a barrier between Him and them. They were perplexed.

The root-cause of their lack of faith and of understanding is seen in the incident that follows" (Ironsides, p. 313).

Third Incident (vv. 46-48):
Their Pride

"It was the common Jewish view that there would be distinctions of rank in the Kingdom of Heaven. It can scarcely be necessary to prove this by Rabbinic quotations, since the whole system of Rabbinism and Pharisaism, with its separation from the vulgar and ignorant, rests upon it.

"But even within the charmed circle of Rabbinism, there would be distinctions, due to learning, merit, and even to favoritisms. . . . And in the Messianic age God would assign booths to each according to his rank. . . .

"How deep-rooted were such thoughts and feelings, appears not only from the dispute of the disciples by the way, but from the request proffered by the mother of Zebedee's children and her sons at a later period, in terrible

contrast to the near Passion of our Lord (Matthew 20:20).

"It does, indeed come upon us as a most painful surprise, and as sadly incongruous, this constant self-obtrusion, self-assertion, and low, carnal self-seeking; this Judaistic trifling in face of the utter self-abnegation, and self-sacrifice of the Son of Man. Surely, the contrast between Christ and His disciples seems at times almost as great as between Him and the other Jews.

"If we would measure His stature, or comprehend the infinite distance between His aims and teaching and those of His contemporaries, let it be by comparison with even the best of His disciples. It must have been part of His humiliation and self-exinanition (emptying) to bear with them. And is it not, in a sense, still so as regards us all?" (Ederheim, pp. 115-16).

The Lord searches heart motives. He would have us be great, but we are to recognize that our natural ideas regarding greatness, position, status, and even humility itself are different from His.

**Humility, the fairest, loveliest flower
That bloomed in Paradise;
The first that died—
It is so frail and delicate a thing
That if it look upon itself 'tis gone;
And he who ventures to esteem it his,
Shows by that very thought he has it
not.**

—Caroline Fry

What is greatness? This is greatness: to be a child in the arms of Jesus. A child has

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no status in the world and none of the world's wisdom, and he is the object of Christ's love. *Whoever receives this child in my name receives me.*

“The child stands for the helpless and the unimportant. The test of loving service is that we receive such in the name of Christ. . . . True greatness is not earthly greatness but its antithesis. The really great man is the lowly one. Jesus is not saying that the great man is one who is ready to serve his stint in a lowly place. Rather the one who is least is the one who is great. He does not say ‘greatest.’ In the kingdom men do not compare themselves with one another. True greatness consists in lowly service” (Morris, p. 176).

“A little child may have in its heart the seed of ambition as of all other evil, but not the man who estimates himself but as that. To him no ambitious thought is possible. While the Lord in His grace identifies Himself with the least of His own, so as to assure every one that his littleness will not make him of little account to *Him*. This is an assurance which prevents the consciousness of nothingness becoming a distress; nay, rather, enables us only the more to realize the sweetness of a love so great” (Grant, *The Gospels*, p. 182).

Fourth Incident (vv. 49-50):
Their Sectarianism

John is the principal one here. He *answered*, **“which means that he responded to Jesus’ words. He may mean,**

‘But surely there are limits. This would not apply to a case like this.’ Or perhaps he had seen that his actions came under condemnation and his conscience was troubled” (Morris, p. 176).

9:49. We saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to hinder him because he does not follow along with us.

“Evidently this man whom they had seen was one who believed in Jesus and in the power of His name, and he undertook to seek to exorcise demons in the name of Jesus, and evidently the demons came out. But this gave no joy to the heart of John or the other disciples. They were indignant that anyone should be using the name of their Master in this way if he did not actually belong to their little company. How much of that spirit we see among Christians who are so obsessed with the idea that they alone constitute the elect of God, that they find no pleasure in the work which others are doing for Christ who do not belong to their particular sect or group” (Ironsides, p. 315).

“A man, who, thus forsaking the methods of Jewish exorcists, owned Jesus in the face of the Jewish world, could not be far from the Kingdom of Heaven; at any rate, he could not quickly speak evil of Him” (Edersheim, p. 117).

The Lord's reply to John is definite:

50. Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you.

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“Christ has never entrusted a monopoly of His truth to any distinctive circle of fellowship formed by His followers.

No body of Christians can claim to be the sole guardians of the historic faith. There may be some whose light is clearer or cloudier than that of others on some particular point of faith or order; no form of institutional religion, whether it be the massed millions of Rome or some tiny splinter amongst our Pentecostal friends or of the sons of Plymouth, can ever reflect more than the private interpretations or the personal opinions of its members” (Harold St. John, p. 100).

DOWN IS UP

Reversal of the world’s values is the central truth of this section. The Lord Jesus Christ is the great Example (Philippians 2:5-11). We mark this in tracing these seven downward and upward steps:

- 1. He made Himself of no reputation:
God highly exalted Him.***
- 2. He took upon Himself the servant’s
form***

God gave Him a name above every name.

***3. He was made in the likeness of men:
God causes every knee to bow to Him.***

***4. He was found in fashion as a man:
God leads all heaven to acknowledge the
Man.***

***5. He humbled Himself:
God causes all on earth to own Him as
the Exalted One.***

***6. He was obedient:
God makes all the disobedient to submit
to Him.***

***7. He died the death of the cross:
Every tongue confesses His Lordship.***

Frederick Edward Marsh
Fully Furnished, pp. 120-21

May we let this mind be in us.

Measure thy life by loss instead of gain:

**Not by wine drunk,
But the wine poured forth,
For love’s strength standeth
In love’s sacrifice—
And whoso suffers most
Hath most to give.**

--Unknown

MEMORY: (Luke 9:25-26): For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

XIII. TOWARD JERUSALEM

Questions on Luke 9:51-10:37

FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

REVIEW: Luke 9:18-50 by reading the passage again and going over the Notes of Lesson 12.

1. Write down a blessing you received from the notes.

READ: Luke 9:51-10:37.

DO QUESTIONS: 2-3.

READ NOTES: Pages 47-48.

2. List the main events in Luke 9:51-10:37.

3. List the Lord's main concerns in Luke 9:51-10:37. Consider your own priorities in the light of the Lord's main concerns. Are they the same?

MEMORY: Review: Luke 19:10; 24:19; 2:49; 3:21-22; 4:14; 5:32; 6:45; 7:22-23; 8:18; 9:23-26.

LEARN: Luke 10:2.

I. DISCIPLESHIP PATTERNED IN THE SAVIOR.

READ: Luke 9:51-62.

DO QUESTIONS: 4-9.

READ NOTES: Pages 49-54

4. Why didn't the Samaritans receive the Lord Jesus? How did their attitude change a few years later? Why? (Acts 8:5-7)

5. What did James and John want to do and how did the Lord Jesus rebuke them?

6. Have you shown a spirit like this toward anyone recently? If so, what is the remedy? (See especially v. 56)

7. Why do you think John's attitude toward the Samaritans changed in Acts 8:14-15?

Meditate on the Lord's encounter with each of the three persons in verses 57-62.

8. Write down the statement of each of the three and how the Lord tests each of these statements.

9. Put these statements and the Lord's answers into the language and situations of today.

II. DISCIPLESHIP PRACTICED BY THE SEVENTY

READ: Luke 10:1-24.

DO QUESTIONS: 10-12.

MEMORY: (Luke 10:2): And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

READ NOTES: Pages 54-61.

10. What is the laborer's first responsibility toward the harvest? How do you personally plan to enter into this aspect of the harvest?

11. Why do you think He includes the section from verses 12-16? Does it have any warning for us? (See 2 Corinthians 5:10; Luke 12:48)

12. What are some of the things we learn from the Lord's words to the 70, their return and report, and our Lord's comments about their mission? What can you apply to your own life THIS week?

III. DISCIPLESHIP PICTURED BY THE SAMARITAN

READ: Luke 10:25-37.

DO QUESTIONS: 13-22.

READ NOTES: Pages 62-64.

13. Consider 10:25-29. Why is the lawyer on the defensive? How does he try to justify himself?

14. Do you notice this attitude in people today?

15. Do you ever try to justify yourself? How?

16. How can you get over doing this?

17. Since we are NOT saved by keeping the law ("by works of the law shall no flesh be justified" Galatians 2:16), why did the Lord Jesus tell the lawyer he could have eternal life by keeping the law (verse 28)? (See Romans 3:23; James 2:10; Gal. 3:24 etc.)

18. Think about being a good neighbor.

19. Contrast the attitude and actions of the Samaritan with the others in the story.

20. What exactly is the Lord's answer to the lawyer's question in verse 29?

21. How can we carry out Luke 20:37? Be specific. (See Galatians 6:10; Romans 12:13; Hebrews 6:10; 13:2, 20-21.)

22. Show how the Good Samaritan could also picture the Lord Jesus Himself. In that case, who is the one who fell among thieves?

MEMORY: (Luke 10:2): And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

XIII. TOWARD JERUSALEM

(Luke 9:51-10:37)

"... his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem . . ." (Daniel 6:10)

"It came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51).

**O Father, help lest our poor love refuse
For our beloved the life that they would choose,
And in our fear of loss for them, or pain,
Forget eternal gain.**

**Show us the gain, the golden harvest there
For corn of wheat that they have buried here;
Lest human love defraud them, and betray,
Teach us, O God, to pray.**

**Teach us to pray remembering Calvary,
For as the Master must the servant be;
We see their face set toward Jerusalem,
Let us not hinder them.**

—Amy Wilson Carmichael
Gold Cord, p. 270

"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'" (Luke 9:23)

Toward Jerusalem and the cross!

This is the turning point. The work in Galilee is finished. The Lord now sets His face toward Jerusalem. Will we follow Him there?

It is not the easy road, this path the Lord has chosen. But cords of love have bound us to Him.

The true follower will not be left behind now. With Him, we turn our faces toward Jerusalem and the cross.

As we follow along the road to Jerusalem, we are learning some lessons from the greatest of all teachers. Our Lord instructs us in the way of discipleship.

He uses the best teaching methods:

MEMORY: (Luke 10:2): And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

First, He sets the pattern; the Teacher Himself is the example of what it means to be a disciple.

Then because He knows that students learn also by experience, He sends us out to practice what we have seen in Him.

Finally, He sums it all up with an object lesson, a picture we can never forget.

Now in this section of Luke, we turn our eyes to the great Teacher and consider His lessons in DISCIPLESHIP:

***I. PATTERNED IN THE SAVIOR
(9:51-56)***

***II. PRACTICED BY THE SEVENTY
(9:57-10:24)***

***III. PICTURED IN THE
SAMARITAN
(10:25-37)***

As we turn to Luke, let us read again the words and pray the prayer poem at the top of this chapter. As you take the road to Jerusalem, others will turn after you and together follow in His train—to Jerusalem, to the cross, to glory.

***I. DISCIPLESHIP PATTERNED
IN THE SAVIOR
(9:51-56)***

The life of the disciple is patterned in the Lord Jesus. Our Lord never calls us to a life He has not lived. He never challenges us to a contest that He has not met. The Master Teacher is Himself the example of the learner, the true disciple. “Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things that He suffered” (Hebrews 5:8). What He always knew by

divine omniscience Christ learned on earth through experience. Becoming Man, He took the place of dependence upon the Father. He humbled Himself, and He learned the meaning of a life of obedience. Finally, He set His face like a flint to go to Jerusalem, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8). He has called His disciples to follow Him there, to deny themselves and take up the cross daily. The Lord Jesus Christ has set for us the pattern of discipleship.

The Setting: The Journey from Galilee to Jerusalem (9:51-19:44)

From verse 4:14 to 9:50, we have Luke devoting himself to presenting Christ’s ministry in Galilee. We watch Him reveal Himself progressively as the Messiah. At verse 51 and going on to 19:44, we have the beginning of a new division of the book that allows us to watch His conduct and preaching as He makes His way to Jerusalem (cf. 9:53; 13:22,23; 17:11; 18:31). This is a significant portion of the entire gospel because we see things through Luke that none of the other gospel writers mentioned.

“Hence, we follow our Lord through the last six months of His earthly life, to the cross, and beyond the cross, until we see Him in resurrection power and glory” (Morgan, p. 129).

Luke does not here follow a strictly chronological order, but he does follow a logical order. Some scholars believe the incidents happened on several different trips the Savior made between Galilee and

MEMORY: (Luke 10:41-42): But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

Jerusalem during the last months before His trial and crucifixion. They refer to John 7:10; 10:22; 11:6; 12:1 and like verses to prove their position.

In the wide view which Luke takes of this period, therefore, he presents what were probably three separate journeys as one—

And “that towards the great end. In its conscious aim and object, all—from the moment of His finally quitting Galilee to His final Entry into Jerusalem—formed, in the highest sense, only one journey. And this Luke designates in a peculiar manner. Just as he had spoken, not of Christ’s death, but of His exodus (9:31)—of ‘outgoing’—which included His resurrection and ascension, so he now tells us that, ‘when the days of His uptaking’—including and pointing to His ascension—‘were being fulfilled,’ He also steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem (v. 51)” (Edersheim, p. 128).

The Setting: In the Context of the Four Gospels

Luke’s account of Christ’s ministry during the last six months of His life and the journey toward the cross fits into the narrative of Christ’s three appearances in Jerusalem as described by John. And the unique section in Luke (9:51-18:14) supplies the record of what took place before, during, and after those journeys, of which the outcome is told by John. . . .

“We have now some insight into the plan of St. Luke’s Gospel, as compared with that of the others. We see that St.

Luke forms a kind of transition and is a sort of connecting link between the other two Synoptists and St. John. . . . The Gospel by St. Matthew has for its main object the Discourses or teaching of the Lord, around which the history groups itself. It is intended as a demonstration, primarily addressed to the Jews, and in a form peculiarly suited to them, that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the living God. The Gospel by St. Mark is a rapid survey of the history of Christ as such; it deals mainly with the Galilean ministry. The Gospel by St. John, which gives the highest, the reflective, view of the eternal Son as the Word, deals almost exclusively with the Jerusalem ministry. And the Gospel by St. Luke complements the narratives in the other two Gospels (Matthew and Mark), and it supplements them by tracing, what is not done otherwise: the ministry in Perea (i.e. Trans-Jordan). Thus, it also forms a transition to the fourth Gospel of the Judaeen ministry” (Edersheim, pp. 127-28).

Heaven’s Timetable

God outlines His own timetable for disciples:

“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

In patterning the life of the disciple, our Lord was always working toward the meeting of Heaven’s schedule for His life. He left heaven on time—*“when the ful-*

MEMORY: (Luke 10:41-42): But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

ness of the time had come (Galatians 4:4); and He returned to heaven on time (Daniel 9:24-26). He knew just how long He was to continue His extended tour in Galilee before His death, during that time preaching “*the acceptable year of the Lord*” (Luke 4:18-19). He knew that time was running out, when “*He set His face to go to Jerusalem*” (9:51). During the days of His life, He made various accurate predictions concerning the time of His death—“*My hour is not yet come.*” As He turned His face toward Jerusalem, He knew that the actual hour of death would be some six months later. It would follow His final ministries in Judea, Perea, Samaria, and Galilee. Through it all the Lord moved under the direction of the Father, in accord with the timetable of Heaven.

We are calling this division of Luke “Toward Jerusalem” because, although Jesus continued to move back and forth for six months in the regions neighboring Jerusalem, His eye was on one target event—the cross—and that target date was set by God (Jensen).

Discipleship Exemplified by Our Lord

The Lord Jesus is the example of the true disciple. Through His incarnation He qualified as the Perfect Learner through suffering. “*He learned obedience through the things He suffered.*” Why? “*That He might bring many sons to glory*”—to completion, to the finishing point, to conformity to Himself (Hebrews 2:10; Romans 8:29). He suffers much in this section of Luke:

First, He meets rejection by the Samaritans (9:53); then He finds again misunder-

standing in His own disciples (9:54); thirdly, He knows disappointment in cities that heard, but despised Him, His message, His disciples (10:13-15); finally, He meets a dissembler instead of a disciple—a lawyer desiring to justify himself (10:25-29). In all this suffering, the True Disciple learns the meaning of obedience, the joy of pleasing the Father. Thus He sets for us the pattern of the disciple.

As we view Him in the section, we are moved by His own heart of compassion. We sense His urgent and pressing desire to disciple men—that men might be reached in time and spared loss of eternal life. He is concerned that men might experience the will of God in their lives and the joy of fruitfulness to God. We see Him in this portion of Luke continuing to “*seek and to save that which is lost.*”

Now we come to verses 51-56 and we learn three things from His perfect obedience: 1) the cost of following Him, of going to Jerusalem with all that implies; 2) the spirit in which His work is only to be done; and 3) the life-giving purpose of His mission.

The Cost of Discipleship

All who would follow Him must first consider the cost of being identified with the Savior in His rejection. To do so involves being identified with His purpose: “*To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace*” (Luke 1:79). Seeing lives saved by being brought to Him—that is the divine incentive.

“He set His face toward Jerusalem,

MEMORY: (Luke 10:41-42): But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

steadfastly” (He, Himself, Greek emphatic). He set His face with fixedness of purpose in the face of difficulty and danger. The first purpose of Christ seems to have been to take the more direct road to Jerusalem, through Samaria, and not to follow that of the festive pilgrim-bands which traveled to Jerusalem through Perea in order to avoid the land of their hated rivals. For anyone traveling to Jerusalem, this was a dangerous way, fraught with real risk. We see this in the attitude of the villagers.

“Seeing that His face was set toward Jerusalem, [they] would have nothing to do with Jesus. Their feud with the Jews was so bitter that they would not help anyone travel to Jerusalem, though apparently they did not mind receiving Galileans as such. Josephus tells us that Samaritans were not averse to ill-treating pilgrims going up to Jerusalem, even to the extent of murdering them on occasion” (Morris, p. 179).

We who would be servants of His, following in His footsteps, can expect to experience indifference and rejection by those who are opposed to the cross of Christ. This is part of “*the fellowship of His sufferings,*” and it brings us into that closer knowledge of Him (Philippians 3:10-11). No cross, no crown! “*The servant is not greater than his Master.*”

The Spirit of Discipleship

Here the Lord reveals His heart to us. We see His seeking spirit. He would risk all for the sake of seeing the Samaritans

brought into eternal life; they remained aloof. They preferred at this time, and willfully chose, to treat His gracious ministry with traditional contempt because of the set of His face toward Jerusalem. So, in the spirit of the true “learner through suffering,” He saw to it that His disciples did not quit. Such was the intensity of His desire to see lives saved, He saw to it that they continued on. And they went to another village.

That is the spirit of true discipleship. Once ignored, He still gave others a chance. This is the spirit of longsuffering. (This spirit is reached by us through the tribulation which works patience.) The spirit which led Him to the cross was a persevering spirit.

The experience in Samaria tested the spirit of the disciples. James and John were not called “Sons of Thunder” for nothing. Having been but recently with the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration and perhaps remembering the spirit of Elijah whom they saw there, they recognized and attributed to our Lord the power of that great prophet. They applied to Christ for fire from heaven to consume these despicably unappreciative Samaritans!

But the “*anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God*” (James 1:20). Such retaliation would destroy those He was seeking to save. The disciples sound like the enemy. They call for a work diametrically opposed to His. Yet they had been chosen by Him, had traveled with Him, and had been specially taught by Him. But they were not yet one with Him. They evidenced another spirit.

“His disciples in loyalty, went to a

MEMORY: (Luke 10:41-42): But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

Samaritan village; and in loyalty, when the Samaritans would not receive Him, would have destroyed the Samaritans by fire. It was loyalty, but it was loyalty out of harmony with the spirit of the Master, and out of harmony with the method of the Master. It is possible to be zealous for the honor of God in a spirit which puts us out of fellowship with God. That is what kept Moses out of the promised land. Loyalty in a wrong spirit” (Morgan, pp. 131-32).

Consider His spirit.

“His face was towards Jerusalem. That revealed His spirit. That revealed His attitude. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. When He was reviled, He reviled not again. That is the spirit of the cross. . . .

“Are we with James and John, loyal, passionately devoted, wanting to destroy men by fire? Our loyalty, because it is in a wrong spirit, puts us out of fellowship with Jesus Christ. Fellowship with Christ means going all the way to Calvary, bearing shame and scoffing rude, with no anger, and no desire to call down fire” (Morgan, p. 132).

We have seen discipleship patterned by our Lord Jesus. Now the Lord will test the hearts of those who say they will follow to Jerusalem, and He will send them out to practice what they have learned from Him.

II. DISCIPLESHIP PRACTICED BY THE SEVENTY (9:57-10:24)

Before sending out the seventy, the Lord sets before them the principles of discipleship. He does this by probing the attitudes of three would-be disciples.

Three Would-Be Disciples (9:57-62)

(1) “In the first case there is the enthusiasm which looks well, but needs a more sober estimate of what is involved in following Christ” (Grant, p. 393).

A certain man is attracted by our Lord Jesus and His teaching. Perhaps this man recognized that the Lord was truly “*a prophet sent from God.*” He came to Christ and spoke words which seemed to ring true: “I will follow You wherever You go!” Words of wholehearted commitment—how cheering such words could be to the One who was looking for true disciples. (We remember the Roman centurion whose faith so pleased the Lord’s heart.) Here is one who, by his words at least, wishes to make an offer of obedience.

But the Lord tells him to count the cost. Here was a man who had spoken with all the ardor of the seed that has fallen on rocky ground. In his instant enthusiastic response to the words the Lord has spoken, he promises total allegiance with all the self-confidence he can exude. It is obvious he has not counted the cost. He hasn’t the slightest understanding of the rejection and sorrow and suffering that lie ahead of the Lord and he certainly has no estimate of his own frailty.

The Lord opens a window and shows

MEMORY: (Luke 10:41-42): But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

this loyalist that the cost of embracing the Savior involves the sacrifice of the amenities that make life comfortable. The Lord is not complaining about His lot in life. He is showing the man—and all of us—that he who would travel far will have wound and scar. He wants us with eyes open to recognize that discipleship has a price, a price that is not always easy to pay.

Detachment from the world is the first principle of discipleship. Materialism can have no place in the heart of the disciple. Today we face the same issue. We can ask ourselves, does my lifestyle run me—so that I have no time to follow the Lord? Have I no time or desire to share His life in ministering to others? Is my lifestyle running me, or is it a subservient background to the Lord's leading in my life?

(2) Jesus calls another: "Follow me." The Lord has a purpose for this man: "Go and proclaim everywhere the Kingdom of God" (v. 60). This high calling of our Lord's makes a great demand upon this man. It means the abandonment of one of his nearest and dearest earthly ties. The Lord has immediate need of the man, and we sense the urgency of His command in those two brief words, "Follow me!"

Here we learn the second principle of discipleship: Christ's call when it conflicts with any other comes first. But this man was unready. He must first go and bury his father. Now, the fact that he is here talking with the Lord suggests that his father has not yet died. Had he, this man would have been home making preparations for the funeral. His response to the Lord allows us to believe his father is old and possibly infirm, but certainly alive. He wants to wait until he can fulfill his

obligations as a son. The Lord tells him that that is not necessary, that there are plenty of others who are not following Him who will look after the funeral arrangements for the dead.

"Our Master's work waits for us, and our Master's work must have the chief place in our hearts. We are God's priests in the world, and, like the priests of old, our mourning must be kept carefully within bounds (Lev. 21:1). 'Weeping,' says an old divine, 'must not hinder working, and mourning must not be allowed to run into excess.' In fact, one of the sure cures for the sense of loss is to become taken up, as God directs, in caring for others. Our empty hearts and lives are then filled, as He sheds His love abroad in our hearts and gives a practical, loving care for others, in the time of our own bereavement" (Ryle).

The Lord Jesus Himself had a greater purpose for this man. He had a plan for greater blessing and plainly told him so. So it is today. He can speak of His plan and will for my life just as plainly. Will I trust Him for it? This is the question each time I hear His call, His commission to a new task.

"Christ's call is superior to the highest and the most beautiful of earth's obligations. That is the cross" (Morgan, p. 133).

(3) The third case "though very similar to the second, requires the renunciation of the claims of the living, as much as of the dead" (Grant, p. 394).

MEMORY: (Luke 10:41-42): But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

This man's response manifested a divided heart. This is indeed a feebleness to our Lord's call than either of the other two. There really was no apparent need or real responsibility on the man's part. Farewells could be lengthy and leading to setting a household in order. At best they could only postpone following the Lord. Postponements are always to be avoided in the believer's life. The reply could well have been the sign of this man's lack of complete faith in the Lord. It seems to have served as an expedient excuse.

But our Lord, who knew what was in man, and whose Word discerns the very "thoughts and intents of our hearts," replied to this man: "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (v. 62). He is talking about **"the one-handed eastern plow, frail and easily overturned"** (Grant, p. 394).

This blows the man's cover. The Lord effectively reveals the state of his divided heart. Like Lot's wife, he was looking back to the old life. He was using postponement as an excuse. The Lord cuts across his delaying tactics.

We have the third principle of discipleship. Nothing is to interfere with immediate obedience. Promptness is the essence of obedience. Obedience lacks its essence when it lacks promptness. Christ let no earthly tie interfere with His obedience. The servant is not greater than his Lord.

After teaching these principles of discipleship, the Lord turns to the harvest field and sends the seventy.

The Harvest Field

Before sending out the seventy to herald His coming, Christ points out to them the spiritual need. *"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few"* (10:2).

Here we begin a section of Luke which is peculiar to this Gospel. Luke 10:1-18:14 except for 11:14-32, is unique, and this material is not found in any other gospel.

"Most of the ministry of our Lord at this time was being conducted in the country 'on the other side of Jordan,' which now we usually call Perea (Trans-Jordan). Jerusalem and Judea constituted the center; that was the land of pride and prejudice and supposed privilege. To the north was Samaria, the region toward which Judea felt perpetual hostility. Further north was Galilee. 'Galilee of the Gentiles' was a term of contempt. Judea held Galilee in contempt.

"There was a third region. It lay 'on the other side Jordan,' and the attitude of Judea to it was not that of hostility, nor yet that of contempt; it was that rather of indifference. Perea was the most neglected area, from the standpoint of the religious ministry emanating from Jerusalem and Judea. Samaria hated, Galilee held in contempt, Perea neglected.

"If that be understood, we at once see the suggestiveness of the fact that most of the last six months in the ministry of our Lord was spent over Jordan, in the neglected area. Luke has told us in this section (10:1-18:14) largely about that ministry.

"Matthew and Mark tell us nothing of the period. John does record some

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incidents that took place then—two visits our Lord paid to Jerusalem, a time of quiet retirement in Bethabara beyond Jordan, and the raising of Lazarus. John, however, tells us nothing that Luke does, and Luke tells us nothing that John does” (Morgan, p. 134).

Luke’s order is not that of chronology, but of subject matter, the teaching of the Lord, that **“net of love which the Lord threw out to Israel”** (Lange).

The Lord cares about neglected areas, and He sees them as fruitful fields of labor. Do we? Through Judean eyes, those same areas appeared as hated, contemptible, and worthy of neglect. Yet Christ visited them all. His disciples must have been fully cognizant of Jewish attitudes and may have held such personally until His calling. No wonder He first called them to Himself, to be with Him first, before sending them into the harvest fields. They needed to learn of Him.

Like those disciples, we need to see the harvest field as He sees it. Do we seek to choose our area of labor for the Lord, rather than to allow Him to point it out to us—because of personal preference or bias? In regard to the attractiveness of that field, are we then in need of a different perspective, His perspective? Do we really believe that His controlling love can give the field of His choosing an attractiveness because He is there?

We are co-laborers in the Lord’s field—*“yoke-fellows”* together with Him. We must, therefore, exhibit His spirit, not our own. This promise then is still good:

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are

heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

Our burdens are then borne by Him. The operative power for coping with them is His!

The Lord looks on the field, and He sees a harvest. How do we see it? In John 4:35, on another occasion, we glimpse something of the sense of urgency in His heart. He was impelled in His mission to reach the lost.

“Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest. Behold I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.” To the farmer, a whited harvest spelled over-**dueness.**

“It meant that the grain was still standing in the field when it should have been cut at some sooner time before it had a chance ‘to go to seed.’ The whiteness of the husks, due to over-dryness indicated that the wind will scatter the good grain over the field. It has gone too long before reaping!” (Robertson).

The world of Christ’s day was overripe for His gracious message.

The Sending of Seventy Missionaries

The resources are in Christ, and He sends His workers into the field. *“Go your*

MEMORY: (Luke 10:41-42): But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

ways: behold, I send you out. . . .” (v. 3).

How does He send them? This seems to be an organized campaign on the part of our Lord. He sends out the seventy in pairs, prayerfully, with a promise, and unencumbered. He sends them to prepare the way before Him. Let us look more closely at these first missionaries and their practices.

*Practice Along Personal Lines: Supply
and Social Customs*

There was nothing in the life to suggest luxury. In the pattern of the Lord Jesus, theirs was a call to personal poverty.

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

They took the necessities, but remained unencumbered by non-essentials.

“The entire outfit of these first missionaries shows that they were plain fishermen, farmers, or shepherds; and to such men there was no extraordinary self-denial in the matter or the mode of their mission. . . . You are going to your brethren in the neighboring villages, and the best way to get to their hearts and their confidence is to throw yourselves upon their hospitality. Nor was there any departure from the simple manners of the country in this” (Thomson, *The Land and the Book*).

Eastern prophets of any religion were used to being provided for by the household with whom they stayed.

“He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward” (Mt. 10:41).

10:7. For the laborer is worthy of his wages.

The mission was urgent; it was not of long term duration. Some of their practices were in view of this time limitation. They did not loiter by the way in idle conversation with friends whom they chanced to meet. The customary salutations were long and sometimes insincere. They could easily cost an hour’s delay.

The Lord had instructed them not to waste time or in any way hinder the prompt and faithful discharge of their important mission. They were not to be distracted by ceremonial fastidiousness regarding the food that they would eat or the homes in which they would stay. In those days many in Trans-Jordan disregarded the demands of ceremonial purity. The disciples were not to insist on it.

Neither were they to go from house to house in a village, wasting more time and strength. They were to take up lodging where they were accepted and to stay there until the work in that place was finished. It was not a one-night stand sort of thing. This remains an important principle of evangelism.

*Practice Along Public Lines:
The Work on Display*

In their reception or rejection, they were identified with Christ. *“He that receiveth you, receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me” (Matthew 10:40).* *“He that taketh not his cross and followeth Me is not worthy of*

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Me” (Matthew 10:38). In discipleship, they were ever to be conformed to His pattern, united to Him regardless of outward circumstances. No doubt they suffered much rejection. Had He not warned them that they would be as lambs in the midst of wolves (v. 3)? And “*the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me*” (v. 16). As for the way they handled rejection, they simply left the area with a symbolic warning and reserved it for His judgment (vv. 10-12).

A Solemn Warning

“Here were comparatively few who opened their hearts and homes to the messengers, but to them came blessing. As for the rest, they were left in their sins. The very dust of their cities was a witness against them. Nevertheless the fact remained that the kingdom of God had come nigh them. In the next few verses we hear the Lord pronouncing the judgments that were to come upon the cities in which He had done the most of His mighty works” (Ironsides, pp. 333-34).

We feel His heart of yearning over them as He cries, Woe! Alas! They would have to reap a more severe condemnation in the judgment day because of their greater opportunity.

Chorazin was associated with our Lord’s preaching and miracles, but denounced by Him because of its unbelief. It was situated about two miles from Capernaum. Bethsaida (“House of Fishes,” “House of Hunting,” or “Catching”) was on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee,

just south of Capernaum; it was the home of Peter, Andrew, and Philip. The Lord hunted for many in these cities to turn to Him in repentance, but He did not catch many. These three disciples were the more apparent part of His catch. Capernaum was an important Roman post. The Lord made it His headquarters for some time, and so it became known as His city (Matthew 9:1).

“Chorazin and Bethsaida are compared with Tyre and Sidon, which under similar admonitions would have repented, while Capernaum, which, as for so long the home of Jesus, had truly been exalted to heaven, is compared with Sodom. And such guilt involved greater punishment.

“As for Capernaum, itself—standing on that vast field of ruins and upturned stones which marks the site of the modern Tell Hum, we feel that no description of it could be more pictorially true than that in which Christ prophetically likened the city in its downfall to the desolateness of death and ‘Hades’” (Edersheim, p. 139).

Practical Results Summarized in Two Reports

A. Their Report to Him

Luke does not give us the various individual reactions of the people who heard the message of the seventy. Instead, he focuses our attention upon the seventy missionaries themselves and their return to Jesus. As someone has said, “The best place to go after a time of spiritual service is to the Lord Jesus.” He alone can help

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you evaluate your ministry and give further instruction, together with the comfort and strength of His presence.

Perhaps our attention is directed to the seventy after their return in order to reassure us about three things: (1) His empowering is enough for any work, no matter how difficult; (2) He has a diligent care and continuing instruction for those He chooses to equip for service; and (3) Heaven's unseen eye is upon the work Christ bids us do.

Their report is taken up with the authority He had given them over the demons. The reason for their joy in this can probably be traced to their recent failure at this point through lack of faith (9:37). The seventy had received no specific instruction to cast out demons. The fact that this took place is a testimony to their faith as well as to His power. They now exult in the Savior's power. There is a mutual and genuine rejoicing together with Him.

B. His Response to Them

His response **“confirms, augments, and sanctifies their joy”** (Lange).

But it is accompanied by a caution regarding the very sin which was in Satan and caused his downfall. Christ warns His missionaries against personal pride.

“Through the Spirit of Truth, they had to make subject to them the spirits of lies; but in this noble task there lurks also a dark danger. . . . Therefore does He sanctify their righteous and augmented joy by a word of most earnest warning. . . . One may cast out devils

and still be a child of darkness (Matthew 7:22)” (Lange).

Now we examine what the Lord said to the seventy. “I beheld Satan fallen as lighting from heaven” (v. 18).

“That is the whole story of Satan from His viewpoint. I beheld Satan fallen. That is the origin of him; that is how he came to be what he is. I beheld Satan fallen. That is the history of him. I beheld Satan fallen. That is the destiny of him. They came back and were a little astonished that the demons had been subject unto them. In effect He said that they need not be. He knew the truth about Satan—the initial truth, the abiding truth, the universal truth—truth from the standpoint of the government and authority of God. I beheld Satan fallen. Behold, I have given you authority. I beheld Satan fallen. I send you. I have given you authority. That accounted for the victories they had gained” (Morgan, p. 137).

Then Christ calls them from earthly statistics to the heavenly:

10:20. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.

Satan is a defeated foe. When the disciples were identified with Christ, they were identified with Him in victory. They are to rejoice in this.

“Do not rejoice in that which is personal, in your success. Rejoice for

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evermore in the fact that you belong to the heaven, and the throne, and the God, and the Kingdom which are victorious over all the power of the enemy” (Morgan, p. 137).

“Thus already they are assured of a more blessed place than among the earthly people. They are enregistered in heaven (Hebrews 12:23), as citizens of that ‘better country’” (Grant, p. 396).

C. His Report to His Father (vv. 21-22)

“These verses are the crown and climax of the gospel. The joy of the seventy was quite different from the Lord’s . . . and the Lord is not content that we should have a joy of a different character and on a different basis from His own joy. That is why this is the top note of the gospel, because in these verses we are brought into the region of the Lord’s own personal joy, and the pleasure of the Father and the Son. . . .

“The Lord withdrew their hearts into the region of His own joy . . . and it formed His praises. On this occasion we are permitted to hear the Son speaking to the Father—what an immense interest to us! There is a holy character and sweetness about it that does not attach to anything else. . . .

“The Father is praised because He has hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes (v. 21). . . .

“There is the direct action of the Father and the Son in personal revelation. This is a blessed retreat. . . .

“This is an action of the Father revealing these precious heavenly things to babes, persons of no account in this world, but only subjects of affection. If we are prepared to be that, there is no limit to what we may get through divine favor. The new man is marked by an absence of self-importance and self-sufficiency. To be a babe indicates that we are subjects of divine work, so the self-importance of which we are all full naturally has come down, and a different spirit has come up, and then the Father can reveal heavenly things.

“Someone once asked J.N.D. (John Nelson Darby) to give him some hints as to the best way to study the Scriptures.

“He replied, ‘I find that when I come to the Word in the spirit of a newborn babe I get something.’

“It was not only that things were hidden from the wise and prudent, but they were not seen by men who were in the place of the greatest favor. With God. It is extraordinary to think that we are more favored of God than Daniel, David, Solomon, or Isaiah, or any of the great prophets and kings: they did not see what we see” (Coates, pp. 122, 124-25).

D. In a Private Place With the Lord
(vv. 23-24)

“What marks this section of the gospel is privacy: having turned to the disciples privately (v. 23). He said these things privately. What we get here we cannot get by the preaching or by the ministry of the Word” (Coates, p. 124).

If we really seek knowledge of Christ, it

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must be a private revelation to each heart. What does the Lord say to me in private? Meetings and ministry cannot take the place of this.

This is the one occasion in the New Testament where He rejoices, and we are taken into this. He sees beyond the cross to the bringing of many sons to glory.

**He and I, in that bright glory, One
deep joy shall share—
Mine, to be forever with Him; His,
that I am there!**

— Gerhard TerSteege (1697-1769)

III. DISCIPLESHIP PICTURED

IN THE SAMARITAN (10:25-37)

We have been considering the meaning of discipleship—patterned in the Lord and practiced by the seventy. Now the Lord gives us a beautiful picture of the true disciple. Here He illustrates the spirit of discipleship. It is not the spirit of legalism, ceremony, or ritual; but it is the spirit of Christ. He shows this to us in a story which many literary critics consider the greatest story ever told.

Right away, the story strikes a note of literary irony, for it is an anecdote told by a Jew to a Jew—but the hero is a Samaritan!

The Lord is challenged by a lawyer.

10:25. Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

This was a proper question prior to the cross of Christ, but not an honest question

on the part of this scribe. It was and still is a stock question.

Of all the people in Israel at that time, this man should have been able to have answered his own question. He was a professional student of the Mosaic law, an instructor of others, and entrusted with the administration of the law. But he typified the moral and spiritual condition of the nation. The One who alone could perfectly interpret the Father's law, of course, discerned this condition of heart. Our Lord reveals not only His superior knowledge of the answer to this question, He shows not only His mastery of teaching method, but more noticeably His mastery of men.

By using the Socratic method of meeting a question with a question and thereby returning the responsibility of the answer to the man who was expert in the knowledge of the law, the Lord shows Himself to be the Master Teacher. The Lord's question really implies a two-part answer:

“What is written in the law? How does it read to you?” (v. 26).

The scribe really only answers the first question about what is written in the law. He obviously evidences a strange reluctance to interpret what is written. After all, he would probably perjure himself if he presumed to have the right to eternal life on the basis of his answer. His life could not possibly be a perfect model of this truth (vv. 27-28).

But now he is suddenly confronted by the One whose life could and did alone fulfill the command to love God and neighbor perfectly. No wonder the man is in a hurry to try to rationalize his way out

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of an uncomfortable situation. For our Lord does not let him off the hook. In effect, He says, "All right, since you have raised the question and think yourself to be righteous, then do it."

"... By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Galatians 2:16).

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:3-4).

If the lawyer had been honest, he would have said that he had tried to do all this, but that he must admit to failure. He would then have asked how a sinner could inherit eternal life, casting himself upon the grace of Christ. Thus he would identify himself with the helpless, robbed, beaten man in the parable that our Lord proceeded to tell, and he would have made himself a sure candidate for the deliverance of God. Instead he tries to still his conscience.

He tries to side-step his responsibility for not having loved God with all his heart and his not having loved his neighbor. He feigns ignorance regarding the identity of his neighbor so he can hide behind it. If the identity of his neighbor can be confused, then he will not be guilty of not loving him.

Christ's answer did not tell him who his neighbor was. It probed more deeply into his heart. The whole point is this:

"The question is not who your neighbor is, but are you a neighbor. The Samaritan was neighbor to the man. The priest was not a neighbor. The Levite was not a neighbor. The Samaritan was the man who came into his neighborhood. He came over to him, and bound up his wounds, and put him on his own beast, and brought him to the inn, and took care of him. The lawyer said, 'Who is my neighbor?' Christ replied: 'Be a neighbor, and the moment you are a neighborly man, you will find your neighbor in the man that otherwise you would not look at'" (Morgan, p. 139).

The man is forced to admit that the Samaritan was neighbor to the man, and the Lord says,

10:37. Go and do likewise.

"There is life in keeping the law, but I have not kept it, and I cannot keep it in my own strength. . . . There are some old-fashioned statements which are very fine. . . . The difference between Law and Grace is this: The Law says, Do this, and live. Grace says, Live and do this. The new life is not intended to set us free from the moral requirement of law. It is to enable us to obey it" (Morgan, p. 140).

If at this point the man had confessed his sin and cried to the Lord for mercy, saying,

"I am that man on the Jericho road—I am the one who needs mercy," then Jesus would not have pointed him

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to the Levite or the priest for help. But He would have said, ‘I am come to seek and to save that which was lost; I can heal your soul and undertake for you. I have come to give eternal life to all who put their trust in Me’” (Ironsides, p. 353).

Above all else, the parable speaks of Christ. He is the Good Samaritan. Through this picture He shows me Himself. And He tells me to go out into the highways and byways in His spirit, the spirit of the true disciple. He shows me that anyone I can help is my neighbor. The people I know need Christ, the Good Samaritan.

Toward Jerusalem and the cross.

Will I take the road of the disciple? Will

I deny myself and take up the cross daily and follow Him? The true follower will not be left behind. I have only one life to offer:

**Only one life to offer—
Jesus, my Lord and King;
Only one tongue to praise Thee
And of Thy mercy sing—forever!
Only one heart’s devotion—
Savior, O, may it be
Consecrated alone
To Thy matchless glory,
Fully yielded to Thee.**

--Avis B. Christiansen
“Only One Life,” 1937, verse 1

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XIV. DEALING WITH DISTRACTION

Questions on Luke 10:38-11:32

FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

REVIEW: Luke 9:51-10:37 by reading the passage again, go over the notes of Lesson 13, and then do question 1.

1. How did the Lord Jesus present Himself to your heart from Luke 9:51-10:37 and from the notes of Lesson 13?

MEMORY: Luke 10:41-42

READ: Luke 10:38-11:31.

READ NOTES: Pages 65-66.

DO QUESTION: List the main events of Luke 10:38-11:32.

I. CHOOSE THE BEST

READ: Luke 10:38-42; John 11:28-46; 12:1-11.

DO QUESTIONS: 2-5.

READ NOTES: Pages 67-71.

2. Think about Martha and Mary in reference to yourself. List some of the worries and distractions that you have had this week. What does the Lord say to you about this right now?

3. In the gospels we find Mary at the feet of the Lord Jesus three times. Why was she there in each case?

4. What kind of testimony did Mary apparently have with her friends? (John 11:31, 45)

5. Personal) How much time have you spent at His feet THIS week? Has it resulted in *the same type of testimony as Mary had?*

II. TRUST MY FATHER

READ: Luke 11:1-4; Matt. 6:9-15; John 16:23-24.

DO QUESTIONS: 6-8.

READ NOTES: Pages 71-76.

6. Compare the Lord's prayer in Matthew with this in Luke. Note the difference.

7. What further instruction does the Lord give in John's gospel?

8. On another paper, take the Lord's prayer, phrase by phrase, and explain what it means. (If you have a Scofield Bible, see the notes.)

III. PRESS ON TOWARD THE MARK

READ: Luke 11:5-10.

MEMORY: (Luke 10:41-42): But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

DO QUESTION: 9.

READ NOTES: Pages 76-78.

9. In Luke 11:5-10, what is the Lord Jesus teaching?

READ: Luke 11:11-13; Joel 2:28-29; Luke 24:49; John 7:38-39; 14:16-17; Acts 1:4-5; Rom. 8:9, 15; 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 1:22; Gal. 4:6; 1 John 2:20, 27; Eph. 5:18.

DO QUESTIONS: 10-11.

10. As you consider Luke 11:11-13, what confidence does this give you in regard to the character of God and His relationship to you? What encouragements to prayer do you find here?

11. Today, are we to ask God for the Holy Spirit? Explain. Concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, what may we pray?

IV. RESIST THE ENEMY.

READ: Luke 11:14-26; Matt. 12:24-30; Mark 3:22-30; Matthew 12:43-45.

DO QUESTIONS: 12-13.

READ NOTES: Pages 78-80.

12. What is the charge against Christ and what are His answers?

13. What are the warnings here for non-Christians? Is there any warning for believers?

V. OBEY HIS WORD ABOUT IT.

READ: Luke 11:16, 27-31; Matt. 12:38-41; 1 Kings 10:1-9; 2 Chron. 9:1-8; Scan the book of Jonah; 1 Cor. 1:22-23.

DO QUESTIONS: 14-15.

READ NOTES: Pages 80-83.

14. Why does the Lord call them “this evil generation?”

15. What is the sign of Jonah?

VI. BEHOLD HIS GLORY.

READ: Luke 11:31; 10:38-42; 1 Kings 10:1-9; 2 Chronicles 9:1-8.

DO QUESTIONS: 16-21.

READ NOTES: Pages 83-84.

16. Why will the Queen of Sheba and the men of Ninevah rise up in judgment “with the men of this generation?”

17. How is the Queen of Sheba an example to us today?

18. Think about how the Queen of Sheba regarded Solomon in comparison with how we value the “One greater than Solomon.”

19. Write down how Christ is like Solomon and how greater.

20. Write down ways in which we can, like the queen, show that we value the Greater Solomon.

21. What will you do today to show any of these attitudes?

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XIV. DEALING WITH DISTRACTION

(Luke 10:38-11:32)

"Martha, Martha, 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 10:41-42 NIV)

**One thing I know, I cannot say Him nay;
One thing I do, I press toward my Lord:
My God, my glory here, from day to day,
And in the glory there my great Reward.**

— F. Brook
"My Goal Is God Himself," v. 4

"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple" (Psalm 27:4).

What are the priorities and what are the distractions? Sometimes it is hard to tell one from the other. How do I sort them out? I set up my schedule for the day, and that's the signal for the interruptions to start.

Or is it just the Lord rearranging the timetable? I make plans for the week, only to feel frustrated when they don't work out. Or are these disappointments *His* appointments? Priority or distraction—which is which?

The Word of God always has answers to the really hard questions. As I go through the next section of Luke, I can discover some of these answers and trace out a plan of action.

Here I find Martha, Mary, and others

like me facing up to problems. I listen to the Lord speaking to them in their situations, and there I detect clues for coping with my own life.

In effect, the Lord writes out my priority list for me:

**I. One thing is needful:
CHOOSE THE BEST
(10:38-42.)**

**II. Not one thing He says fails, so
TRUST MY FATHER
(11:1-4, 13).**

**III. This one thing I do—
PRESS ON TOWARD THE MARK
(5-10).**

**IV. With the one thing I know
RESIST THE ENEMY
(11:14-26).**

**V. If one thing is lacking,
OBEY HIS WORD ABOUT IT
(27-30, 32)**

MEMORY: (Luke 10:41-42): But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

**VI. *One thing I desire is to
BEHOLD HIS GLORY***
(11:31; 10:38-42)

I discover that knowing the priority is the key to coping with the distractions. I have come the full circle and find myself again with Mary at His feet.

I. *CHOOSE THE BEST*
(10:38-42)

“Only one thing is needed: Mary has chosen what is better.”

Perhaps this incident took place during the Feast of Tabernacles. Edersheim thinks it did, and so he describes the festive scene:

At the end of His journey to the Feast of Tabernacles, the Lord came to Bethany, close to Jerusalem, almost one of its suburbs.

“We infer that Christ had dismissed His disciples to go into the neighboring city for the Feast, while Himself tarried in Bethany (John 7:14). . . .

“It was the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles, and the scene recorded by Luke would take place in the open leafy booth which served as the sitting apartment during the festive week (Leviticus 23:39-43). For, according to law, it was duty during the festive week to eat, sleep, pray, study—in short, to live—in these booths, which were to be constructed of the boughs of living trees.

“And, although this was not absolutely obligatory on women, yet, the rule which bade all make ‘the booth the principal, and the house only the secondary dwelling,’ would induce them to make this leafy tent at least the sitting apartment alike for men and women. And, indeed, those autumn days were just the season when it would be joy to sit in these delightful cool retreats—the memorials of Israel’s pilgrim days!

“They were high enough, and yet not too high, chiefly open in front; close enough to be shady, and not so close as to exclude sunlight and air. Such would be the apartment in which what is recorded passed; and, if we add that this booth stood probably in the court, we can picture to ourselves Martha moving forwards and backwards on her busy errands, and seeing, as she passed again and again, Mary still sitting a rapt listener, not heeding what passed around; and, lastly, how the elder sister could, as the language of verse 40 implies, enter so suddenly the Master’s presence, bringing her complaint. . . .

“It was, as the whole history shows, a wealthy home. It consisted of two sisters—the elder, *Martha* . . . ; the younger, *Mary*; and their brother *Lazarus*. . . .

“Evidently the house was Martha’s, and into it she received Jesus on His arrival in Bethany. It would have been no uncommon occurrence in Israel for a pious, wealthy lady to receive a great Rabbi into her house. But the present was not an ordinary case. Martha must have heard of Him, even if she had not seen Him.

“But, indeed, the whole narrative implies, that Jesus had come to Bethany with the view of accepting the hospitality of Martha, which probably had been

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proffered when some of those ‘Seventy,’ sojourning in the worthiest house at Bethany, had announced the near arrival of the Master. Still, her bearing affords only an indication of being drawn towards Christ—at most, of a sincere desire to learn the good news, not of actual discipleship.

“And so Jesus came—and, with Him and in Him, Heaven’s own Light and Peace. He was to lodge in one of the booths, the sisters in the house and the great booth in the middle of the courtyard would be the common living apartment of all. It could not have been long after His arrival;—it must have been almost immediately, that the sisters felt they had received more than an Angel unawares. How best to do Him honor was equally the thought of both.

“To Martha it seemed, as if she could not do enough in showing Him all hospitality. And, indeed, this festive season was a busy time for the mistress of a wealthy household, especially in the near neighborhood of Jerusalem, whence her brother might, after the first two festive days, bring with him, any time that week, honored guests from the City. To these cares was now added that of doing sufficient honor to such a Guest—for she, also, deeply felt His greatness. And so she hurried to and fro through the courtyard, literally, ‘distracted about much serving.’

“Her younger sister, also, would do Him all highest honor; but, not as Martha. Her homage consisted in forgetting all else but Him, Who spake as none had ever done. As truest courtesy or affection consists, not in its demonstra-

tions, but in being so absorbed in the object of it as to forget its demonstration, so with Mary in the Presence of Christ. And then a new Light, another Day had risen upon her; a fresh life had sprung up within her soul: ‘*She sat at the Lord’s feet, and heard His Word.*’ We dare not inquire, and yet we well know, of what it would be.

“And so, time after time—perhaps, hour after hour—as Martha passed on her busy way, she (Mary) still sat listening and living. At last, the sister, who, in her impatience, could not think that a woman could, in such a manner, fulfill her duty, or show forth her religious profiting, broke in with what sounds like a querulous complaint: ‘*Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone?*’ Mary had served with her, but she had now left her to do the work alone. Would the master bid her resume her neglected work?

“But, with tone of gentle reproof and admonition, the affectionateness of which appeared even in the repetition of her name, *Martha, Martha*—as, similarly, on a later occasion, Simon, Simon (Luke 22:31)—did He teach her in words which, however simple in their primary meaning, are so full, that they have ever since borne the most many-sided application: ‘*Thou art careful and anxious about many things; but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her*’” (Ederheim, pp. 145-47).

The contrast here is not between a life of worship and a life of service. Rather, it is a contrast of attitudes. Succinctly put,

MEMORY: (Luke 10:41-42): But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

He is saying, “Don’t let service rob you of communion with God.” We are not saved to serve. We are saved to worship, and out of that will flow our service. Both are part of the healthy Christian life. But service may carry us out of fellowship with the Lord, because we can be taken up with the cares of it. The one thing needful in service is to be taught of Christ—to be served by Him. Martha had lost sight of Him; she had no time to be occupied with Him and to hear His Word. It is more blessed to let Him minister to us than for us to minister to Him. To be occupied with our service only has self-sufficiency at its root. Christ calls us to service, but the basis of it is listening to Him.

The Lord is very far from saying that activity and service are nothing.

“But if a man brings me, let us say, an apple, I do not despise it when I say, ‘The one thing is the tree that bears the apples.’” It is possible to hear His Word and never hearken. **“There may be even an occupation with them which is little better than mere idleness. But to hear as Mary did, that implies service also, and the right kind of service—wisdom and power for service; and a service which shall be in the sanctuary also—worship in the heart of it,”** (Grant, pp. 400-01).

“In John 12 we see Martha serving without any distraction. . . . She was divinely adjusted so that she could take her place in that circle of affection and represent the true place of service. . . .

“There is no true service without having sat at the feet of Jesus. . . .

“The fact of being distracted about service proves that it is of a Martha character. One of the world’s poets has said, ‘All great service springs from the center of a quiet heart.’ It is a bad sign if we begin to complain of the brethren. Martha made complaints. When we get on to the line of serving only, we always think that other people should be doing just what we are doing.

“The question is, Are we supremely interested in what is for God’s heart, for His pleasure? Mary’s blessing lay in her deep interest in the supreme joy of the Father and the Son; she gave supreme pleasure to the heart of Jesus in listening to His word. We all know what it is perhaps to do a great deal for a person, and for that person to receive it with gratitude and affection; and our hearts might be full of something we want to speak of, but we find they are not interested; we know the bitter sense of lack that it gives. That is so with us often, and the Lord’s heart is grieved. We are more interested in what meets our need than in what is for His pleasure. I noticed this when I first began to preach: if I spoke of what was for man’s benefit and gain, there was interest shown; but when I turned to speak of what was for the heart of God the interest flagged” (Coates, pp. 129-30).

“The one prime necessity is to be subject to Christ in all things. This was what characterized Mary, and this He would have her continue to enjoy. In other words, Mary delighted in communion with Him, and thus she was pleasing to His great loving heart. He

MEMORY: (Luke 10:41-42): But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

longs for the fellowship of His people. I am ashamed to say that in a very busy life, I have not spent nearly as much time at His feet as I should, but every hour spent there has meant far more than time spent in any other way” (Ironside, p. 357).

Know the priority, and then deal with the distractions. Priority # 1: Choose to commune with Christ. Set aside time to be spent in His Word every day. A distraction is anything that would interrupt—Martha-like—that quiet time. The Lord dealt with Martha’s interruption by keeping Mary there at His feet. Sometimes we can meet distractions in the same way—by not giving in to them. Postpone the interruption; deal with it later after your quiet time. Or set aside time for study of the Word when there are likely to be fewer interruptions—earlier in the morning, later at night, during a child’s nap-time—a time of the day which tends to be quieter than other periods. Choosing to spend time at His feet is the number one priority of the Christian life, and the greatest joy for two hearts—mine and His! He does not force; it is my choice.

II. TRUST MY FATHER **(11:1-4, 13)**

“And ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that NOT ONE THING HATH FAILED of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you” (Joshua 23:14).

To know the Lord is to trust Him. The quiet time at His feet brings us to this con-

fidence. It issues in prayer, and real prayer is an expression of our confidence in Him. In the place of prayer we take the place of dependence upon Him. The picture is that of the child coming to his father, ever confident of that love. To know God as our Father is to trust Him with our needs.

Here Christ as the dependent Man is our pattern. The Son of Man was representative Man, and He took the place of dependence when He came into the world. He lived a life of dependence upon the Father, doing always those things which pleased Him. His prayer life was the expression of this dependence. Nowhere do we see it more clearly than in Luke’s Gospel where the Son of Man is the Man of prayer.

His example moved the disciples to ask for that kind of life. His disciples had watched Him and probably had listened to Him praying alone—**“and His praying inspired them with a passion to do the same thing. . . . What they felt that day is exactly what we have all felt some time or other, not that we wanted to know *how* to do it, but that we wanted to be taught to *do* it”** (Morgan, p. 142).

11:1. Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

This is the last thing we learn about John the Baptist. He was a man of prayer, and he instructed his disciples in this way.

“That is a little window throwing light on the ministry of John. It is evident that John had taught his disciples, that John’s prayer life had influenced his disciples” (Morgan, p. 142).

MEMORY: (Luke 10:41-42): But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

Now the disciples **“saw Jesus praying on some higher level than that in which John prayed. There was something more in the praying of Jesus than even the praying of John. They said in effect, John taught his disciples. They learned the lessons. Teach us to pray. Lift us up to Thy level of prayer”** (Morgan, p. 142).

We want also to commune with heaven.

In answer He gave them what is commonly called **“The Lord’s Prayer.”** It should better be described as **“The Disciples’ Prayer.”**

“Strictly speaking, of course, it was not the Lord’s prayer, because He did not pray it. Our blessed Lord could not say the prayer as expressing His own needs and desires, because He was the absolutely sinless one. He therefore could not pray, ‘Forgive us our sins.’ It was never intended to be used in a formal way . . . but it is a model upon which all our prayers may well be formed. . . . Surely there is no expression in it that the most enlightened Christian may not use on occasion, and as a whole it is of the greatest value in guiding our thoughts when we approach our Father in prayer” (Ironside, pp. 360-61).

“Our Father”—first of all, the Lord emphasizes the Father’s name. This reminds us of the relationship which makes prayer possible. It speaks of the new relationship, the new birth, which brings us into the family of God. Only those who are born again have the right to address God as Father. When an unsaved person

uses this prayer as a religious form, he is appropriating what is not his.

“It is only the one who can say in faith that God is his father, who has the right to use such words. This is a recognition of the blessed relationship between the saved and the God who saved them” (Ironside, p. 362).

Only by trusting in the death of Christ as my penalty for sin am I saved; this then brings me into relationship with God as my Father.

So Christ **“begins with the simple address, Father. This corresponds to the Aramaic *abba*, the address of a child to its parent. . . . Jesus taught His followers to think of God as their Father (that they learnt the lesson is seen from Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6)”** (Morris, p. 193).

He is the Father in heaven. Once we were cut off from any approach to heaven; now we are brought nigh by the blood of Christ. We are citizens of heaven now that we are children of the Heavenly Father. It is here that we find **“*grace to help in time of need*”** (Ephesians 2:13; Hebrews 4:16).

11:2. Hallowed be Thy name.

To revere the name of God is to worship Him for who He is. Name means character. That is what Mary learned at His feet. She came to appreciate Him. To hallow His name is not a pious sentiment. His name is to be hallowed in us.

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“It is not hallowed anywhere else. It is blasphemed by the world. But, if Jesus has become to me the Revealer and Teacher, the Father’s name will be hallowed in me—in my words and in my ways” (Coates, p. 133).

Are the things in my life in accord with His character?

11:2. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

“The thought of the Father’s kingdom is beautiful. It is not the kingdom of the Son, but the Father’s kingdom. I suppose the saints are viewed as having known and tasted what the Father’s kingdom is, so they desire it to come and radiate its light and blessedness. They can ask for it to come because it is in them. The Father’s kingdom is known in the hearts of the saints and therefore they can greatly desire that it should be known universally” (Coates, p. 133).

The first passion of prayer is a passion that God’s will may be done, that God’s heart may be satisfied, that God’s purposes may be realized. That is the first realm in which prayer is to operate—praying to God on behalf of God. *“The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.”* When we say a man is lost, what do we mean by lost? We think immediately of the man’s dereliction and the man’s punishment and the man’s condemnation. But we are not thinking in the right order. If we have lost something and talk about it as being lost, the word lost reveals our loss; and it is not the thing we think about, but the

person who has lost it. . . .

When you think about a lost soul, think about God! All the passion of Calvary pulsates through the petitions of this prayer. *Thy name be hallowed. God’s name has been blasphemed. Thy kingdom come.* He is being robbed of His own possession.

Am I robbing Him of His own possession? I am not my own, for I am bought with a price. Do I want Him to reign in my life right now? I cannot pray this in sincerity for the future unless I can pray it for myself now. His kingdom is taking shape now.

“Suppose someone insults me and I do not resent it, but pray for the one who spitefully uses me and persecutes me. That is an expression of the Father’s kingdom. His kingdom refers to the sphere of His influence” (Coates, p. 134).

The sphere of His influence today is confined to His people. To pray this prayer is to ask for the increase of His government in our lives today.

11:3. Give us day by day our daily bread.

Now the prayer turns manward. First, prayer is to God on behalf of God; then prayer is to God on behalf of man. Bread represents what man needs day by day for his sustenance so that he with energy may do the will of God in his life.

“Notice the limitations of prayer. Bread for a day, no more—day by day” (Morgan, p. 143).

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He has promised to supply our every need, and we are told not to be anxious about it, *“but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, to make our requests known”* (Matthew 6:33; Philippians 4:6).

“The continuous present, ‘keep giving,’ and the each day make it clear that we should look to God constantly, not ask for provision for a lengthy period and then proceed to forget Him. Christians live in a state of continual dependence on God” (Morris, p. 194).

For spiritual food, too—He provides it, but He does not eat it for us!

11:4. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us.

We should not read into this passage the condition that our sins are forgiven on the basis of our willingness to forgive others for their sins against us. Forgiveness ever remains in the providence of the grace of God. The point here is that we should willingly forgive our fellow-men. This prayer is the confession of our own sin and the knowledge of His forgiveness. Having an appreciation of what this means will lead us to forgive as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13).

11:4. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

We need to pray this more often. We cannot walk into temptation and then expect God to deliver us. We should ask that

we may not get into it. This is to acknowledge a recognized weakness:

“As if to say, ‘My Father, I am so weak myself, grant that I might not be put in a place of temptation which I could not stand and overcome.’ That is, recognizing our weakness, we pray not to be exposed to a test too great for us” (Ironside, p. 364).

The prayer **“does not imply that God does sometimes cause man to be tempted and in fact James assures us that He never does (James 1:13). Rather Jesus is encouraging an attitude, the attitude that flees temptation (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:18; 10:14; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22). The Christian recognizes his weakness, recognizes also the ease with which he gives way to the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. So he prays to be delivered from them all”** (Morris, pp. 194-95).

God never lures believers into temptation, but He allows them to be tempted in order to strengthen us as He tests and purifies us. We should take our stand that we have died to that which compels us toward sin (Romans 6; 1 Corinthians 10:13); and we should rejoice that He causes all things *“to work together for good”* in our life (Romans 8:28).

“I believe with every one of us there is something that would be too much for us if we were tempted, so we say, ‘Lead us not into temptation.’ I want to be kept by the Father’s grace from these particular things that would be too

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great for me to withstand, and from circumstances that would be too great a test for me. So this prayer finishes in profound humility, a true spirit of self-distrust, true self-knowledge. There is no self-confidence; we are cast on the Father that if He left us in temptation we should be sure to fall, and so in true self-judgment and humility we pray to be kept” (Coates, p. 136).

We ask in confidence:

11:11. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?

Here the Lord compares the disposition of the earthly parent to give the best to his child with the attitude of our heavenly Father. Here it is “*how much more*” (11:13). His attitude is on an altogether higher plane.

“If He substitutes something else for what we ask, we can be sure it will be better than that for which we have pleaded. The egg would sustain life; the scorpion would destroy it. No loving parent would thus deceive his child” (Ironside, p. 366).

11:13. How much more shall your heavenly Father!

Know the priority and then deal with the distractions. The priority is an attitude of trusting the Father. A distraction is any thought of doubt, anything that would shake my confidence in the character of God. It is any temptation to doubt the

goodness of God, to question His kindness and love. How do we learn the nature of God? At His feet—He reveals Himself in His Word. And also through experience—we come to trust Him as we walk in obedience to His Word; then we find that His promises do not fail (Joshua 23:13-16). To know Him is to rest in confidence upon Him and experience that goodness and mercy which “*follow us all the days of our life*” (Psalm 23). To trust, in the face of temptation to doubt His goodness, is an act of the will. It means putting on the armor of God (Ephesians 6:13-18). It means doing the thing Christ is teaching the disciples to do: “*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance. . . .*”

“We must do more than know about Him; we must have the strength of His arm, a resource in Him ever available. And this is what prayer expresses, the cry to One who hears and who answers. ‘The fervent, effectual prayer of the righteous man availeth much.’” Paul presses the need for prayer even in an epistle “**like Ephesians, where we are at the topmost height of heavenly position—in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus**” (Grant, p. 401).

Here distraction is anything that would move us from this place of dependence upon God. It would shake our confidence in Him, for dependence is based upon confidence. Confidence is happiness.

“We all know what it is to be dependent for certain things on people in whom we have no confidence, and it is

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misery. In a sense all men are dependent on God. And often it is without any confidence in Him, so they are not happy. The believer in the light of the declaration has confidence, therefore his dependence is of a confiding nature and he knows it is not difficult to get things from the Father” (Coates, p. 137).

What is the resource which enables us to deal with *distractions*? It is the Holy Spirit.

11:13. How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.

“Type of all good gifts, this, the Holy Spirit. And John has told us that when the Lord was yet on earth, the ‘Holy Spirit was not yet glorified’ (Jn. 7:39). . . . But we know quite well that the work of the Spirit in enlightening, sanctifying, working all spiritual work in man, was needed then as now, and being needed, was found and enjoyed” (Grant, p. 403).

We receive the Holy Spirit when we are born again (Romans 8:9, 15). That is where we begin today.

“That is initial, but it is continuous. . . . The prayer life is the life that is always seeking and always receiving—the filling, the infilling, the overflowing of the Spirit” (Morgan, p. 144).

“How comforting is the Lord’s assurance here! Yet how it reproves us also! Here if we lack, ‘we have not because we

ask not’ (Jas. 4:2). Shall we be content to go without the fulness of what Christ our Lord has certified to us to be ours if only we value it enough to seek it from the blessed hand of God?” (Grant, p. 403).

Here distractions are fiery darts of the enemy (Ephesians 6:16)—doubts well-aimed to destroy our trust in the Father. We deal with them by an act of the will, which raises the shield of faith: It involves (1) faith which *uses* the Word of God; (2) faith which *remembers* the faithfulness of the One who never changes His parental love and care (Hebrews 13:8); (3) faith which *keeps* the child in the place of happy dependence upon the Father; (4) faith which *asks* continually for every need; (5) faith which *draws* upon all of the resources of the Holy Spirit. All of this is summed up in the attitude of *trust in the Father*—the *priority* which is its own defense against the *distraction of doubt*.

III. PRESS ON TOWARD THE MARK (11:5-10)

“But this one thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14).

Now by means of a humorous parable, the Lord encourages us to press on. It drives home the point that our lives must be diligent and that God is always ready to supply the needs as we bring them sincerely to Him in prayer.

The Lord pictures “a man whose house-

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hold has used its supply of bread and on whom a journeying friend makes an unexpected call. It is *at midnight*, which probably means that the friend had traveled after dark to avoid the heat. The man must feed his friend, for hospitality was a sacred duty. So he goes to another friend for *three loaves*, i.e. three small loaves that would suffice for one man.

But this second householder has shut his door and gone to bed with his children. Evidently he was a poor man living in a one-roomed house. The whole family would sleep on a raised platform at one end of such a room, possibly with the animals at floor level. A man in such a situation could not get up without disturbing the whole family. He raises no difficulty about giving the bread, but the bother of getting up is quite another matter. It is much easier to stay where he is.

“But the man is persistent. He will not go away, nor will he let his friend go back to sleep. And where friendship cannot prevail, his importunity (lit. ‘shamelessness,’ ‘persistence’) wins the day” (Morris, p. 195).

In all of this, there is a real sense of contrast here between the human friend and God as Friend. The motive is never the same. God never gives to get rid of the petitioner, though He says,

11:9-10. Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.

“This is used only as an illustration of what, to our poor finite minds, might

seem to be the attitude of God when we do not receive immediately the answer to our prayer. No request of ours can ever be a trouble to Him. His delays are not denials, but are meant to test our faith. . . . We are taught to continue instant in prayer (Romans 12:12) until the answer comes. We are not to be discouraged because God does not respond to our call at the first moment when we go to Him in regard to some particular matter. . . . It is for our own soul’s good that we become earnest in our supplications, pouring out our hearts in unremitting intercession, literally storming the gate of the storehouse of blessing until the answer comes. God will never deny the prayer of faith. Ask, seek, knock—these are degrees of importunity. As we continue to besiege the throne of grace we shall be moved to heart searching and to self-judgment, that thus we may pray according to the will of God” (Ironsides, pp. 365-66).

“Thus the Lord shows us that we may seek continuously, seek importunately, seek, as one needy man from another; although it might be argued, You are forgetting the difference between God and man. Difference there is, indeed; but we are not to use it to check the pouring out of our full hearts to Him. Be it so that He knows all before we ask; be it that we may be tempted to say with Job, ‘He is of one mind, and who can turn Him? (Job 23:13). Let us not heed arguments that would shut us from all the comfort of knowing that we have for our necessity a living God that hears and answers prayer. Ask as if He would yield to mere importunity. Cling

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to Him as Jacob clung, and say, ‘I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.’ Ask until you hear Him say, ‘As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed’ (Genesis 32:26-28 KJV)” (Grant, p. 402).

There are many such Old Testament examples to encourage us to press on in the way. The writer to the Hebrews says,

“*Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith*” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

What is the *distraction*? Surely it is discouragement. How do we guard against that? Again the writer to the Hebrews has the answer:

“*For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds*” (12:3).

Discouragement is a feeling, and feelings are not to be trusted. Instead, we can take our thoughts off ourselves and turn them to the Lord in times of discouragement. He is the incentive, the motivation, and the prize. In fact, this is why we are studying Him in the Gospel right now. The distraction of discouragement would turn our eyes from the goal. In a race, distraction can cause the runner to falter. How can we prevent this? By refusing to look inward and to give in to feelings. By

keeping our eyes on Him. Then we can continue to “*press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*” (Phil. 3:14 KJV).

11:10. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened.

IV. RESIST THE ENEMY **(11:14-26)**

Such a life will be contested. Here the Lord meets the opposition of the enemy. His opposers are the religious leaders, the same ones who hauled into their courts the blind man who was healed by the Lord Jesus. This man stubbornly withstood their opposition:

“*ONE THING I KNOW: that, whereas I was blind, now I see!*” (Jn. 9:27).

And then he proceeded to confound the accusers (vv. 26-38).

Now the Lord also confronts and confounds His accusers. He has chosen the road to Jerusalem, the road to suffering. En route, he faces the increasing hatred of the rulers of the Jews.

On this occasion, “*He was casting out a demon.*” The Lord has just been speaking about the coming to God and asking in confidence. Now we have the opposite of that. The power of evil shows itself in dumbness, a demon which was *dumb*.

“For a man to be dumb indicates that he is not able to speak to God. He is not in the light of the revelation, and there is therefore no confidence to speak at

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all. The power of *the Kingdom* is necessary in such a case. . . .

“The Lord acted sovereignly. He cast out the demon; it was His own activity in the power of *the finger of God*. It is a great object with God to give evidence in this world that His power is greater than all the power of evil, so the character of two kingdoms comes to light: the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God. Therefore it is no longer possible to be neutral; that is why the Lord said, ‘*He that is not with me is against me*’ (v. 23). . . .

“The Lord here is dispossessing the demon and showing that the kingdom of God is stronger than all the power of evil. The question is, Are we going to identify ourselves with Him? Neutrality is impossible” (Coates, p. 140).

The people *marveled*, but some of them attributed His power to *Beelzebub, the chief of the demons*.

“Apparently the comments were made privately, not to Jesus. But He knew what these people were thinking. So He pointed out that, if they were right, the forces of evil would be destroying themselves. He reasons from the universal rule, Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste. . . . From the general, Jesus moves to the particular with the question, if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? The forces of evil are destructive of good, not of one another. . . . Jesus clinches His argument with an appeal to the practice of Jewish exorcists. If casting out demons means a

league with the devil, then Jewish practitioners of the art are in the same case” (Morris, pp. 197-98).

He asks, *By whom do your sons cast them out?* The argument proves too much for them.

“Jesus hammers this home with a little picture of Satan as the *strong one* guarding his possessions, i.e. the man under his power. Satan is in control and at peace. But the strong one can be defeated. When *one stronger* overcomes him, as Jesus has just done in casting out the demon, the whole situation is altered. Satan’s armor is taken away. His *spoil* (probably what he has taken from his captives) is divided. Both terms are pictorial and they stand for the complete inability of Satan to stand in the face of God.

“Evil has a strong grip on men. But that strong grip is broken decisively when the kingdom of God comes in. The kingdom is not beautiful words; it is the overthrow of evil” (Morris, p. 198).

“Next comes the parable of the unclean spirit to show the danger of professing outward allegiance to Him and having nothing in the heart. . . .

“Jesus likens the body and soul of a man to a house in which the evil spirit has dwelt. After the demon has been driven out, the house is empty (*swept and garnished*), for the Spirit of God does not come into the man who has not accepted Christ” (Ironsides, p. 374).

In Matthew the Lord applied this condi-

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tion to the nation of Israel. **“Nationally they had reformed from their once constant idolatry, and were now swept clean and adorned, but hollow-hearted. God was not enshrined among them, as their empty temple witnessed”** (Grant, p. 404).

It “is like christendom today. Providentially christendom has been freed from the gross evil of the heathen world, but there is no security in that.

“Security lies in giving the Lord Jesus a place in our hearts, so that we are not unoccupied. He is not only the Owner but the Occupier; if He is this there is security against evil. . . .

“If the Person who brought the deliverance occupies the house there is perfect security. The top note of Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 3:16 is ‘that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.’ It is Christ in the affections that gives permanent security” (Coates, pp. 141-42).

There is no neutrality in this contest, where we are told to *resist*. It is an absolute priority:

“RESIST the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). “Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom RESIST steadfast in the faith” (1 Pet. 5:8-9 KJV).

How can we do this? It is in His strength, for *“greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4)*. The means to resist is all His provision. He gives the defensive armor, and He puts in our hand the only offensive weapon, *the*

sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:10-18).

What are the *distractions* which would neutralize us in the contest? They are any of the temptations which would cause us to lower the guard. The main distraction might be the laziness which would keep us from hiding the Word of God and thus prevent us from wielding the sword effectively. *“Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee” (Psalm 119:11)*. We need to know the Word of God. *One thing I know,*” the healed man said to the enemy. This was the weapon which the Lord Himself used. We need to know how to use it, too. We must know the Word. It takes time to learn how to use it.

**And though this world, with devils
filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim—
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo! His doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.**

— Martin Luther

V. OBEY HIS WORD (11:27-30, 32)

“Yet LACKEST THOU ONE THING: Sell all . . . and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me” (Luke 18:22 KJV).

11:16. And others, testing him, sought of Him a sign from heaven.

MEMORY: (Luke 10:41-42): But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

Now we are given a reason for failure, **“in the lack of the spirit of obedience, the want of singleness of eye. . . . No signs were wanting, but the heart to interpret them”** (Grant, pp. 404-05).

“Typically it is Luke alone who tells us of this spontaneous exclamation from a woman in the crowd” (Morris, pp. 199-200).

In a very middle-eastern fashion, the woman, deeply impressed by the power of His person and His words, calls out a blessing on His mother as a means of expressing her admiration for Him.

“The lady apparently thought how wonderful it would be to have a son like Jesus and she pronounced a blessing on her who had borne Him. Her words involve a recognition of His Messiahship and are in part a salutation of Jesus. He did not reject the woman, but proceeded to something more significant. The word translated rather ‘does not question the truth of the preceding statement, but emphasizes the greater relevance of what follows.’ It is not physical relationship to Jesus that is supremely important, but one’s attitude to God’s word. What matters is hearing and keeping the Word of God” (Morris, p. 200).

Yes, rather—so it is indeed—but there is a greater blessedness—

11:28. Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it.

In verses 17-26, the Lord has been replying to the accusation of verse 15. Now He answers the question of verse 16. He rebuked those who were asking for a sign **“in the realm of the material, in the realm of the spectacular. He said that such seeking was the result of the fact that the generation was evil”** (Morgan, p. 145).

“When our Lord Jesus was here on earth, those to whom the revelation of the Old Testament had been given came to Him wanting to see a sign from Him. They had a sign. They had the Bible. They should have known who Jesus was; they should have known when the Messiah was to come, and where He was to be born, and what kind of personality He would be. Though professing to believe the Bible, they did not search the Scriptures to find out whether or not Christ was the Son of God. They said, rather, ‘We would see a sign from heaven,’ a sign to gratify their curiosity” (Ironside, pp. 379-80).

The Lord tells them that no sign will be given except *the sign of the prophet Jonah*. Matthew makes it clear that this sign will be His death, burial, and resurrection (Matthew 12:40). *“For the Jews require a sign . . . but we preach Christ crucified”* (1 Corinthians 1:22-23). Jonah is the sign—not his words, but Jonah himself. In both cases the sign is the person.

Jonah brought before the Ninevites the real state of evil before God. He was to preach judgment to them. This is what John the Baptist preached to Israel. He showed that man was corrupt and how the

MEMORY: (Luke 10:41-42): But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

tree was to be cut down. But this was done in grace, by the judgment coming upon the Son of Man. This is judgment paid by another in the way of grace to man.

“Therefore the Son of man is the sign. (The Lord says that the Jews) must get the blessing on the same ground as the Ninevites. . . . It was as Son of Man that He came to seek and to save that which was lost. There are no distinctions there, for Jew and Gentile are lost; there is only one common ground on which the Son of Man can touch men, and that is the ground of His death. Jonah is the great sign that everything offensive to God is removed from the eye of God, and Solomon is the great sign that everything delightful to God has come in” (Coates, pp. 142-43).

“Christ crucified . . . the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24).

“Jesus knew Jonah, and Jesus knew the men of Nineveh, and it is recorded that the men of Nineveh repented. . . . The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, a greater than Jonah is here. . . .

“Think of facing the men of Nineveh and having them look at you and say, ‘You had so many privileges and opportunities and yet you spurned them. We believed the first message from God that we ever heard. We believed the first time a prophet came to proclaim the divine truth, and God had mercy on

us and saved us; but you have heard the Word expounded over and over again, and you turned away because of your love for the world” (Ironside, p. 382).

“A greater than Jonah was then among them, and as Jonah had been a sign to the Ninevites, so would He be in His death and resurrection a greater sign; but they would not repent” (Grant, p. 405).

The sign was there before them, but the heart to interpret it was not. It was the one thing lacking, but it made all the difference. This is the *priority—singleness of heart to obey Him, no matter the cost.*

What are the *distractions*?

These are the things that would capture our hearts and draw them away from the first love (Revelation 2:4). They are the things that would turn our feet from the path of discipleship, from following to Jerusalem and the cross.

How do I cope with the distractions which would turn me from obedience to Christ?

By looking again at the sign of Jonah and the meaning there for me that I am freed from the distractions of the world. I reckon myself dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God (Romans 6:11-13), and I do not let sin reign in my life. I refuse to give in to selfishness.

I judge the flesh on the basis of Christ’s work on the cross.

I see myself as having died in Christ, having been buried with Him, as having been raised again in newness of life.

I reckon it true, counting upon the fact of my union with Him in death, burial,

MEMORY: (Luke 10:41-42): But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

and resurrection. I base my daily life and attitudes on this. Then I am enabled in the power of the Spirit to *walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4)*.

**Living with Christ, who dieth no
more,
Following Christ, who goeth before;
I am from bondage utterly freed,
Reckoning self as dead indeed.
Glory be to God!**

— T. Ryder
“Buried With Christ,” v. 3

The *priority* is moment by moment saying *yes* to God. It is preceded by saying *no* to self, and that may be the one thing lacking.

VI. BEHOLD HIS GLORY (11:31; 10:38-42)

ONE THING HAVE I DESIRED of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple (Psalm 27:4).

We have come the full circle. *The Queen of Sheba* (v. 31) represents this movement of the heart toward God. She (1 Kings 10) came out of oblivion, as far as the Jews were concerned, wanting to hear more of the wisdom of Solomon and to see the grandeur of his kingdom. She saw and heard and, having believed, could return to her own country telling all “that which (she) had seen and heard.” The Jews who saw the Greater-Than-Solomon in their midst did not recognize Him and did not listen to him. She will stand on the

day of judgment and with pointing finger accuse them of abusing and squandering their incomparable opportunity.

“Sheba’s queen dwelt a long way from Jerusalem, but she had a hungry heart, and she was anxious to know the truth of God. She had heard that there was a great king in Jerusalem to whom great wisdom had been given, and who knew the true God and would be able to answer her questions and solve her problems. So she, at great cost to herself, came to Jerusalem, and when she met Solomon and communed with him, she was so stirred that she said, ‘The half hath not been told me’” (Ironsides, p. 381).

“To reach Solomon a journey has to be undertaken, and it will only be by lovers of God. Solomon has to be found where he is. He is found in his own circle where everything is delightful to the heart of God” (Coates, p. 144).

We join Sheba, David, Mary when we undertake such a journey. We join the disciples. We go with all of those who would follow Christ to Jerusalem. It is a long and costly journey, this way of discipleship, but it leads to *joy unspeakable and full of glory*.

What are the *distractions* that would hinder us from paying the price?

They are the idols of the world upon which many squander all that they have. John’s last word in his letter was, *Little children, keep yourselves from idols*.

How do we do this?

By coming with Sheba and Mary the

MEMORY: (Luke 10:41-42): But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

full circle, we sit at His feet, *beholding the beauty of the Lord and inquiring in His temple.*

By doing this, we say with David, one thing have I desired of the Lord:

**One thing have I desired, my God, of
Thee,
That will I seek, Thine house be home
to me.
I would not breathe an alien, other
air,
I would be with Thee, O Thou fairest
Fair.
For I would see the beauty of my
Lord,
And hear Him speak, who is my
heart's adored.
O Love of loves, and can such wonder
dwell
In Thy great Name of names, Im-
manuel?
Thou with Thy child, Thy child at
home with Thee,
O Love of loves, I love,
I worship Thee.**

— Amy Wilson Carmichael

The number one priority is Christ. The number one distraction is self. The way to cope is provided at Calvary. It means an activity of the will to go the way of the cross, denying self, to live a life pleasing to God.

The priorities involve action. They are all active verbs: *choosing, trusting, pressing on, resisting, obeying, beholding.* Isn't it encouraging to know that, when our wills are weak, we can draw upon His strength?

He "works in us both to will and to do

His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

One of the ways that He does this is by motivating our hearts to seek His face:

**Hast thou heard Him, seen Him, known
Him?**

**Is not thine a captured heart?
Chief among ten thousand own Him,
Joyful choose the better part.
Idols once they won thee, charmed thee,
Lovely things of time and sense;
Gilded thus does sin disarm thee,
Honeyed lest thou turn thee thence.**

**What has stripped the seeming beauty
From the idols of the earth?
Not a sense of right or duty,
But the sight of peerless worth.**

**Not the crushing of those idols,
With its bitter void and smart;
But the beaming of His beauty,
The unveiling of His heart.**

**Who extinguishes their taper
Till they hail the rising sun?
Who discards the garb of winter
Till the summer has begun?**

**'Tis that look that melted Peter,
'Tis that face that Stephen saw,
'Tis that heart that wept with Mary,
Can alone from idols draw:**

**Draw and win and fill completely,
Till the cup o'erflow the brim;
What have we to do with idols
Who have companied with Him?**

--Anonymous
Keswick Hymnal, p. 104

MEMORY: (Luke 10:41-42): But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

XV. TELL IT LIKE IT IS

Questions on Luke 11:33-12:12

FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

What spoke to your heart from the notes of the last chapter?

List the main events in Luke 11:33-12:12.

MEMORY: Luke 11:9-10—"And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives, and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened."

I. THE DIM-OUT IS MY FAULT.

READ: Luke 11:33-36; Matt. 5:14-16; 6:22-23; Mark 4:21-22; Luke 8:16; John 3:16-21; 8:12

DO QUESTIONS: 1-2

READ NOTES: Pages 87-92

1. What is the main point which the Lord is making in this parable?

2. How does this parable apply to (a) unbelievers? (b) believers?

II. NOT ONE OF MY COVER-UPS FOOLS GOD

READ: Luke 11:37-54

DO QUESTIONS: 3-7

READ NOTES: Pages 92-101

3. What surprised the Pharisee and what kind of response did this bring from the Lord Jesus?

4. List the Lord's indictments against the Pharisees and the warnings for us today.

5. List the Lord's indictments against the lawyers (scribes) and the warnings for us today.

6. (Personal) Is there any one thing which the Lord spoke to you especially? Explain and write down ways in which you can avoid doing the thing the Lord warns against.

7. How did the rulers of Israel react?

III. BUT GOD WILL NEVER DEVALUE ME

READ: Luke 12:1-12; Matt. 16:5-12; Mark 8:14-21

DO QUESTIONS: 8-17

READ NOTES: Pages 101-1053

MEMORY: (Luke 11:9-10): "And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened."

8. What details are given in Matthew and Mark but not found in Luke?

9. What is the leaven of the Pharisees, and what did the Lord say about it?

10.(Personal) Pray about whether or not there is in you any of this leaven. Ask the Lord to reveal it, if it is there. If He shows it to you, write it down and state how you are going to deal with it. (See Rom. 12:9; 1 Cor. 5:7-8; James 3:17; 1 Pet. 1:22.)

11. In Luke 12:5 who is the one that we should fear? What does it mean to fear Him? (See Prov. 8:13; Rom. 3:18; 1 Pet. 2:17, etc.)

12. What comfort do you have in Luke 12:6-7?

13. Compare Luke 12:8-9 with John 12:42-43; Rom. 10:9-10; James 2:14-26.

14. What do you think the Lord is teaching in Luke 12:8-9?

15. Are we saved by confession of Christ and works? Explain. (See Titus 3:5 and Eph. 2:8-10)

16. Explain Luke 12:10. (Compare Mark 3:28-29.)

17. Give an example from the book of Acts where Luke 12:11-12 was fulfilled. Does it have any application today? (Think about John 14:26 and Col. 3:16a.)

MEMORY: (Luke 11:9-10): "And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened."

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XV. TELL IT LIKE IT IS

(Luke 11:33-12:12)

"The Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any two-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it is the Critic of the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do!" (Heb. 4:12-13).

**No, not despairingly,
Come I to Thee;
No, not distrustingly
Bend I the knee.
Sin hath gone over me,
Yet is this still my plea,
Yet is this still my plea,
Jesus hath died.**

**Ah, mine iniquity
Crimson hath been:
Infinite, infinite,
Sin upon sin;
Sin of not loving Thee,
Sin of not trusting Thee,
Sin of not trusting Thee,
Infinite sin.**

**Lord, I confess to Thee
Sadly my sin;
All I am tell I Thee,
All I have been.
Purge Thou my sin away,
Wash Thou my soul this day;
Wash Thou my soul this day;
Lord, make me clean.**

**Faithful and just art Thou,
Forgiving all;
Loving and kind art Thou,
When sinners call:
Lord, let the cleansing blood,
Blood of the Lamb of God,
Blood of the Lamb of God,
Pass o'er my soul.**

**Then all is peace and light
This soul within;
Thus shall I walk with Thee,
The loved Unseen:
Leaning on Thee, my God,
Guided along the road,
Guided along the road,
Nothing between.**

—Horatius Bonar

*"Then I said, 'Woe is me, for I am ruined!
. . . For my eyes have seen the King'"
(Isaiah 6:5).*

My vain cover-ups never fool God. He looks right through the tacky masks. He strips off every tawdry disguise and uncovers what He values—the real me.

MEMORY: (Luke 11:9-10): "And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened."

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Christ does this to me with His words right here in Luke. Along His way to Jerusalem, He talks to the Pereans and to me as well. His words are Light itself, illuminating darkened minds. As He pierces through pretense and lays bare the heart of the Pharisee, He becomes the Critic of my motives, too. When He speaks words of encouragement to true disciples, with them He comforts my heart also.

He is completely honest with us all. Faithful and true is He. And He deals with us according to His nature. He always “tells it like it is!”

Since this is so, I had best agree with God and also tell it like it is. With others here in this section of Luke, I stand uncovered before God and confess that:

***I. THE DIM-OUT IS MY FAULT
(11:33-36)***

***II. NOT ONE OF MY COVER-UPS
FOOLS GOD
(11:37-12:3)***

***III. BUT GOD WILL NEVER
DEVALUE ME
(12:4-12)***

Open before God—it is the best way to be. I turn my eyes from myself and gaze on Him, “**with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord.**” Thus I am being “*transformed into the same likeness from glory to glory by the Lord, the Spirit*” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

***I. THE DIM-OUT IS MY FAULT
(11:33-36)***

The Jews were asking for a sign. But the signs were there—all pointing to

Christ. The signs were not missing. What was missing was the heart to interpret them. They could not see the signs. Their spiritual eyes were bad. They were responsible for their condition. That was the tragedy. Spiritual dimness was for a time a curable disease. But when the final blindness came, it would be their own fault. The signs were there, but already their eyes were too dim to see.

When they asked for a sign, the Lord pointed them to Himself. They said they wanted light. He pointed them to His own glory—especially that of His life and work on the cross and coming resurrection (Luke 11:16, 29-30; Matthew 12:40; John 1:14).

“In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness; and the darkness did not comprehend it. . . . There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. . . . And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil (John 1:4-5, 9; 3:19).

They had the sign of Jonah, but they would not see.

When a normal person turns on a lamp, does he then cover it up so that no one can see? This is the question the Lord was putting to them. He explained the answer with a parable.

11:33. No one, after lighting a lamp, puts it away in a cellar, nor under a bowl. Instead he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light.

God will not do this either with the

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

Light of the world. For God, who said, Light shall shine out of darkness, is the One who would shine “*in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ*” (2 Corinthians 4:6). Christ said to them plainly, “*I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life*” (John 8:12).

“God had not done what man would not do: He had not lighted a lamp to hide it from men’s eyes, but that all might see and rejoice in the light” (Grant, p. 405).

That was the true light which lighted every man who came into the world. The light of the glorious gospel of Christ radiated everywhere after the resurrection of Christ.

Why do men and women walk in darkness? It is because they choose to do so, not because the light is obscured:

11:34. The lamp of your body is your eye; when your eye is clear (healthy), your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness.

The lamp is not the light. It is the vehicle that carries the light. If the wick is broken or the chimney is dirty, the lamp is not adequate to display the light it bears. The lamp of the body is the eye. When the eye has vision, the body can function to all its capacity when walking and working, playing and resting. But when something is wrong with the eye, the efficiency of the body suffers. It cannot see to walk and work. It lives in darkness.

This example is similar to one the Lord Jesus used on other occasions (cf. Matthew 5:15; Luke 8:16) and with other connections. This has led some critics to claim that either Matthew or Luke must therefore be mistaken. But most good teachers use the same similes not just once, but many times. Who is to say that the Lord could not use the same figure of speech more than once?

“Whereas the figure is the same in chapter 8 as in chapter 11 of Luke, the application is different.

In chapter 8 He was teaching them their responsibility as to what they had heard, in order to publish. . . . This for the sake of others. There He was speaking of responsibility concerning others. Here He was speaking of responsibility concerning personal life” (Morgan, p. 147).

11:34. The eye is the lamp of the body.

God has given to every man this lamp. It is a faculty of perception, so that we can grasp abstract truth. The Old Testament calls this lamp “the spirit of man.”

“The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all the innermost parts of His being” (Proverbs 20:27).

With this faculty we can understand man. Paul writes,

“For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him?” (1 Corinthians 2:11a).

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

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This faculty is the lamp; it is not the light. Christ is the Light, and the Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ and shows them to us (John 16:13-14).

“Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:11b).

When a man trusts Christ as Savior, he receives the Spirit of God (Romans 8:9).

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God” (1 Corinthians 2:12).

Man is responsible to receive the light. Christ said,

11:35. Then watch out that the light in you may not be darkness.

36. If therefore your whole body is full of light, with no dark part in it, it shall be wholly illumined, as when the lamp illumines you with its rays.

“Watch out!” He said.

“If you have not received the light of life, if you have never trusted Christ as your Savior, oh, I warn you, be careful! All men by nature are in darkness, but there is something worse than that. When you refuse the light that is offered you, the darkness becomes far more serious than that darkness in which you were born. We read, ‘Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.’ That is willful darkness” (Ironsides, p. 385).

This is a strong warning to the unbeliever. If he continues to close his eyes, his spiritual vision grows dim. The day will come when the blackout becomes permanent. God will give him up to judicial darkness. In the Old Testament He warns the people of their responsibility to “give glory to the Lord your God, before He brings darkness, and before your feet stumble on the dusky mountains, and while you are hoping for light He makes it into deep darkness, and turns it into gloom” (Jeremiah 13:16). If you persist in remaining in darkness, one day God will say, “You may have darkness forever.”

“But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!” (Matthew 6:23).

“You will enter into the darkness forever. That is the doom of those who have refused the light—eternal darkness” (Ironsides, p. 386).

How great is that darkness. Well might we heed the warning and ask God in humility:

**Oh, how shall I, whose native sphere
Is dark, whose mind is dim,
Before the Ineffable appear,
And on my naked spirit bear
The uncreated beam?**

But He would not leave such a soul in darkness. There is one answer, one way:

**There is a way for man to rise
To that sublime abode:
An Offering and a Sacrifice,**

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

**A Holy Spirit's energies,
An Advocate with God:**

**These, these prepare us for the sight
Of holiness above;
The sons of ignorance and night
May dwell in the Eternal Light,
Through the Eternal Love.**

Unknown

The believer through all eternity will dwell in the Eternal Light.

What then is our responsibility today? In view of such an eternity, how should we live? We should live as children of light.

“For you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8).

To live as a child of light is a very practical thing. The motive of such a life is to please God, to bring pleasure to His heart. This means producing fruit for God. It involves separation from the world of darkness.

Paul spells it out:

“For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth, trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them. . . .

“But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. . . .

“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:9-15).

God never calls us to a life that He does not enable us to live. When we accept the responsibility, He provides the strength. He invites us to His throne, there to ask and receive *grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16)*. The choice is ours—to become a child of light and to walk as a child of light.

It is so easy to fall into habits that lead to moral darkness, or take up with things that will darken the spiritual eyesight. Give attention to God's Word; cultivate the desire to read the Word of God. Nothing will kill the desire to read the Word of God so much as the habit of reading the trashy literature that prevails in so many places today. You cannot get spiritual light in this manner.

“People say, ‘I read my Bible, but I do not get much out of it.’

“The reason is that the eye is not sound; it has become dull, partially blinded and occupied with things that are opposed to the truth of God and the Holy Spirit who dwells within you. If, on the other hand, your eye be sound then your whole body will be sound, having no part darkness.

“So our blessed Lord stresses firmly the importance of walking in the light that He gives. Think of the responsibility of those who have already come to God in Christ, to pass that light on to others, and to so live before God that they will always have clear vision themselves to do what the Lord would have them do” (Ironsides, p. 385).

The problem is sometimes that we have become so accustomed to the spiri-

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

tual dimness that we do not recognize our sad condition.

“Because you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy and have need of nothing,’ and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked!” (Revelation 3:17).

The light of God’s Word reveals our condition, and the Great Physician has a remedy. Again, it is our responsibility to take it and use it:

“I advise you to buy from Me . . . eyesalve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me” (Revelation 3:17-20).

**Our eyes see dimly till by faith
anointed,
And our blind choosing brings us
grief and pain;
Through Him alone who hath our
path appointed,
We find our peace again.
Choose for us, God, nor let our weak
preferring
Cheat us of good Thou hast for us de-
signed:
Choose for us, God; Thy wisdom is
unerring.
Foolish we are and blind.**

— Unknown

Tell it like it is. There is no excuse for spiritual blindness. *The dim-out is my fault!* Therefore I will turn my eyes to

Christ, looking into the mirror of His Word to behold His glory. I will draw upon His resources to live a life that pleases Him. The way with Him leads to Jerusalem. I will deny myself, take up the cross and follow Him. The joy of the Lord is my strength (Nehemiah 8:10). For even though the road leads through the valley of the shadow, His presence goes with me; His light shines upon the path (Psalms 23; 119:105; 139:3).

“The path of the just is like a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18).

He is my Strength.

II. NOT ONE OF MY COVER-UPS FOOLS GOD (11:37-12:3)

The Jewish leaders are now brought into the light and exposed—and I stand there, too. For them the exposure is scathing and severe. It incites in them the utmost hostility. For me the searchlight is no less scorching. It burns off the disguises and masks. But this is good for me. It burns away impurities and brings healing.

As the Lord was speaking His words about the sign of Jonah and the parable of the lamp, He was knocking upon doors of people’s hearts, seeking to bring them to conviction of sin and need of Him:

“If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me” (Revelation 3:20).

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

Does the Pharisee hear the knock, however faintly, and finally open the door of his heart to Christ? We do not know. We do not know what happened to the man in the end. What we do know is that after the Lord spoke His words about the lamp, a certain Pharisee invited Him to lunch.

“Bitter as was the enmity of the Pharisaic party against Jesus, it had not yet so far spread, nor become so avowed, as in every place to supersede the ordinary rules of courtesy. It is thus that we explain that invitation of a Pharisee to the morning meal, which furnished the occasion for the second recorded Perea discourse of Christ.

“Alike in substance and tone, it is a continuation of His former address to the Pharisees. And it is probably here inserted in order to mark the further development of Christ’s anti-Pharisaic teaching.

“It is the last address to the Pharisees, recorded in the Gospel of St. Luke” (the only exception being 20:45-47, which is not a formal address, but only the answering of questions) (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 204, The Lamp and the Temple).

Matthew records an address to the Pharisees made much later in Jerusalem (Matthew 23). The words are similar, and this leads some critics to say that Luke was confused in his reporting.

“That Luke does not always preserve the order of time or the historical connection of events or words may be freely admitted; nor does he here give as definitely as in the last case the time

or times of these sayings of the Lord” (Grant, p. 407).

Definite certainty as to time and place is probably impossible to have.

“If it could be, we would have to ask, would there be any particular profit in such knowledge? It is hard to imagine what. We have the Gospels in the form the Spirit of God has been pleased to give them, and shall surely find divine wisdom in this as elsewhere in Scripture. When it leads commentators to talk of ‘heterogeneous elements of discourse,’ we can realize the dangers of too much theorizing in things unknown. We shall do well to take it as we find it, assured that none can mend what needs no mending, and that ‘to this man will I look’ saith the Lord, ‘even to him that is lowly and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word’ (Isaiah 66:2)” (Grant, pp. 407-08).

“Why may we not accept it as the truth that the Lord in His final judgment of Pharisaism repeated much of what He had said at the earlier time recorded by Luke? Why may He not, at the end of His ministry in Israel, have deliberately reaffirmed His former judgment of those scribes and Pharisees whose characters were so well marked? A double testimony suited to the solemnity of it!” (Grant, p. 406).

Now we turn to what happened in the house of the Pharisee. Before sitting down for the morning meal, the Jews must perform the rituals of purification. This was

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not a matter of hygiene, but of ceremony; and on this occasion the Lord sat at the table without going through the rituals.

“The law laid it down that before a man ate he must wash his hands in a certain way, and that he must also wash them between the courses. As usual every littlest detail was worked out. Large stone vessels of water were specially kept for the purpose because ordinary water might be unclean; the amount of water used must be at least a quarter of a log, that is, enough to fill one and a half eggshells. First the water must be poured over the hands beginning at the tips of the fingers and running right up to the wrist. Then the palm of each hand must be cleansed by rubbing the fist of the other into it. Finally, water must again be poured over the hand, this time beginning at the wrist and running down to the fingertips. To the Pharisee, to omit the slightest detail of this was to sin” (Barclay, p. 158).

This Pharisee *was astonished* that such a famous rabbi ignored the rituals.

11:38. And when the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal.

39. But the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but inside of you, you are full of robbery and wickedness.

40. You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also?

Remembering that a Pharisee ought not to sit down to a meal with such an igno-

rant one, he might feel that he should not have asked Jesus to his table. All this, as well as the terrible contrast between the punctiliousness of Pharisaism in outward purifications and the inward defilement which it never sought to remove, must have lain open before Him Who read the inmost secrets of the heart and kindled His holy wrath. He scathingly denounced their hypocrisy. They had professed **“to entertain the Lord. Ostensibly they were honoring Him, but it was only to exalt themselves”** (Coates, p. 146).

They thought that when they ritually washed the outside, they were clean before God.

“The Lord saw into the very hearts of men, and He told them it was not enough to serve legal ordinances. If He were here today He would rebuke, just as strongly as He rebuked these Pharisees, those who imagine that being a Christian depends on church-membership and ritual-services, rather than the cleansing of the soul before God.

“Our Lord told these Pharisees that they were very careful about cleaning the outside of the cup, but they did not clean the inside. They did not seem to understand that He who made the outside made also the inside. They cleansed the body with water, but the heart was *full of ravening and wickedness* (11:39 KJV). What God wants above everything else is a clean heart” (Ironside, p. 389).

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Matthew 5:8).

11:41. But give that which is within as char-

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

ity, and then all things are clean for you.

When we give our money to the Lord's work, **“we must give our hearts and not just make an outward gesture. ‘The gift without the giver is bare’ (Lowell). When a man gives from his heart, everything is clean. No amount of pouring of water can make up for a wrong state in the inward man”** (Morris, p. 204).

“You can test the measure of a man's spirituality, not by a pious look on his face, nor by his words, but very largely by his use of the means which God has entrusted to him” (Ironside, p. 390).

Now the Lord pronounces six *woes*—three upon the Pharisees and three upon the scribes. These correspond to their opposites, the beatitudes.

“They pronounce a surprising verdict on qualities and states which men have universally regarded as desirable. But the world's blessings may encourage an independent attitude over against God, an attitude of self-sufficiency which is fatal to spiritual growth. Woe does not convey the force of Jesus's ‘ouai’ (in the Greek). It is more like ‘Alas’ or ‘How terrible.’ It is an expression of regret and compassion, not a threat” (Morris, p. 127).

The Lord grieved over the condition of men's hearts.

First, He pronounced woe upon them for their reversed value system.

“They were laying their emphasis

upon the trivial and neglecting the essential” (Morgan, p. 149).

11:42. But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithes of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.

“These weightier matters of the law with them were the things that had no weight with them” (Grant, p. 406).

“It was perfectly right to apply the rule of tithing even to the smallest things, even though of little value, but the most important thing was a godly walk—to walk in justice and righteousness before God and man, and to manifest the love of God in the life (11:42). The trouble with many religionists is that they have never known the reality of the new birth. Jesus said to Nicodemus, ‘Ye must be born again,’ and ‘except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God’ (Jn. 3:3, 7). Outward observances will never make up for this lack of inner life” (Ironside, pp. 390-91).

11:43. “Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the front seats in the synagogues, and the respectful greetings in the market places.

44. “Woe to you Pharisees! For you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over them are unaware of it.”

Secondly, He denounced them for the pride and self-centeredness which made

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them seek the place of prominence and popularity. They liked to be dignitaries.

“This dignitary sits complacently enjoying the admiration of the company while pretending to worship God. In reality he is but seeking satisfaction from the recognition given him. Such conduct is abhorrent to God who knoweth the proud afar off (Psalm 138:6)” (Ironside, p. 391).

Thirdly, He denounced them for their **“corrupting influence that they were exerting, all unconsciously, on the people”** (Morgan, p. 149).

According to Numbers 19:16, everyone who touched a grave in the open was for seven days ceremonially unclean.

“A problem was posed by the fact that men were sometimes buried in unmarked graves. The unwary traveller (sic) could easily walk over such a grave and all unwittingly contract ceremonial defilement. There is irony in the comparison of the religious Pharisees, who thought so well of themselves, to these unsuspected sources of defilement. Men who walked over unmarked graves became ceremonially unclean. And men who walked in the teaching and ways of the Pharisees became morally unclean” (Morris, p. 204-05).

11:45. And one of the lawyers said to Him in reply, “Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too.”

46. But He said, “Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with bur-

dens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers.

47. “Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them.

48. “Consequently, you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs.

49. “For this reason also the wisdom of God said, ‘I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute

50. in order that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation

51. from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.’

52. “Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered.”

Now it was the turn of the lawyers (or scribes, 11:45-52). **“The lawyers were men who gave themselves over to the study of the Old Testament Law. They were religious men and many of them were Pharisees. There was a difference in that the lawyer as such was a member of a learned profession and the Pharisee of a religious party. There was a link in that the essential Pharisaic position was based on a close study of the Law”** (Morris, p. 205).

11:45. And one of the lawyers said to Him

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

in reply, "Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too."

The shoe was beginning to fit.

"Jesus did not retract His words for one moment. He was not trying to insult anyone. He was absolutely faithful. He would not cover up their sins; He brought them into the light, that they might be judged in the presence of God" (Ironsides, p. 393).

First, the Lord denounced the lawyers for their insincerity. They were not supposed to put a heavier burden on the people than the Law required. What the Law lightened, they made heavy.

"These lawyers were superadding to the commandments of God the traditions of men; and they would not touch one of the burdens with one of their fingers (11:46). They were not living by their code" (Morgan, p. 149).

They were saying, "Do as I say, not as I do."

Secondly, He denounced the lawyers for their hypocrisy.

"Their fathers killed the prophets, and they put monuments up to killed prophets, and went on with the same business of killing prophets" (Morgan, p. 150).

"This is the only place in the New Testament where the Wisdom of God is personified (11:49). In the book of Proverbs we have this personification.

In chapter 8, Wisdom warns men of the danger of insincerity and sinful folly" (Ironsides, p. 394).

"The men of this generation are castigated (11:50-51) because they rejected the essential position of the prophets and aligned themselves with all those who had persecuted and killed them. Thus the blood of all the prophets would be required of them. Abel, of course, was the first martyr (Genesis 4:8); it is not clear why he should be called a prophet. Zechariah's death was the last death of a prophet mentioned in the Old Testament, taking the books in their normal Hebrew order (2 Chronicles 24:21ff)" (Morris, p. 206).

Thirdly, the lawyers were denounced for **"prostituting"** their office (Morgan, p. 150).

They professed to teach knowledge, but in fact they had *taken away the key to knowledge (11:52)*.

"Instead of opening up the treasures of knowledge, the lawyers closed them fast. They turned the Bible into a book of obscurities, a bundle of riddles. Only the experts could understand it. And the experts themselves were so pleased and preoccupied with the mysteries they had manufactured that they missed the wonderful thing that God was saying. They neither entered themselves nor allowed others to enter. There were ordinary people on their way to the knowledge of God until their teachers turned them away" (Morris, p. 207).

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): 'And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.'

“It is a solemn warning against the misuse of the Scriptures. If God has entrusted one with the Knowledge of the Word, he is responsible to give out that Word clearly and helpfully so that others may share the blessing” (Ironsides, p. 395).

After such denunciations, the entertainment in the Pharisee’s house must have been broken up. The Christ was too terribly in earnest—too mournfully so over those whom they hindered from entering the kingdom, to bear with the awful guilt of their trivialities. With what feelings they parted from Him appears from the sequel (11:53-12:1):

11:53. And when He left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects,

54. plotting against Him, to catch Him in something He might say.

12:1 Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of the multitude had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first of all, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”

The word is that *they began to press Him hard*. It shows intense hostility. They were trying to *trap* or to *catch at* Him. The word is used of hunting wild beasts. **“It is a vivid word for intense opposition”** (Morris, p. 207).

Christ follows His denunciation of the Jewish leaders with teaching for His disciples. In Luke this section begins with

12:1 and runs through 13:17.

“The tone is still that of warning, but entirely different from that to the Pharisees. It is a warning of sin that threatened, not of judgment that awaited. It was for prevention, not in denunciation” (Edersheim, Book IV, Vol. II, p. 214).

First, we are told that “an innumerable *multitude* of people were gathered together.” The common people loved to hear the Lord Jesus. Actually it was they who sought Him rather than the religious leaders. We are told elsewhere that *the common people heard Him gladly* (Mark 12:37).

But it is one thing to hear Him; it is quite another thing to receive His words into the heart and turn to God in repentance. How many there were in this great group who truly received Christ as Savior, recognizing their own sinful state and their need of a Deliverer, we have no way of knowing; doubtless many did. But the great majority were simply interested in hearing His message and seeing His works of power. There were so many, we are told, that *they trod one upon another* (12:1).

“There can be no doubt that Jesus wished the crowd to hear what He said, [but] He addressed His teaching to His disciples first of all (12:1). Those who profess to follow Jesus cannot sit back comfortably and listen while Jesus makes demands on people outside their number. Disciples must see the Master’s teaching as addressed to them in the first instance” (Morris, p. 208).

12:1. Beware of the leaven of the Phari-

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

sees, which is hypocrisy.

“The metaphor would have been more obvious than now, for people tended to make their own bread and everyone would be familiar with the way a little yeast slowly transforms a large lump of dough. Leaven speaks of a penetration that is slow, insidious, and constant” (Morris, p. 208).

“What did He mean by that? The history of the Pharisees is a wonderful history. They arose in the Maccabean period; and were to the Jewish people at that time, what the Puritans were to England in the period of their greatness. The Pharisees constituted an order, created to prevent the nation coming into contact with other nations and losing its purity and its identity; and their influence was of the highest, and of the best. The Pharisaic movement arose out of the passion of men for the Divine ideal for the nation.

“In the days of Jesus, they had become utterly degenerate. They had lost their spiritual and moral influence; and in effect He said to His disciples, The leaven that has destroyed them is hypocrisy. In that warning our Lord was interpreting the failure of one of the most magnificent movements that had ever arisen in the history of God’s ancient people. The leaven of hypocrisy had destroyed it” (Morgan, p. 151).

“And here it is characteristic of Pharisaism, that Rabbinic Hebrew has not even a word equivalent to the term ‘hypocrisy.’ The only expression used

refers either to flattery of, or pretense before men, not to that unconscious hypocrisy towards God which our Lord so truly describes as ‘the leaven’ that pervaded all the Pharisees said and did. It is against this that He warned His disciples—and in this, rather than conscious deception, pretence, or flattery, lies the danger of the Church. Our common term, ‘unreality’, but partially describes it. Its full meaning can only be gathered from Christ’s teaching” (Ederheim, Book IV, Vol. II, ch. 8, p. 215).

The Greek word for *hypocrisy* “quite literally means wearing a mask. A hypocrite is a man who wears a mask, so that his features are not seen. Hypocrisy is dishonesty. These Pharisees were masquerading” (Morgan, p. 151).

In verses 1-3, the Lord is warning against this unreality.

“That is something to which we are all prone. It is so easy to pretend to be more than we are. We may appear to be more devoted than we are and assume a profession of piety to which we have not actually attained. So we may well take these words of our Lord to heart. . . . As Christians we are to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness. Our lives should be as open books. We should be able to say . . . ‘I would that a mirror might be placed over my heart that men might be enabled to look in and see how true it beats toward God’” (Ironsides, p. 398).

Hypocrisy is really self-deception. Sooner or later the masks are going to

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

have to come off:

12:2. "There is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.

3. "Accordingly whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops."

The hypocrite is short-sighted. For the Christian everything is going to come out at the Judgment Seat of Christ: *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:10a), where "each man's work will become evident . . . because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work" (1 Corinthians 3:13).* It is better to judge sin now than to wait to have it tested by fire then.

"What you have whispered in the inner rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops" (12:3).

"If we would keep that in mind I think it would stop a great deal of gossip. If we realized that everything we whisper about another person, every unkind criticism and evil story which we spread abroad concerning others will at last be made known to them and to everyone else, would it not have a tendency to make us very much more careful as to the use of our tongues? It is all coming out some day, for 'Every idle (careless, NASB) word that men shall speak they shall give account of in the day of judgment (Matthew 12:36)'" (Ironside, p. 399).

The Three Sieves: Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?

"All of us who have tried to remember these three sieves, and have used them, know what a help they are. We are sorry when we ever forget them, and we are very grateful when we are reminded of them in time to keep us from saying something untrue, unkind, or unnecessary.

"Sometimes when I listen to hymn-singing I think of the words about the fig tree and the vine and the fountain. 'Can the fig tree . . . bear olive berries? Either a vine, figs? So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh' (James 3:12). Can the lips which have sung these beautiful loving words speak those other words? But they sometimes do.

"Perhaps these three sieves will help to keep some words from being spoken that would grieve the Spirit of love and hurt someone whom our Lord loves:

"Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?"

"The three sieves are only useful for keeping wrong words from being spoken. They do not give us right words. Love can fill the cup so full of love, that nothing can come out but love. You remember the old illustration: A cup brimful of sweet water cannot spill even one drop of bitter water however suddenly jolted. Love can quicken our powers of thinking and of imagining so that we shall know how others are feeling, even if they do not tell us; a kind of instinct will tell us—the instinct of love. Love will never let us hurt another unless we must, and then it will hurt us far more. We will not do it easily.

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): 'And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.'

“Sometimes there is a great deal to be done before God can come upon us in changing and renewing power. But if only we will ask Him to come now and sweep from us every particle of unlove; to cleanse us thoroughly in this matter, searching into the deep places of our hearts, where thoughts that only He and we know like to creep and hide; then the way will be clear for Him to do all that He longs to do for us” (Amy Carmichael, *Edges of His Ways*, pp. 113-14).

The Lord is after reality. He wants to get rid of anything that would darken the shining of His light through us.

“I suppose nothing could be more darkening than hypocrisy; therefore it was the first thing that was on His heart to say to His disciples. If every form of hypocrisy was got rid of, we should be like the city. We read in Revelation 21: ‘Her shining was like a most precious stone, as a crystal-like jasper stone’ (v. 11); and ‘the city, pure gold, like pure glass’ (v. 18); ‘the street of the city pure gold, as transparent glass’ (v. 21). It suggests a medium that in no way obscures the light; and that is the Lord’s thought for us spiritually now. . . .

“Hypocrisy is a principle to which we naturally gravitate, so that we need to take heed to the wholesome words of the Lord.

“. . . Ezekiel (1:22) speaks of the crystal, but he says ‘the terrible crystal.’ It is the idea of being shone through by divine light. Who would like to be made of crystal so that the most hidden thoughts and secret motives could be

seen by everybody? No natural man would like it.

“But then Ezekiel shows that there is something for God in the terrible crystal, something on a higher plane. He sees a throne and the appearance of a man upon it, and the throne surrounded by a rainbow. God is able to act in the faithfulness of His own covenant towards sinful men, because the very Man who sits upon the throne has died on the cross for them, and everything the light has exposed love has removed, so there is no need for covering anything up. It is all out. That is where the Gospel puts us” (Coates, pp. 149-51).

Tell it like it is. It is all open before God. *Not one of my cover-ups fools Him.* It is good to be open to Him. The light is the revelation of Himself. It is the place of true prayer. In the light of the revelation of God, I can pray. Such prayer would eliminate the darkness. If I pray, telling it all to God, the darkness goes, because the place of prayer is nearness to God, and “*in Him is no darkness at all*” (1 John 1:5).

“Either prayer makes a man cease from sin, or sin makes a man cease from prayer” (John Bunyan).

III. GOD WILL NEVER DEVALUE ME (12:4-12)

In this second part of the section of teaching, the Lord gives comfort to His disciples in view of what they will suffer for His sake.

“Soon He, the Master, after having

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’”

been rejected and crucified, will rise from the dead and be received back into the glory. His people are to be left in the world to tell others of His grace. He said, *‘I say unto you, My friends.’* There is something very precious about this expression—*My friends*” (Ironsides, p. 399).

12:4. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

5. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!

“In that word He gave them guidance. He told them to be free from false fear, and filled with true fear. He said there was to be no fear of the man who kills the body. . . . That little phrase ‘after that’ is revealing. Is there anything ‘after that’?” (Morgan, p. 152).

“Though men might kill the body they cannot touch the soul. When the body dies, the soul of the believer departs from the body and is immediately present with the Lord. Who then would fear death with that glorious prospect in view?

“On the other hand, if one is not right with God he may well fear Him who, after the death of the body, has power to cast the soul into hell.

‘Yea,’ says Jesus, ‘I say unto you, Fear Him.’

“There are men today who do not believe in a judgment-day, men who do not believe in hell and punishment after death. But all the arguments that they

may bring against these truths cannot take them out of the word of God. The Scriptures declare that, *‘It is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment’* (Hebrews 9:27). Our Lord had more to say about judgment after death than any other New Testament preacher” (Ironsides, p. 401).

“The fear of God is rather out of fashion these days. We much prefer to stress the love of God. But, while there is a sense in which perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18), there is another in which fear is quite compatible with love.

“This kind of fear is continually regarded in the Bible as a necessary ingredient in right living. It is an attitude compounded of a recognition of the greatness and the righteousness of God on the one hand and our readiness to sin on the other. Fear of this kind guards against presumption and must find its place in a right faith” (Morris, p. 209).

But the Lord’s intention here was to comfort His disciples:

12:6. Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? And yet not one of them is forgotten before God.

7. Indeed the very hairs of your head are all numbered (labeled). Do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows.

The Lord tells us of His care by giving the example of His care of little birds. Two sparrows were sold for a penny. Evidently when two cents worth were purchased, one was thrown in for nothing. But *not one of them*—not even the free

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

one!—*is forgotten before God.*

“God takes notice of the commonest and cheapest of birds. Much more, then, will He be concerned for men. Jesus brings out this point with the information that the hairs of our heads are all numbered. The importance of this does not lie in the actual count, but in the fact that God cares enough about His people to know the minutest detail about them. He knows things they do not know about themselves. So those who are of more value than many sparrows should face life without fear” (Morris, p. 210).

The Lord is instructing us in the minuteness of the care and protection of God, so that while there is profound reverence in the sense of His authority, there is profound confidence in the sense of His care. The friends and confessors of Jesus are the objects of the greatest care and interest of God. . . .

We do not think much of a sparrow, but the Lord tells us that not one is forgotten before God. He does not forget a sparrow, not for a moment! It is wonderful. So nothing in our lives is small. There is nothing small about the confessor of Jesus.

8. And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God.

“Every time you mention His Name with reverence in the face of the world it is going to be told to the thousands and ten thousands. It is worth doing.

“One might be in a shop or an office or a school, and the temptation is not to confess the Son of Man—not to confess Jesus. But then think of all that hangs upon it: there is a day coming when the Son of Man is going to tell the heavenly hosts how you behaved . . . about your just confessing His name.

9. But he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

“This supposes that in the end such is the character of the person; his nature is that of a denier of the Lord. Such a man’s character is summed up this way. Peter denied the Lord, but that was not Peter’s character. He did not deny Him on the day of Pentecost” (Coates, pp. 153-54).

“But the man who denies Jesus will face the ultimate denial. He has refused to number himself among Jesus’s followers. When he stands before God, his choice will be ratified. Jesus leaves His hearers in no doubt that eternal issues are involved in their attitude to Him. . . . This brings us to the thought that there is a sin so serious that it cannot be forgiven” (Morris, p. 210).

12:10. And everyone who will speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him.

“The idea here is that there is deliberate wicked hatred of the Spirit as rendering testimony to Christ; and

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

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there is no forgiveness for that” (Coates, p. 155).

The one sin that never can be forgiven is the final rejection of the Holy Spirit’s testimony to the Lord Jesus.

“If you reject Christ there is nothing else for you but judgment. All sin—stealing, murder, drunkenness, evil-speaking, maliciousness, hatred—all these were atoned for on Calvary’s cross, and the Holy Spirit came from heaven to bear testimony to this. But if men reject this testimony, they deliberately sin against the Holy Ghost” (Ironside, p. 404).

“Paul speaks of himself as a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent, overbearing man, but he adds a saving clause: ‘I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief’ (1 Timothy 1:13). What is done ignorantly is a different thing; it would come in as a sin of ignorance; but this enmity and wickedness is deliberate, with eyes open” (Coates, pp. 155-56).

“We must understand this, not of the uttering of any form of words, but of the set of the life. This blasphemy is so serious because it concerns the whole man, not a few words spoken on any one occasion. Matthew and Mark put these words in connection with the Beelzebub controversy, and this helps us to get the meaning. Then Jesus’ opponents attributed His works of mercy to the devil. They called good evil.

“Men in such a situation cannot re-

pent and seek forgiveness: they lack a sense of sin; they reject God’s competence to declare what is right. It is this continuing attitude that is the ultimate sin. God’s power to forgive is not abated. But this kind of sinner no longer has the capacity to repent and believe” (Morris, pp. 210-11).

We are not to **“think of the Holy Spirit primarily . . . as [the] One whom we must be careful not to blaspheme. He is our Helper [and Comforter]. He is present with God’s people, especially with God’s persecuted people, to give them the assistance they need when they stand before the authorities”** (Morris, p. 211).

We have many examples of this in the book of Acts.

When the apostle Peter was brought before the Sanhedrin, he did not work out a great discourse which he was to deliver the next morning. The Holy Ghost gave him utterance. . . .

“When Saul of Tarsus appeared before kings and governors, and high priests, and rulers of Israel, it was no worked-up message that he gave; but in the power of the Holy Spirit he made his defence (sic) in an unanswerable way.

“The only real preaching today is preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit. We do not say that ministers of the gospel should not give much time to prayer, study, and to the Word that they may be prepared to give that Word when the time comes, but their depend-

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

ence must be upon the power of the Holy Spirit of God who alone can make that Word fruitful” (Ironside, p. 405).

Now all through these verses (12:1-12) **“there runs the note of intention. (The Lord) intended to comfort the hearts of those disciples in the presence of manifested hostility. Not a sparrow forgotten in the sight of God. The hairs of the head numbered. They were of more value than many sparrows. If they confessed Him, He would confess them before the angels. If they were put in prison, the Holy Spirit would guide them”** (Morgan, p. 153).

The Lord is telling me that I am infinitely valuable to Him. The value He places on me is measured by the cross of Calvary. We often value a thing by how much we pay for it. My salvation shows me how much He values me. Today we hear about currency devaluations. My

value to Christ can never undergo any change. I can never be devalued in His sight. The eternal measure of my worth is *the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:19).*

The Word of God always *tells it like it is!*

“Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all committed to the disciples of Jesus. God, as Father, knows the falling of the sparrow and cares for them; the Son is waiting for the day when He will confess their name; the Spirit is at their disposal to help them in every hour of difficulty” (Morgan, p. 153).

What words of comfort and encouragement these are.

**Children of the heavenly Father
Safely in His bosom gather;
Nestling bird nor star in heaven
Such a refuge e'er was given.**

— Carolina Sandell Berg
1858, v. 1

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

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XVI. YOUR LIFESTYLE – TO WHAT END?

Questions on Luke 12:13-53

FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

What blessed your heart from the notes on Luke 11:33-12:12?

List the main events in Luke 12:13-53. What is the main theme of this section?

MEMORY WORK:

REVIEW: Luke 19:10; 24:19; 2:49; 3:21-22; 4:14; 5:32; 6:45; 7:22-23; 8:18; 9:23-26; 10:2; 10:41-42; 11:9-10.

LEARN: Luke 12:8-9: "And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God."

I. THE LIFE-STYLE THAT IS SELF-CENTERED

READ: Luke 12:13-21 and Phil. 1:21.

DO QUESTIONS: 1-19.

READ NOTES: Pages 108-119.

1. The Lord is telling us to take stock of our lives. How are we investing what God has given? Think and pray about Luke 12:15 and Phil. 1:21.

2. What should life NOT consist of?

3. What does Paul mean in Phil. 1:21? What will be true in your life if this is true of you?

4. According to Col. 3:5, what is covetousness?

5. What does John tell believers about this in 1 John 5:21?

6. How can we guard our hearts against this sin? (See Col. 3:1-3.)

7. By today's standards, the rich man would probably be called wise, but God calls him a fool. Why?

8. Meditate on Luke 12:16-21, Eph. 1:1-23 and Col. 1:1-2:3. What are some of the riches (treasures, inheritance) that believers have in the Lord Jesus? How rich are YOU toward God?

STUDY: Luke 12:22-34

9. Think about verse 22 and its context. What does the Lord mean in this verse? Are we to take it literally? (See also 12:31 and Matt. 6:33.) Explain.

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): "And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God."

10. List the examples Christ uses (ravens, etc.) and give the application He makes for our encouragement.

11. Do you think that verse 33 means that you are to sell all and give the proceeds to the poor? Justify your answer from Scripture.

12. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Luke 12:34) How did the following men evidence (by life and/or pen) where their treasure was?

13. Abraham – Gen. 15:1, Heb. 11:8-19

14. Moses – Heb. 11:23-29

15. David – Psalm 16:11

16. Paul – Phil. 3:7-10; Col. 3:1-4

17. John – 1 John 1:3; 4:19

18. Peter – 1 Pet. 1:3-5, 8

19. Where is YOUR treasure?

II. THE LIFE-STYLE THAT IS GOD SERVING

READ: Luke 12:35-53; Matt. 24:37-25:30; 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11

DO QUESTIONS: 20-26.

READ NOTES: Pages 119-126.

20. What should our attitude be about the coming of the Lord Jesus?

21. How did Paul and John feel about the coming of the Lord? (2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 22:20) Is this YOUR attitude? If so, how will it affect your life TODAY? (See also 1 John 3:1-3; 2 Pet. 3:11.)

22. How does Luke 12:48 apply to us who for years have had the privilege of hearing the Word of God? (See also James 4:17.)

23. Explain Luke 12:49-53.

24. What baptism is the Lord referring to?

25. What did the Lord mean when He said He did not come to give peace on earth? (See also John 14:27 and 16:33.)

26. What causes division?

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): "And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God."

XVI. YOUR LIFESTYLE – TO WHAT END?

(Luke 12:13-53)

“And do not seek what you shall eat, and what you shall drink, and do not keep worrying. For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. But seek for His kingdom, and these things shall be added to you” (Luke 12:28-31).

**Go, labor on; spend and be spent—
Thy joy to do the Father’s will;
It is the way the Master went;
Should not the servant tread it still?**

**Go, labor on; ‘tis not for naught;
Thy earthly loss is heavenly gain;
Men heed thee, love thee, praise thee
not;
The Master praises—what are men?**

**Go, labor on; your hands are weak;
Your knees are faint, your souls cast
down;
Yet falter not; the prize you seek
Is near—a kingdom and a crown!**

**Go, labor on while it is day,
The world’s dark night is hastening
on;
Speed, speed thy work, cast sloth
away,
It is not thus that souls are won.**

**Men die in darkness at your side,
Without a hope to cheer the tomb;
Take up the torch and wave it wide,
The torch that lights time’s thickest
gloom.**

**Toil on, faint not, keep watch and
pray;
Be wise the erring soul to win;
Go forth into the world’s highway,
Compel the wanderer to come in.**

**Toil on, and in thy toil rejoice;
For toil comes rest, for exile home;
Soon shalt thou hear the bride-
groom’s voice,
The midnight cry: “Behold, I come!”**

—Horatius Bonar
The Keswick Hymn Book, p. 292

“I call heaven and earth to witness against you that today I have set before you life or death, blessing or curse. Oh, that you would choose life; that you and your children might live! Choose to love the Lord your God and to obey Him and to cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days” (Deuteronomy 30:19-20).

Your choice of lifestyle shapes your future! This slogan of the seventies echoes the appeal of God to men of all generations. God does not force the allegiance of your heart and the service of your life. He leaves the choice with you. But that choice determines your destiny.

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): “And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.”

That service affects your place in His eternal kingdom. Your lifestyle does indeed shape your future.

The choice is between two lifestyles, only two. But both have eternal consequences.

In this passage Christ brings His disciples to face the fact and the choice. He probes their hearts with questions. What does each lifestyle entail? Where does each lead? Christ answers the questions by throwing into sharp contrast two kinds of life:

***I. THE LIFESTYLE
THAT IS SELF-CENTERED
(vv. 13-34)***

***II. THE LIFESTYLE
THAT IS GOD-SERVING
(vv. 35-53)***

As you study the passage, you must face the contrast. You must examine lifestyles and choices. Who is the center of your life? Whom do you serve—self or God?

A self-centered life or a life of service—which has it been?

The one lifestyle holds fleeting pleasure in its grasp, but loses it with everything else in the end. The other releases the hold on things for today in order to gain all things forever.

Is the choice then so difficult? Which lifestyle is it for you?

Here Christ Himself sets the pattern for your lifestyle. His face toward Calvary, He marks out the life of the true servant of God.

***I. THE SELF-CENTERED
LIFESTYLE:***

What To Do About It! (Luke 12:13-34)

Two heart cries reflect two lifestyles. One is the clamor of the crowd, “Give me more!” One is the humble prayer of a lonely disciple, “Oh, release me from the tension of the grasping hand!” Each heart cry is an attitude which has shaped a life.

Christ always hears such cries of the heart. He does this now in Luke. He hears what is not expressed in words. He sees life-shapes unseen by other eyes. He confronts the spiritual need which He alone can meet. All through this passage He probes heart attitudes toward material things. With Him now we look at what hands are doing with things. In each of three successive scenes we focus upon the hands . . .

1. of one grabbing for things which are not his (vv. 13-15)

2. of a rich fool grasping more and more things (vv. 16-21)

3. of disciples releasing the grip on things (vv. 22-34)

Christ looks at their hearts and hands, and He looks at mine. What are my hands and heart doing with things?

**1. Hands Grabbing for Things?
(vv. 13-15)**

12:13. And someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me!”

14. But He said to him, “Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbiter over you?”

15. And He said to them, “Beware, and be

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

It is a demanding voice ringing with tones of self-interest. Just then the Lord is speaking to the crowd about an attitude far different from this, speaking words of warning and comfort and grace (vv. 1-12). Now comes this strident interruption. Has not the man paid any attention? Has he not been listening at all?

"Man, who appointed Me a judge or an arbiter between you?"

Christ rejects the demand, and His words are stern.

"His form of address, Man, is far from cordial (cf. Bengel, 'He addresses him as a stranger'). He came to bring men to God, not to bring property to men" (Morris, p. 212).

"The man has thrust himself forward and, whether consciously or unconsciously, demanded that Christ concern Himself with something entirely removed from what He came to earth to do" (Geldenhuys, p. 354).

Jesus comes *"not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved"* (John 3:17).

"Christ had not only no legal authority for interfering, but the Jewish law of inheritance was so clearly defined, and, we may add, so just, that if this person had any just or good cause, there could have been no need for appealing to Je-

sus. Hence it must have been 'covetousness' in the strictest sense, which prompted it—perhaps a wish to have, besides his own share as a younger brother, half of that additional portion which, by law, came to the eldest son of the family" (Edersheim, Book IV, p. 243).

The law specified that the eldest receive a double portion. If there were two brothers, the inheritance would be divided in three, and two-thirds would go to the elder and one-third to the younger. If there were five brothers, it would be divided into six portions, and the eldest would receive two-sixths (one-third) and each of the younger brothers one-sixth. It appears that this man has listened to Jesus and now gets the idea that he can use the great Rabbi of Nazareth for his own selfish ends.

"Such an attempt for covetous purposes to make use of the pure unselfish preaching of love, and to derive profit from His spiritual influence, accounts for the severity with which Christ rejects the demand, although, as we judge, He would, under any circumstances, have refused to interfere in purely civil disputes, with which the established tribunals were sufficient to deal" (Edersheim, pp. 243-44).

The Lord looks into the heart and names the sin. He uses the incident to warn the people against one of the most perfidious sins in the heart of man. *"And He said to them, 'Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of*

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): 'And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.'

things which he possesses" (v. 15). It is the sin of coveting.

It is the sin forbidden in God's tenth commandment (Exodus 20:17).

"This is one of the red flags our Lord hung out which most people nowadays do not seem much to regard. . . . Covetousness is not practically considered a sin in these times. If a man breaks the sixth or eighth commandment, he is branded as a criminal and covered with shame; but he may break the tenth, and he is only enterprising" (J. R. Miller as quoted in MacDonald, p. 234).

"Paul tells us . . . that this was the only commandment that convicted him of the sinfulness of his nature. Elsewhere he says that so far as the righteousness of the law was concerned he had lived a blameless life. . . . He had not committed any of the sins forbidden in the first nine commandments, but when it came to the tenth he had to plead guilty" (Romans 7:7; Philippians 3:6) (Ironsides, p. 406).

"What is covetousness? It is a desire to grasp that which God has withheld from us though He may have given it to others. We ought to be content with such things as we have, but we grasp after other things which God has not seen fit to bestow upon us. . . . Our Lord Jesus Christ reproved men for this sin in no uncertain terms. . . .

"This is not only love for money, but it is also the attempt to find satisfaction in temporal things. . . . We go through life accumulating things, many of them

absolutely worthless; but we hoard them. We strive to have a beautiful home, more land, more expensive furniture than other people possess, a nicer set for the table, more elegant apparel, and in many other ways we go on hoarding and accumulating until at last death comes, and my! what a time our executors have dividing up the rubbish!" (Ironsides, p. 408).

This is one of the most subtle sins, one which Satan has always most skillfully downplayed. But God includes it with killing, adultery, stealing, lying; it is as wicked as all of these. It was covetousness that made Eve sin:

"God knows perfectly well that He might have made you happier than you are," the serpent suggested. So Eve coveted this supposed happiness, took, and ate what God had forbidden" (Lange).

Christ warns against this sin in the strongest terms: Guard yourselves.

"It is the taking of positive action to ward off a foe. . . . It is an important warning for men who live in an age of affluence" (Morris, p. 212).

Life does not consist in nor derive from the abundance of material things. We want life at its best, life abundant; and our Lord tells us that life is not found in things possessed—things, things, things!

How much of our life is involved with them—groceries to buy, house to clean, laundry to do, meals to prepare, money to earn, lawn to mow, faucet to fix. This

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): 'And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.'

takes us back to Mary and Martha—Martha distracted by things and Mary choosing the better part.

We remember Paul: *For me to live is Christ* (Philippians 1:21). Things had lost their attraction for Paul. He could say, “*I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content*” (Philippians 4:11). He wrote young Timothy that godliness with contentment is great gain; for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out (1 Tim. 6:6-7).

“The Jews used to say that a child is born into this world with his hand clenched, that is, with his fists clenched, grasping after everything he can obtain. But we die with our hands wide open; we have nothing in them. We cannot take anything with us; we have to go empty-handed. Why hoard things?” (Ironsides, p. 409).

Why be distracted by them?

“Characteristically Jesus hammered the point home with a parable. He pictures a wealthy farmer with a good harvest. His stores are full and he has nowhere to put this latest bumper crop. So what does he decide to do? Pull down his barns and build bigger ones. That will take care of the storage problem” (Morris, p. 212).

God calls him a fool:

2. Hands of a Rich Fool Grasping More and More Things (vv. 16-21)

12:16. And He told them a parable, saying, “The land of a certain rich man was

very productive.

17. “And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’

18. “And he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.

19. ‘And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.”

20. “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’

21. “So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

He was a godless fool, a grasping fool, and a self-centered fool. He was stupid. He lacked common sense. Could that be? He seemed to have done very well for himself. But he left God completely out of his picture. Psalm 14:1 describes the fool: He says “*in his heart, ‘There is no God’*” or “no God for me!” This is “**not so much atheism, a denial of God’s existence, but a practical atheism, the denial of the moral government of God**” (Lockyer).

The man was ignoring the fact that all he had was due to God’s mercy and kindness. God is the giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17). Yes, this man was a godless fool.

He was also a rich fool. This parable shows that, like a handful of sand, one cannot hold onto anything in this life. He has great plans because he’s reaped an excellent harvest. Short-sighted, he looks for

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

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ways to keep what he has earned. His silos are full; his barns are bursting. Ordinary reason would suggest a logical solution—build bigger storerooms.

Had he looked on the world around him with its starving poor, its widows, its orphans, he would have been able to save himself the expense of new construction.

“The bosoms of the poor, the houses of widows, the mouths of children are the barns which last forever” (Ambrose as quoted in Macdonald, p. 235).

There is no hint of fraud or dishonesty. The farmer had probably been successful through diligence, through using the best farming methods. Yet he was a poor rich man, and he did not know it. Like the Laodiceans, because he said, I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing, he was a fool. He did not know that he was in the eyes of heaven wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked (Revelation 3:17). He had failed to be the one thing that really mattered—rich toward God.

He was a self-centered fool. Look at the text (vv. 17-19). The man had a bad case of Perpendicular I-tis! There are six “I’s”, five “my’s”, and four “I will’s”—all revolving around him and his: my barns . . . my grain . . . my goods . . . MY SOUL.

But no one possesses his soul. God says, *“All souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine!”* (Ezekiel 18:4). This is why the man was a fool. He had lived only for himself. He had built for his own retirement so that he could live it up. He thought that would satisfy the soul which was created for

eternity, not time.

He had discounted God, and he was doomed. He had his future all planned. One thing he hadn’t counted on is summed up in the little three-letter word “but.” It is a word that means change. *“But God said to him, ‘You fool!’”* The man had thought he had all the time in the world to realize his dreams, BUT he met God who told him that he would lose his soul that very night. His dreams would end at his grave. His material possessions would fall into the hands of someone else. After all his boasting that night, he heard God say, “You fool! This very night you will be asked for your soul! Then who is going to possess all that you have prepared?” That is what happens to the man who hoards things for himself and is not rich where God is concerned (vv. 20-21).

How shortsighted he was. He had forgotten all about death. He had to leave it all behind and to lose his soul as well (1 Timothy 6:7; Mark 8:36; Psalms 49:16-17; 52:5, 7; 39:6).

The parable applied to the two brothers who were fighting over their inheritance—the one grasping to hold on to all he had received, the other grasping to get what he perceived was his. Both wanted to grip and hold.

What about your grip? Is it holding onto things? Is your life revolving around things? The brothers and the man in the story were choosing what they could touch and handle as opposed to the unseen and eternal treasures. For you, too, it involves a choice. Life is sustained by what one really needs and uses—both the physical and the spiritual. Why long for more than we need? Do you choose

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

Christ? Do you say with Paul, “*to live is Christ*”? Do you choose spiritual blessing in Him or the material things of this temporary life?

The things of earth so easily engross hearts and minds which should be in captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5); they drive out those higher thoughts and aims. We need to remember and act daily upon the fact that the believer has been crucified with Christ. We need to say by our lives and actions, It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:4; 1 Timothy 6:11; John 14:6; 11:25). This is your daily choice. You are responsible for your attitudes and goals in life.

The Lord has been talking to His disciples about things that would dim the light of their testimonies. He is warning them about two darkening influences—the sins of hypocrisy and covetousness. A coveting heart wants possessions and position here in this world. Covetousness is the desire to get something now. Now Christ points His disciples to **“a life of a different character.”** It is a life that does not consist in possessions and position here. **“That does not constitute life, but to be rich toward God—that is life.”** The stumbling block is covetousness. Here **“the great corrective is to seek to be rich toward God.”** It involves the heart desire, the act of the will, and it has practical results. **“If a thing is not adding to my wealth towards God, it is not contributing to my life at all.”** If I am living along **“the line of covetousness—of pulling down barns and building greater—then I am not wanting the Father’s care. I am forgetting the mercy and**

grace of God. I am thinking I am able to care for myself. To be rich towards God is to be appreciating His mercy. I learn to appreciate that in which God’s riches consist (Coates, p. 156).

We need to release the tension of the grasping hand on things down here and reach up for the things above. How can we do this? Let’s listen further to Christ and have Him examine our hearts and hands. Do we have hands of the true disciple?

3. Hands of the Disciple Releasing the Grip on Earthly Things (vv. 22-34)

12:22. And He said to His disciples, “For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on.

23. “For life is more than food, and the body than clothing.

24. “Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; and they have no storeroom nor barn; and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds!

25. “And which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life’s span?

26. “If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why are you anxious about other matters?

27. “Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these.

28. “But if God so arrays the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you, O men of little faith!

29. “And do not seek what you shall eat,

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

and what you shall drink, and do not keep worrying.”

What can I do about a self-centered life? How can I release my grip on earthly things? Christ gives me specific direction: by refusing to worry; by trusting the Father’s care; by seeking the Kingdom of God. Now I can apply these principles to my daily life under the leading of the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13).

a. By Refusing to Worry

The Lord has warned the people against the sin of covetousness. Then He turned to His disciples to give the positive side of this. The covetous man cannot be rich toward God.

Paul echoes the words of Christ:

“Don’t worry over anything whatever; tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer, and the peace of God, which transcends human understanding, will keep constant guard over your hearts and minds as they rest in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6).

Tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer. Why? Because your Father cares. Consider the care of your Father, Christ says. This helps you to release the grip on earthly things.

b. By Trusting the Father’s Care

Christ knows that it is difficult not to be anxious, so He calls us to consider (vv. 24, 27). To consider what?

“The ravens, the birds, the lilies, the

flowers. What are we to see when we do so? We are to see that the ravens do not sow, or reap. They have no store-chamber or barn. But God feeds them. How much more valuable do you think you are than birds? He did not mean to say that we are to sit down and expect God to feed us, as He feeds the birds. They cannot sow and reap. But we can sow and reap and have barns. And we ought to sow and reap and have barns; and if God cares for the birds who have no forethought and rationality, how much more will He feed us, to whom He has given foresight and rationality” (Morgan, p. 155).

“Sell your possessions’ and give to the poor does not mean that we must sell all our possessions and join the ranks of the poor ourselves.

“He was not advocating thriftlessness, nor was He inculcating idleness, nor unconcern as to one’s future responsibilities. The admonition was that His disciples should avoid anxious thought. . . . It is unthinkable that He should have more concern for the fowls of the air than for His own children. . . . ‘If you worry, you do not trust; if you trust, you do not worry.’ It was just this that the Lord sought to impress upon His disciples” (Ironside, p. 414).

“Again, consider the lilies. They toil not; we can toil. They spin not; we can spin. . . . Supposing the day comes when I cannot toil and spin, and I cannot sow and reap and gather into barns, then when I cannot, God can; and I am safe every way. That was what He was teach-

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

ing. I am not to expect God to do anything for me that I ought to do for myself in the power that He has bestowed upon me in the rationality of my personality” (Morgan, p. 155).

“Industriousness and faith go hand in hand. It does not signify, however, that one has real faith in God because he gives up temporal employment and declares he is going to trust the Lord to meet his needs. If so busily engaged in the ministry of the Word that one cannot also labor with his hands, even as Paul sometimes did, he is entitled to look to God in confidence that He will meet every need.

“But ordinarily it is in full accord with the path of faith to remember that God has said, If a man will not work, he shall not eat (2 Thessalonians 3:10). We need to recall the primeval admonition, By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread (Genesis 3:19).

“No one is more able to impress people with the reality and sterling character of a true Christian experience than the laboring man, or the business executive, who, while working to support himself and his family, lives a life of daily dependence on God, looking to Him to provide the employment whereby his temporal responsibilities are met.

“There is a difference between faith and presumption. Faith acts on the revealed Word of God. Presumption attempts to harness God to a human program, and the result is inevitable failure. God has promised to answer the prayer of faith; He has never promised to gratify the desires of men who do not act accord-

ing to His Word” (Ironsides, p. 416).

“It would be sad if we found we had been working hard for ourselves, taking up the responsibility of caring for ourselves and missing the blessed privilege of being cared for by God. A friend and confessor of Christ, and one rich towards God, becomes of the greatest interest to God. There is life there and a body there that are of deep concern to the blessed God. If He cares so much for a flower or a bird, what will He do for a friend or confessor of Christ?

“There is a difference in this chapter between what we have need of and what the Father gives us. The things He gives us are far superior to the things we have need of. . . . It is the Father’s good pleasure to give us the kingdom (v. 32), and that is far greater than feeding and clothing us. If He will give you the kingdom, a whole realm of blessed things perfectly in accord with His own mind, He will assuredly give you bread to eat and clothes to wear, so that you may be perfectly free for that kingdom. On the Father’s side it is His good pleasure to give us the kingdom; and on our side it should be our pleasure to seek it and to be relieved in the sense of divine care so that the provision for temporal need is not the ruling principle of life” (Coates, pp. 156-57).

We are relieved from the tension of the grasping hand by refusing to worry about the provision for our temporal needs, by resting in the Father’s care, and by actively seeking the Kingdom of God.

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

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c. By Seeking the Kingdom of God

12:30. *“For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things.*

31. *“but seek for His kingdom, and these things shall be added to you.*

32. *“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.*

33. *“Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves purses which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, nor moth destroys.*

34. *“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”*

If it is His pleasure to give us the kingdom, it will be our joy to seek it. The Lord tells the disciples to seek the kingdom of God. In Matthew 6:33, it is to seek first the kingdom of God. Don't let other things hinder, and all these things will be added. On our side there is to be seeking in contrast to care and covetousness (Coates, p. 157). He will reward those who put His things, His glory, His work first. If for His sake and service it means material deprivation, He is our example and incentive:

Do you remember the generosity of Jesus Christ, the Lord of us all? He was rich beyond our telling, yet he became poor for your sakes so that his poverty might make you rich (2 Corinthians 8:9).

“The supreme passion of all our days, in all our ways, is to be a passion for the Kingdom of God, and that not as some

‘far-off divine event’ only, but as something already existing, with which we are to seek right relationship. The passion of life is to be a passion for the Kingdom of God, and the measure in which we obey this injunction is the measure in which we pass into the realm of unruffled peace and rest and calm” (Morgan, p. 155).

There is certainly no danger of our starving or going naked because we are trusting the Lord to make every provision for our need. However, think how disappointed both He and we would be if we were to reach the end of our life realizing we had toiled so ardently for that which is already included in our passport to heaven. Instead of devoting all our time to making provision for physical needs now, we need to invest time in that which will go through to eternity where moth and rust do not corrupt and thieves do not break in and steal.

“The trouble with material wealth is that ordinarily (we) can't have it without trusting it” (MacDonald, p. 236).

“The testimony comes out in giving. We are here to give away spiritual riches, gospel wealth, but we are also to give alms.

“It is obvious from Scripture that almsgiving is very acceptable to God, because it is the expression of His own character of goodness and bounty. . . . Our concern is not to be in the spirit of a covetous man who wants all he can get, or of a man oppressed with care, afraid of not having enough and of what

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

he may lose. We are to take up business in the light of heaven.

“Our heavenly-mindedness depends, I am convinced, on what comes from practical everyday life. The moment we get to business, as we have been speaking of it, we become heavenly-minded and have Jesus as our own (v. 36) Lord. That means that if He is not Lord to anyone else on earth, He is to me. It is open to us all to be on this line, and if others do not take it up, it is still open to me. . . .

“The giving of alms and prayer are linked together, showing how important it is that giving should be done in active dependence on God, and not on the line of human kindness and benevolence. It is easy to give money or goods away, but nothing demands more grace than to give so that there is a real shining of the character of God. If we are distributing gospel wealth, we have to pray for open doors and access to souls; we are concerned to have someone to receive.

“Now in giving alms, we are just as dependent on God as in giving gospel wealth; we should pray for opportunities to give in such a way as would glorify God. We are not to be marked by covetousness or care, but to hold all things in relation to God. As a man begins to have treasure in heaven, he becomes heavenly-hearted” (Coates, p. 158).

“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.”

“The whole statement is an Eastern expression. We know that in Eastern

lands, the head of the tribe is at once the shepherd of the flock, the father of the family, and the king of the kingdom. Here God is seen in the threefold relationship. . . . Our Lord was pledging God as Shepherd, Father, and King to us, and to that which we seek in personal life and service” (Morgan, p. 156).

As for the flock, it is not a great affluent crowd. Those who follow the Shepherd may appear few in number; but all through the ages there have been the few. To these God enjoys giving the Kingdom.

The little flock is composed of those who trust the Shepherd. They have refused to worry about daily needs. They have given themselves completely to Him. They value His things and actively seek His Kingdom. They have been released from a lifestyle with self at the center, from the tension of the grasping hand. Their lives embody the prayer of Jim Elliott:

“Father, let me be weak that I might lose my clutch on everything temporal. My life, my reputation, my possessions, Lord, let me loose the tension of the grasping hand. Even, Father, would I lose the love of fondling. How often have I released a grasp only to retain what I prized by ‘harmless’ longing, the fondling touch. Father, open my hand to receive the nail of Calvary, as Christ’s was opened—that I, releasing all, might be released, unleashed from all that binds me now. He thought Heaven, yea equality with God, not a thing to be clutched at. So let me release my grasp!” (Elisabeth Elliott, *Shadow of the Almighty*, p. 59).

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

They are free to seek the Kingdom of God, and the Father will freely give. This means to seek the things of Christ:

“If you are then ‘risen’ with Christ, reach out for the highest gifts of Heaven, where Christ reigns in power. Give your heart to the heavenly things, not to the passing things of earth. For, as far as this world is concerned, you are already dead, and your true life is a hidden one in God, through Christ. One day, Christ, the secret center of our lives, will show himself openly, and you will all share in the magnificent denouement” (Colossians 3:1-3).

This is to be rich toward God. It is a life rich in faith (James 2:5) and rich in good works (1 Timothy 6:18). It is the life which esteems the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for the one who chooses this life is looking to the reward, the reward which is eternal (Hebrews 11:26). It is the life which is built around Christ. He is at the center. He is the Treasure of such a life.

This is the life devoted to the service of Christ. It involves a lifestyle which is completely different from the lifestyle of the world. Let us now look at the practical details of such a life.

II. THE GOD-SERVING LIFESTYLE ***How to Enjoy It!*** **(vv. 35-53)**

This is the singing life, this life of joyful service. How could it be otherwise, with Christ at the center, with Him as the Treasure of the heart, with these words as a prayer:

**Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my
heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou
art—
Thou my best thought, by day or by
night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my
light.**

**Riches I heed not; nor man’s empty
praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and al-
ways;
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my Treasure
Thou art.**

Irish hymn c. 8th century,
Hymns II, p. 18

**Jesus, priceless treasure,
Source of purest pleasure,
truest friend to me:
long my heart hath panted,
'till it well-nigh fainted,
thirsting after Thee.
Thine I am, O spotless Lamb,
I will suffer nought to hide Thee,
ask for naught beside Thee.**

**In Thy strength I rest me;
Foes who would molest me
Cannot reach me here.
Though the earth be shaking,
Every heart be quaking,
God dispels our fear.**

**Sin and hell in conflict fell
With their heaviest storms assail us:
Jesus will not fail us.
Banished is our sadness!
For the Lord of gladness,**

Jesus, enters in.

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

**Those who love the Father,
Tho' the storms may gather,
Still have peace within.
Yea, what-e'er we here must bear,
Still in Thee lies purest pleasure,
Jesus, priceless treasure!**

--Johann Franck;
translated by Catherine Winkworth

With Him as the center of our lives, we can be His bondmen while He is away. We must be so attached to Him, so loyal to Him that, remaining steady in our present vocation, we will fix our eyes on Christ's soon coming. That's what it means to be heavenly-minded.

The God-serving lifestyle has its opposite, the self-serving one, of course; and the Lord warns against this. By parable and discourse He shows two aspects of the kind of service that pleases God:

(1) It must be self-forgetting, and

(2) It must be separating, for it carries the offence of the cross. We look at these two aspects of the God-serving lifestyle:

It Is Self-Forgetting (vv. 35-48)

12:35. Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps alight.

36. And be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks.

Wholly detached from the things of the world, hearts of true servants are set on the Kingdom.

“Only one thing should seem worthy of their whole attention and engage all

their thoughts and energies—their Master! He was away at some joyous feast, and the uncertainty of the hour of His return must not lead the servants to a life of idleness. They must be faithful to their trust and eagerly expecting the return of their Master (Edersheim, Book IV, p. 218).

Let your loins be girded!

“The girding of the loins is a step towards preparedness. The long, flowing robes of the Easterner were picturesque, but apt to hinder serious labor, so when work was afoot they were tucked into a belt about the waist. Jesus goes on to picture servants whose master has gone to a marriage feast and who expect him back at any moment. They will not be found unready, but will open the door as soon as he knocks and show themselves prepared for whatever service he wants” (Morris, pp. 216-17).

The emphasis here is upon the joy at his return.

“This is another grand point, not only that He is associated with joy, but that they should be free from all earthly encumbrance, so that the moment the Lord knocks, according to the figure, they may open to Him immediately—without distraction or having to get ready. Their hearts are waiting for Him, for their Lord; they love Him, they are waiting for Him. He knocks, and they open to Him immediately. Such is the normal position of the Christian, as

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waiting for Christ, the only true Object of hope” (Kelly, p. 214).

12:37. Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes.

“Here their blessing as waiting for Him is shown. We shall find another blessing a little later on; but the blessing here is the watching—not so much working as watching. That is, it is not so much occupation with others as watching for Him, and assuredly this is of some importance to feel.

“Watching takes precedence even of working. There is no doubt that working has no small value, and that the Lord will remember it and reward it, but watching is far more bound up with His person and with His love” (Kelly, pp. 214-15).

12:37. Truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at table, and will come up and wait on them.

What extraordinary happiness for those who are found watching and waiting for the Lord when He returns! When He comes in, He comes in to serve the bond-slaves. This is always true of the one who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). In the upper room, He took the towel and girded Himself for service, washing the disciples’ feet (John 13:4ff). Now He is girded about the breast for the service of love (Revelation 1:13) toward His own.

“We want to get a sense in our hearts that we are holding a place for the Lord in the world that has rejected Him. It is a place He loves to visit; and when He comes He knocks, and when we open we get the most wonderful privilege. If the Lord serves, it is without measure because He would feed us with all He enjoys Himself. It is a great thing to look for it and not to put it off to some future day, to look for it now. Then as being served by the Lord, we know how to serve the household. He is the first One to serve the household, and it seems to me He sets the pattern for all the service in the household” (Coates, p. 161).

“For who is greater, the one who reclines at table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves” (Luke 22:27).

This was always His attitude when He was among us. Now in this parable the man comes back from the wedding to find his servants watching and waiting for him.

And what does He do?

He gives them a surprise. He seats them at table, puts on an apron and serves them instead. What condescending gentleness! He whom every tribe and nation will fall down and adore graciously seats and serves them at home with Him in heaven.

This has been called the greatest promise in the Bible.

“But then the reward of God’s people is never commonplace: it is always the unexpected” (Morris, p. 217).

12:38. Whether he comes in the second

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

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watch, or even in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

39. And be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into.

40. You, too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.

The second watch was from 9 p.m. to midnight. The third was from midnight to 3 a.m. Waiting for the master, these servants had not eaten dinner, nor lain down. They had kept watching for his return.

“Hungry and weary as they were from their zeal for Him, He would now, in turn, minister to their personal comfort. And this applied to servants who so watched—it mattered not how long, whether into the second or the third of the watches into which the night was divided” (Edersheim, Book IV, p. 218).

In the next two verses, the Lord changes the picture. He reminds us that no homeowner **“would suffer loss if he knew when the burglar was coming. The house in mind is one of mud brick which could be ‘dug through’ (broken into)”** (Morris, p. 217).

The homeowner must be ready; it is the only way he can be secure from thievery.

At this point Peter interrupted. Always full of questions, he wanted to know to whom this parable applied.

12:41. And Peter said, “Lord, are you addressing this parable to us, or to everyone

else as well?”

Only Luke tells us that Peter was the questioner here. The Lord did not reply directly, but answered with a counter question, as He often did to make people think.

12:42. And the Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time?”

“He answered the question by a question which narrows and extends. Our Lord said in effect, Whether I am talking to you or the crowds depends. I am talking to My stewards; and of course you are stewards, but the door is open. Other people may come if they will into My Kingdom, and become My servants and stewards” (Morgan, p. 157).

The Lord, then, is talking to those who profess to love and serve Him.

As to the reward, most likely it has to do with sharing government rule with Him during the millennium (I Peter 5:1-4). The bondmen are set over the household to minister food, and the reward is in keeping with the services:

12:43. “Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.

44. “Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.”

“The Lord may give great enlargement, so that if a servant begins with a small sphere of service, the Lord may give a larger sphere. . . . Now is not the

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

time for exercising rule; our capacity for rule depends on our ability to feed” (Coates, p. 162).

Peter had asked the question. He heard the Lord say that it is the duty of stewards to feed the flock and not to tyrannize. That he evidently learned the lesson we gather from instructions he gave in his first epistle to elders (1 Peter 5:1-4).

“The wicked bondman takes up the place of rule, and feeding stops and beating begins. We see in the epistles to the Corinthians Paul’s beautiful spirit; he would not take the place of having dominion over them, but as being helper of their joy (2 Cor. 1:24). . . .

“The servants have not to find the food for the household; it is put in their hands, and the ability to serve is God-given, so it is for each one of us seriously to face the question as to what we have. My measure is the measure of faith and grace which God has dealt to me. I have not responsibility for the measure you have, but I have as to my own (1 Peter 4:10)” (Coates, pp. 162-63).

12:45. “But if that slave says in his heart, ‘My master will be a long time in coming,’ and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and eat and drink and get drunk;

46. “the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

47. “And that slave who knew his master’s will and did not get ready or act in accord

with his will, shall receive many lashes,
48. *“But the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.”*

That servant isn’t working for Christ. He is working for himself. He is an unbeliever who in no way has the spirit of his Master. He doesn’t feed the people of God. He abuses them and lives life indulging himself. Possibly this has primary reference to the Pharisees. When the Master comes, this man’s trickery will be revealed; and he will be punished with the same punishment other unbelievers deserve.

“Cut him in pieces” could also be translated “severely scourge him.”

In the case of the believer who fails to obey the Lord in his service, he will have to suffer loss.

“To fail to act in accordance with the revealed will of God will cause us to suffer loss when we are called to give an account of our stewardship at the judgment-seat of Christ, where all our works will be tested by the fire of God’s holiness (1 Corinthians 3:13-15). . . .

“In studying our Lord’s parables we need to bear in mind the fact that each one was given to emphasize some important line of truth. It is often a mistake to try to fit every part of such an illustration into a theological, or eschatological mould.

“In the parable of the master and his servants, we must not confuse the

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

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earthly lord with our divine Lord. The one is used only as an illustration in so far as his character and behavior may coincide with those of Christ” (Ironsides, p. 424).

The principle underlying this parable is that great privilege involves great responsibility. As a result, great rewards await the faithful servant; and, obviously, there will be degrees of reward in heaven for believers just as there will be degrees of punishment in hell for unbelievers.

“There is such a thing as knowing the Lord’s will and not doing it. We see the principle of government here.

“The Lord exercises it even now. It is a very serious thing to be well acquainted with the Lord’s mind. To receive light means responsibility and more ‘stripes’ if we do not prepare ourselves to do the Lord’s will.

“I think the Lord in His government deals out stripes where they are due. His government goes on, and I believe the Lord will not suffer in us what He suffers in some of our brethren who have less light. Some of our brethren do things with a good conscience and the Lord suffers it, but if we do them we come under His discipline. His government goes on and we are all under it, and it is a mercy that we are” (Coates, p. 165).

In this life of service, the bondsman does all for the glory of his Lord. It is a self-denying and self-forgetting service. It involves going the way of the cross. This means a service which is separating. We see this in the section which follows.

It Is a Separating Lifestyle of Service
(vv. 49-53)

12:49. “I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled!

50. “But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!

51. “Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division;

52. “for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two, and two against three.

53. “They will be divided, father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against mother; mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

In the Lord’s absence from the earth, “His gospel is to be proclaimed everywhere. When men receive that gospel and come out definitely for the Lord, they, like Him, will be rejected by the world. Christ said in His great High Priestly prayer, ‘They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.’

“It means something to be a Christian; it means something to be identified with the One whom the world has rejected. And so as the world hated and rejected Him, we need not be surprised if it hates and rejects us—these are the consequences of the cross. . . .

“In the opening verses of the present section our Lord refers to this rejection and to that which was to be accomplished on the cross” (Ironsides, pp. 427-28).

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

Here in vv. 49-50 the Lord “is saying that God’s plan for men is salvation that involves judgment. But it is a judgment that the Messiah will bear for others, not one He will inflict on others. It is not an attractive prospect, but Jesus longs for it to come, for only so can the saving work be accomplished.

“He goes on to the thought of the cross as a baptism, a figure He uses elsewhere (Mark 10:38ff). It fits in with the frequent link of ‘baptism’ and ‘baptize’ with death. We catch a glimpse of the cost of the cross to Jesus in His comment,

“‘What constraint I am under until the ordeal is over!’ (NEB). The shadow of the cross hung over Him. He knew it was inevitable: it was the very purpose of His coming. But though He accepted its inevitability, nothing could make it attractive” (Morris, p. 219).

The cross divides the world. “*Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division*” (v. 51).

“There is, of course, a sense in which He does bring peace, that deep peace with God which leads to a real peace with men. But in another sense His message is divisive. The cross challenges men. Jesus calls on His followers to take up their own cross as they follow Him (9:23ff). When men do not rise to this challenge, they not uncommonly become critical of those who do. The divisions that thus arise may run through families (cf. Micah 7:6)” (Morris, pp. 219-20).

“Hence division in families—in no way because the grace of Christ in itself promotes discord, but because man’s evil fights against the truth which puts it in the light, and man’s hatred refuses the love of which it does not feel the need” (Kelly, p. 221).

Introduce Christ into a family of five and inevitably faith in Him will split the family. And what a protest will come from the relatives who would prefer a drunken bum in the family to one who would stand out publicly as a follower of the Lord Jesus.

“If the light comes in with one person, it exposes others. If any one of us begins to fear God and walk in His ways, it condemns those who do not fear God. One praying man in a town condemns all the town because they do not pray. The proper effect of any testimony for God individually or collectively is that it judges everything contrary to it” (Coates, p. 167).

The lifestyle of the true servant of God is a separating life. It separates the bond-servant from the lifestyle of the world. It separates him unto God, and it brings him all of the eternal joy of heaven. This is the lifestyle that earns the crowns to lay at the Lord’s feet.

**Lower and lower, dear Lord, at Thy
feet,
Seeking Thy Spirit, Thy mercy so
sweet;
Down in our need, blessed Master, we
fall,
Lower and lower: be Thou all in all.**

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): ‘And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’

**Lower and lower, dear Savior, we pray,
Losing the self-life still more every day;
Weak and unworthy, we're looking
above;
Empty us, Jesus; then fill us with love.**

**Lower and lower, yet higher we rise.
Lifted in Jesus, led on to the skies;
Humbly we follow the way to the cross,
Then crowns of glory, and gain for all**

loss.

Chorus:

**Lower and lower, down at Thy cross,
All the world's treasure counting but
dross;
Down at Thy feet, blessed Savior, we
fall,
Lower, still lower, Christ all in all**

— E. E. Hewitt
Keswick Hymnal, p. 80

MEMORY: (Luke 12:8-9): 'And I say unto you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.'

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XVII. THOSE SAD REFUSALS

Questions on Luke 12:54-13:35

FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

REVIEW: Luke 12:54-13:35 by reading the passage again, going over the Notes of Lesson 16, and then do question 1. What blessed your heart from the notes for this section? What, if any, has been the impact of lesson 16 on your life.

READ: Luke 12:54-13:35.

DO QUESTION: 1.

READ NOTES: Pages 129-130.

1. Outline Luke 12:54-13:35.

MEMORY: Luke 13:29-30: *"And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline at table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last."*

I. REFUSAL TO SEE.

READ: Luke 12:1, 35—13:17; Isa. 5:1-2; Eze. 15:1-3; Hos. 10:1

DO QUESTION: 2

READ NOTES: Pages 130-133.

2. In Luke 12:56, who is a hypocrite and why?

II. REFUSAL TO REPENT.

READ: Luke 13:1-9.

DO QUESTIONS: 3-9.

READ NOTES: Pages 133-137.

3. What is the Lord calling for in 13:1-5?

4. What does it mean to "repent"? (Look it up in a dictionary and a concordance.)

5. Is repentance necessary for salvation? Do believers ever need to repent? Explain. (See Acts 20:21; Matt. 21:28-29; Rev. 3:19)

6. In the parable of Luke 13:6-9, what do you think the fig tree represents?

7. What is the Lord looking for in Luke 13:6?

8. Does He have a right to expect fruit in your life?

9. What kind of fruit? Explain. (See Gal. 5:22-23; John 15:1-6)

III. REFUSAL TO CARE.

READ: Luke 13:10-17.

DO QUESTIONS: 10-11.

MEMORY: (Luke 13:29-30): "And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline at table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last."

READ NOTES: Pages 137-141.

10. Why did the Lord Jesus call the ruler of the synagogue a hypocrite?

11. How do you account for the two reactions in verse 17?

IV. REFUSAL TO ENTER.

READ: Luke 13:18-23.

DO QUESTIONS: 12-16.

READ NOTES: Pages 141-144.

12. What is the Kingdom of God like (13:18-21)? Explain what this means.

13. What did the Lord Jesus mean by His reply to the question in 13:23?

14. List all the prophecies in 13:22-35.

15. Consider all of the warnings in 13:22-35. List them.

16. What effect should this have upon Christians? What effect does it have upon you?

V. THE FINAL SAD REFUSAL.

READ: Luke 13:24-35.

DO QUESTIONS: 17-22.

READ NOTES: Pages 144-147.

17. Who are the people in verse 29?

18. What does the Lord Jesus mean in verse 30?

19. What did the Pharisees tell Christ and what did He answer in verses 31-33? Explain.

20. Think about Luke 13:34-35. How are both the "goodness" and "severity" of God (Rom. 11:22) seen in these verses?

21. What do they show about the free will of man?

22. What does the Lord say about His wings in the Old Testament and what comfort is there for you (which comfort Israel missed)? See Exodus 19:4; Psalms 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 91:4.

MEMORY: (Luke 13:29-30): "And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline at table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last."

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XVII. THOSE SAD REFUSALS

Luke 12:54-13:35

*"How often would I . . . and ye would not!"
—Luke 13:34.*

"Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you will seek to enter and will not be able. Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from'" (Luke 13:24-25).

There can be nothing more sorrowful than not to know the way or, having known of it, to have lost it. In the cathedral of Lubeck, in Germany, there is an old inscription:

**Ye call Me Maker, and obey Me not.
Ye call Me Light, and see Me not.
Ye call Me Way, and take me not.
Ye call Me Life, and desire Me not.
Ye call Me Wise, and follow Me not.
Ye call Me Fair, and love Me not.
Ye call Me Rich, and ask Me not.
Ye call Me Eternal, and seek Me not.
Ye call Me Gracious, and trust Me not.
Ye call Me Noble, and serve Me not.
Ye call Me Mighty, and honor Me not.
If I condemn you, blame Me not.**

But it is far from our Lord's desire to condemn us. "*I became thoroughly miserable while a thorn was fastened in me*" is the Septuagint rendering of Psalm 32:4. He wore a crown of thorns that the thorn of unforgiven sin might be plucked out of

my heart.

Hear what comfortable words our Savior Christ saith unto all that truly turn to Him.

Come unto Me all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you (Matthew 11:28).

"To the hurt, the puzzled, the troubled, the sinful, I would repeat what Faithful said to Hopeful when he thought that His Savior was not willing to receive him, 'He bid me go to Him and see.'

"There is no doubt what will happen then: it has always happened. To the pilgrim at the wicket gate, 'I am willing with all My heart,' said He, and with that He opened the gate" (Amy Carmichael, *Gold By Moonlight*, pp. 135-36).

Spiritual exercise. Soul searching. These are old-fashioned words. They name activities which before God can never go out of date. They express the

MEMORY: (Luke 13:29-30): "And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline at table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last."

concern of people who love Christ and do not want to grieve Him with their sinning. They involve sorrowing over sin and repenting of it. They describe the heart that hungers and thirsts after righteousness. “Spiritual exercise” and “soul searching”—old-fashioned terms, perhaps, but this is what goes on in the heart of the earnest Christian right through every day of his life.

Here in Luke’s Gospel, Christ is calling the people to such earnest heart exercise. “*Agonize to enter in at the narrow gate,*” He says. He stands within the gate, arms outstretched in love, ready to receive the one who comes. But many turn away, hearts hardened against Him. Again and again they refuse Him until it is too late. Let us be warned as we listen to *those sad refusals*.

I. REFUSAL TO SEE
(12:54-59)

II. REFUSAL TO REPENT
(13:1-9)

III. REFUSAL TO CARE
(13:10-17)

IV. REFUSAL TO ENTER
(13:18-24)

V. THE FINAL SAD REFUSAL
(13:24-35)

Let us be exercised and not allow our hearts to harden against our Lord; for we look at the people in the Gospel and wonder how they could refuse such love. But they did.

I. REFUSAL TO SEE
(12:54-59)

12:54. *And He was also saying to the multitudes, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, ‘A shower is coming,’ and so it turns out.*

55. *“And when you see a south wind blowing, you say, ‘It will be a hot day,’ and it turns out that way.*

56. *“You hypocrites! You know how to analyze the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why do you not analyze this present time?*

57. *“And why do you not even on your own initiative judge what is right?*

58. *“For while you are going with your opponent to appear before the magistrate, on your way there make an effort to settle with him, in order that he may not drag you before the judge, and the judge turn you over to the constable, and the constable throw you into prison.*

59. *“I say to you, you shall not get out of there until you have paid the very last cent.”*

The Lord rebukes the people for their refusal to discern the signs of the time. They are weather-wise, but time-foolish.

Earlier He had said privately to the disciples, “Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see, for I say to you, that many prophets and kings wished to see the things which you see, and did not see them, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them” (10:23-24).

The signs were all around them. Prophecies concerning the coming of Messiah were being fulfilled to the right and left.

MEMORY: (Luke 14:26-27): “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

The seventy weeks of Daniel were fulfilled (Dan. 9:24).

The ministry of John the Baptist, forerunner of Messiah, had prepared the way.

The miracles of Christ had proved His claims before their eyes. But the Jews had closed their eyes. It is not that they could not see the signs, but that they would not see.

“They still obstinately refused to believe that Jesus was the Christ. And hence they drew from our Lord the question, ‘How is it that you do not discern this time?’” (Ryle, p. 102).

They had no difficulty interpreting the signs of the weather. *A cloud rising in the west*, over the Mediterranean sea—and they say, *“A shower is coming.”* A south wind blowing up from the Sinai desert—and they say, *“A hot spell is coming.”*

“Our Lord’s argument appears to be that the signs of His advent as the true Messiah were so clear and intelligible that it required no more discernment to see them, than it did to foretell heat or rain from observations of the heavens and the winds.

“If the Jews would honestly and impartially consider the signs of their times, they could not avoid the conclusion that Christ was the Messiah” (Ryle, p. 106).

Their problem was with their hearts which were prejudiced and disbelieving. They came to him with questions, but they were not honest in their inquiries. Therefore the Lord calls them *“Hypocrites!”*

They did not like to hear His words,

which were too convicting of sin. They wished for another kind of Messiah, one who would free them from the yoke of Rome, not the yoke of sin. The Light of the World was standing in their midst; His glory could have changed their lives, but their spiritual eyes were evil. He had warned them of the danger, and now they were *full of darkness* (11:34-35).

Their spiritual blindness and unbelief have kept them from seeing the cloud rising with grace and blessing, a sight which those who believe in Him readily see. Nor do they feel the Sahara winds of judgment that sweep down upon the disobedient.

He appeals to them to get right with God: *“Why do you not even on your own initiative judge what is right?”* (v. 57).

“In earthly matters men get the best settlement they can out of court instead of insisting on seeing through a hopeless case” (Morris, p. 220).

The illustration is the court of law. Ultimately this becomes the court of life. In this court of judgment **“the adversary is God, the magistrate is God, the judge is God, and the exactor is God. Our first and last allegiance is to God; and in His Kingdom He is Magistrate; Adversary of the law-breaker; Judge deciding; Exactor carrying out the sentence”** (Morgan, p. 160).

The fire of His judgment is coming, but they will not feel the heat.

“God cannot be bribed. God cannot be caught out by a side issue. God cannot be hoodwinked. In Isaiah, the prophecy of the Kingship of God, as

MEMORY: (Luke 14:26-27): “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

vested in His Servant, it says of the coming One, 'He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither decide after the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth' (11:3-4).

"This becomes arresting when we think of it by contrast. How do we judge today? We judge by the sight of the eye, and by the hearing of the ear; and we cannot help it. There is no other way for us to do. Go into any court of law in this land, and what do you find? A judge, and possibly a jury, and it is the business of the court to decide whether the criminal is guilty or not. The witnesses are called to speak; and there are only two things they can do; they can speak of what they saw, and what they heard. There is no other way. All verdicts are found by that method.

"Now mark the contrast; He does not judge that way, not by the sight of the eyes, or the hearing of the ears; not by testimony given to Him. How, then, does He judge? With righteous judgment" (Morgan, p. 160).

"They had the Scriptures of the prophets in their hands, and yet they could not see the signs which were being fulfilled all about them. We have the Bible today, and there are many things being fulfilled which tell us of the near return of our Lord; but how few there are who realize this. . . . The standard is the Word of God. Study the Scriptures, and you will learn from them the path you should take as you pass through this world" (Ironside, p. 431).

The day of judgment is coming, so try to settle this matter out of court. Do not wait until the day of manifestation, whether you think of the judgment of the Christ-less at the Great White Throne, or whether you think of the day when the Lord shall descend from heaven and His own shall appear before Him.

"Do not leave matters to be straightened out till that day. It is better to face everything in this life and so obtain the certainty of divine forgiveness now. It will be too late to put things right in eternity.

"No man by any effort of his own, by any merit that he might accumulate, can ever meet the demands of Divine justice. But Christ has paid for all who will trust in Him. Justified by faith before God, we are responsible to so behave toward our brethren here on earth that we shall keep a conscience void of offence toward God and man (Acts 24:16)" (Ironside, pp. 431-32).

God is saying to us that today is the opportunity for reconciliation. Now is not the time for condemnation. He is the adverse party. He says to the churches of Revelation, *"I have something against you."* He calls them to repent.

"If there is anything about any of us that is not in accord with Christ, He says, repent of that, have done with it, get it judged, be reconciled. It is very searching.

"The whole principle is that man is offered opportunity to repent; every individual has opportunity to repent, and the

MEMORY: (Luke 14:26-27): "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

church has opportunity to repent. . . .

“Jehovah was there in the Person of Jesus, and they could be reconciled to Him on the simple principle of repentance. Now this is a universal principle. . . .

“God says, I am compelled to be adverse because your ways are not Mine, but you have only to repent, and I am ready to be reconciled” (Coates, pp. 167-68).

How could they refuse such love? But they did.

II. REFUSAL TO REPENT (13:1-9)

13:1. Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2. And He answered and said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered this fate?”

3. “I tell you, no, but, unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

4. “Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem?”

5. “I tell you, no, but, unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

6. And He began telling this parable: “A certain man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it, and did not find any.

7. “And he said to the vineyard-keeper, ‘Behold, for three years I have come look-

ing for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?’

8. “And he answered and said to him, ‘Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer;

9. “and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.’”

In the first verse of chapter 13, we learn that some of the men in the Lord’s presence reported that Pilate had sent his soldiers to massacre some Galileans while they were offering sacrifices in the temple. Their blood mingled with the blood of their offerings. Galileans were known for their rebellious nature. Consensus said they must have given bloodthirsty Pilate some reason for creeping up on them in the temple. It was a general belief that any disaster was punishment for sin. We look at this incident more closely:

“Christ had rebuked the people for not being able to interpret the time; and they came to Him, and in effect they said, We are not so blind as you make us appear. We recognize the activity of judgment as suggested by the parable of the law court. To show their understanding, they told Him this story of the Galileans and Pilate. They were standing up in smug self-satisfaction, and never more blind than then.

“And Jesus said to them, Is that it? Is that what you are thinking? Do you think that those Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans? Do you think calamity of that kind demonstrates extreme turpitude? I tell you, Nay, you

MEMORY: (Luke 14:26-27): “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

are wrong. You are misinterpreting the justice and judgment, and the ways of the Magistrate, the Adversary, the Judge, and the Officer.” *‘Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish’* (v. 3).

“Or do you imagine that when the tower of Siloam fell and crushed eighteen, and they were killed, that that proves they were ‘worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem?’ I tell you, no, but, unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (vv. 4-5) (Morgan, p. 161).

Christ uses both of these incidents to urge the people to repent. Here the tenses of the verbs “repent” are instructive: In v. 3 “repent” is an aorist (of a single decisive action); in v. 5 “repent” is a present imperative (with continuous force).

“Repentance is both a once-for-all thing that shapes the whole subsequent course of the life and a day-by-day affair that keeps putting sin away” (Morris, p. 222).

“The call to repentance is one of the missing links in the preaching of modern times. Some of our brethren are almost afraid to speak of repentance, lest people think of it as something meritorious. Repentance is not a work of merit: repentance is an acknowledgment that one has no merit, that in himself he is just an undeserving sinner exposed to the judgment of God.

“God ‘commands that all men everywhere should repent’ (Acts 17:30). Repentance is not to be confounded with mere penitence. Penitence is sorrow for sin, but we are told, ‘Godly sorrow

works repentance to salvation not to be repented of” (2 Corinthians 7:10).

“It is not mere sorrow because one has done wrong. I may grieve in my heart to think of the wrong I have done, of the injury I have caused another, and yet I may not really be repentant toward God. Repentance is not to be confounded with what some call ‘penance.’

“Penance is an effort to atone for something which one has done by suffering voluntarily; but no physical suffering or self-denial can ever make up for the wrong we have done to God and to man.

“Repentance is not to be confounded with reformation. Some people have the idea that repentance is trying to break off from their sins and live righteously. There may be reformation apart from repentance, but there never can be true repentance apart from reformation, because if I really repent I shall certainly seek to reform.

“The word repent means a change of mind; it is not merely a change of viewpoint. . . . Repentance is a change of mind which results in a complete change of attitude. When a man, who has been living in sin and utter indifference to God, confesses his sin and judges his wickedness and earnestly seeks to be delivered from it, when he is determined to walk, not in his old ways or live as he formerly lived, but turns to the God he had spurned and puts his trust in the Savior He has provided—this is genuine repentance!

“We read of ‘repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ’ (Acts 20:21). The repentant man now

MEMORY: (Luke 14:26-27): “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

finds in Christ not only a Savior from all his sin and guilt, but also One who gives him a new life in order that he may walk henceforth in a new way. He will live no longer in bondage to the things which dominated and controlled him in the past” (Ironsides, pp. 435-37).

In Scripture there is everything to encourage us to begin (to repent). Christ invites us. Promises of Scripture are held out to us. Glorious declarations of God’s willingness to receive us abound throughout the Word. *“There is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents”* (Luke 15:7, 10). Then let us arise and call upon God. Let us repent without delay.

“If we have already repented in time past, let us go on repenting to the end of our lives. There will always be sins to confess and infirmities to deplore, so long as we are in the body. Let us repent more deeply, and humble ourselves more thoroughly, every year. Let every returning birthday find us hating sin more, loving Christ more. He was a wise old saint who said, ‘I hope to carry my repentance to the very gate of heaven’” (Ryle, p. 111).

Then in verses 6-9, the Lord spoke a parable which is humbling and heart searching. As we think about it, we need to practice that heart-exercise we were speaking about earlier.

It was not unusual for a farmer to plant a fig tree in a vineyard in Israel. The Lord’s parable concerns such a tree which, though planted, has not borne fruit for three years running. The owner wants to

cut it down. The caretaker suggests that the three years be considered a probationary period when he asks for one more year in which he will provide tender care. He knows that fig trees don’t usually bear until after the third year. If it still did not bear fruit, it could then be cut down. In God’s Word, a fig tree often represents the Jewish people (cf. Hosea 9:10; Joel 1:7). The inference is that the Jewish people have three years, a sufficient period, to respond to the ministry of the God-Man in their midst.

Are we fruitful or unfruitful? The owner of the vineyard *came looking for fruit, and did not find any* (v. 6). John the Baptist had called upon the people to bring forth *fruit in keeping with repentance* (Luke 3:8). And what about the *fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control—*(Galatians 5:22-23)? God has the right to expect fruit. Consider the Jews as an example. They were so favored by God above every other nation. To them belonged the oracles of God (Romans 3:2).

“It was only just and right that they should bear fruit to God’s praise. It might reasonably be expected that there would be more faith, and penitence, and holiness, and godliness in Israel than among the heathen. This is what God looked for. The owner of the fig tree came seeking fruit” (Ryle, p. 113).

The Lord is looking for self-judgment. *“Except you repent you shall all likewise perish.”* The unfruitful fig tree, after a further period of mercy, would be *cut down*. Repentance is the only ground upon which

MEMORY: (Luke 14:26-27): “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

we can come to God for the salvation He provides in the death of Christ for our sin. This ground is the way of self-judgment.

“It is the only fruit God is looking for when failure has come in. He is not looking for good in men, but He is looking for the recognition of their badness; He says, If you will only recognize you are bad, I can do something with you.

“The thought in the minds of the Jews was that those who were killed (vv. 1-2) were very bad men, but the Lord says, No, it is a warning to you; you will all perish like that if you do not repent. I have no doubt it had special application to the nation. They did not repent, and in the overthrow of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) over a million Jews perished; the streets were rivers of blood.

“This principle of repentance is of the utmost importance for all of us. If anything is wrong between two brothers or sisters, it can only be healed on the principle of self-judgment.

“The question is, What have I done wrong? I have nothing to do with what the other has done. In every case of difference between brethren there is generally some wrong on both sides: there has seldom been a case where all is black on one side and all white on the other. If I begin to judge the little bit wrong on my side, it is much easier for the other party to judge himself.

“Nineteen centuries have passed since the death of Jesus; it is the longest period there has been, and it is just about to close. It is pure mercy that we have not been taken away. The Lord has perhaps left us here because there may

be something in our ways or spirits to which He is an adverse party, and He wants to give us opportunity to repent. He is saying to us, I want you to be in perfect harmony and agreement with Me” (Coates, pp. 168-69).

This is a solemn and heart-searching parable. Where do we stand in relation to the warning? Christ has said, ‘From everyone who has been given much shall much be required’ (Luke 12:28). Like the fig tree, we have been nourished and cared for by God. Where is the fruit? Many professing believers have lived for years in the best part of God’s vineyard, and yet have borne no fruit.

“They have heard the Gospel preached faithfully for hundreds of Sundays, and yet have never embraced it, and taken up the cross, and followed Christ. They do not perhaps run into open sin. But they do nothing for God’s glory. . . . Of each of these the Lord of the vineyard might say with truth, ‘I come these many years seeking fruit on this tree and find none. Cut it down. It encumbers the ground.’

“There are myriads of respectable professing Christians in this plight. They have not the least idea how near they are to destruction. Never let us forget that to be content with sitting in the congregation and hearing sermons, while we bear no fruit in our lives, is conduct which is most offensive to God. It provokes Him to cut us off suddenly, and that without remedy. . . .

“And now are we fruitful or unfruitful? This, after all, is the question that

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concerns us most. What does God see in us year after year?

Let us take heed so to live that He may see in us fruit” (Ryle, pp. 115-17).

Would they bring forth the fruit of repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ? How could they refuse such loving care? But they did.

III. REFUSAL TO CARE (13:10-17)

13:10. And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.

11. And behold, there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all.

12. And when Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, “Woman, you are freed from your sickness.”

13. And He laid His hands upon her; and immediately she was made erect again, and began glorifying God.

14. And the synagogue official, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, began saying to the multitude in response, “There are six days in which work should be done; therefore come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day.”

15. But the Lord answered him and said, “You hypocrites, does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall, and lead him away to water him?”

16. “And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sab-

bath day?”

17. And as He said this, all His opponents were being humiliated; and the entire multitude was rejoicing over all the glorious things being done by Him.

“We are still following our Lord in the last six months of His earthly ministry, and most likely this incident occurred on the other side of Jordan, where He spent so much of that final period.

“Luke does not name the locality, nor state the exact time. The record of the incident is peculiar to him. The place was a synagogue. The time was a Sabbath day” (Morgan, p. 162).

“This is the last time Jesus is recorded to have taught in a synagogue or even to have been in one” (Morris, p. 222).

“As we go over this account we are reminded that all through the three-and-one-half wonderful years of our Lord’s ministry, as He went about doing good and healing all oppressed of the devil, He found Himself in conflict with a certain group of legal formalists in Israel who put far more value upon outward observances, sacred ceremonies and religious rites than upon the human soul. And yet the soul of man is more to God than all such rites and ceremonies. Our Lord Jesus never lost an opportunity to rebuke this type of hypocrisy” (Ironsides, p. 440).

“Here, then, was a case in which an evil spirit had produced a physical malady that lasted eighteen years. There is no suggestion in this story that there

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was anything of immorality in this woman's life. She was the victim of a demon activity, under what circumstances we do not know, producing a physical disability, and holding the woman in it for eighteen long years.

“There is no hint of this mastery having produced an immoral effect in her life. As a matter of fact, here she was in the synagogue. She had found her way to the place of worship, and when Jesus presently called her a daughter of Abraham, He did not merely mean she was a Jewess; that was patent. He was using the term in its full spiritual significance as revealing her faith in God” (Morgan, p. 162).

13:16. This woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?

“Notice how definitely Jesus traces her infirmity back to Satan himself. Sickness never comes directly from God. God is infinitely pure; there is no corruption in Him. All the sickness, all the infirmity that anyone has to endure is the direct or indirect result of sin. Do not misunderstand me. I do not mean one's own personal sins are responsible for his infirmities. It would be cruel to take the stand which was taken by Job's friends, that calamity comes to one only because of personal sin.

“But no one would ever have been ill if sin had not come into the world by Adam's fall. There are times when in a very special way Satan undertakes to

inflict punishment upon God's people, but he can do that only as God gives permission (Job 1:11-12; 2:4-6). . . .

“In similar ways (as with Job) Satan is permitted to try God's people still. He is permitted to put illness upon us; but the Lord will turn it all into blessing if only we learn to receive it as from His own hand and recognize no second causes” (Ironside, pp. 445-46).

“We need not doubt that this mighty miracle was intended to supply hope and comfort to sin-diseased souls. With Christ nothing is impossible. He can soften hearts which seem hard as the nether millstone. He can bend stubborn wills which ‘for eighteen years’ have been set on self-pleasing, on sin, and the world. He can enable sinners who have been long poring over earthly things, to look upward to heaven, and see the kingdom of God.

“Nothing is too hard for the Lord. He can create, and transform, and renew, and break down, and build, and quicken, with irresistible power. He lives who formed the world out of nothing, and He never changes. . . .

“Let us never despair about the salvation of others so long as they are alive. Let us name them before the Lord day and night, and cry to Him on their behalf. . . .

“There are no incurable cases with Christ. If He were to lay His healing hand on them, they would be ‘made straight, and glorify God.’ Let us pray on, and faint not. That saying of Job is worthy of all acceptance: ‘I know that thou canst do everything’ (Job 42:2).

MEMORY: (Luke 14:26-27): “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

Jesus is ‘able to save to the uttermost’ (Hebrews 7:25)” (Ryle, pp. 121-22).

“Do you see what He had done? He had made a crooked woman straight! Of course her ailment was physical; but I think there is a spiritual lesson here for us. All through the centuries since, that is what the gospel has been doing—it has been making crooked people straight. Sin makes us crooked. We have ‘all gone out of the way.’ ‘All have sinned and come short of the glory of God’ (Romans 3:12, 23). ‘There is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins’ (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

“As God looks down upon us He discerns the crookedness in all of us; but when we come to Christ He can straighten us out. . . .

“There are many who have never come to the place where they have confessed their crookedness, acknowledged their sinfulness, and faced their true condition before God. He desires to do something for them; He wants to straighten them out, but they refuse to come to Him, for they do not realize their need of His grace” (Ironsides, pp. 446-47).

“But grace, though it tenderly stoops to the wretched, does not accommodate itself to the obstinate unbelief of men, more particularly of men who make a show of their religion but who have nothing real in the sight of God.

“Christ cured her on the Sabbath and in face of the congregation, knowing it would provoke the enmity of the ruler of the synagogue. There is no use in striving to keep fair terms with men

who profess to be friends, but are really the enemies, of God” (Kelly, p. 227).

We can almost see the ruler of the synagogue. Little suspecting that he was carrying on war with God to his own eternal ruin, he turns to the people and says,

13:14. There are six days in which work should be done; therefore come during them and get healed and not on the Sabbath day.

There he was, “confused, irresolute, perplexed, and very angry, bustling forward and scolding the people who had done nothing, yet not venturing to silence the woman, now no longer infirm—far less, to reprove the great Rabbi, Who had just done such a ‘glorious thing,’ but speaking at Him through those who had been the astounded eye witnesses” (Ederheim, p. 225).

“Vain and wicked man, that presumed to lay down the law to God! He was far from keeping the law himself, yet ventured to give law to Him who was not more truly man than God. God is not to work on His own Sabbath day?” (Kelly, p. 228).

“It was evident that while this man was professing to stand for the sanctities of the ceremonial law, there lurked in him hostility to Jesus, and that was the underlying reason of his objection” (Morgan, p. 164).

The Lord answered the ruler and all who agreed with him with a stern rebuke:

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13:15. Hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall, and lead him away to water him?

Rabbinic law expressly allowed this. If animals can be cared for in this way, how much more should God's grace relieve a victim of Satan's power.

The Lord puts it on a double ground—the **“ground of relationship to Abraham, God's friend, and of subjection to the insulting power of the enemy. . . . It was plain therefore that the ruler, under the pretence of high respect for God's institutions, was in truth a satellite of Satan. If true-hearted, he would have rejoiced at the expulsion of the spirit of infirmity by which the woman had been so long bound”** (Kelly, p. 229).

“The sabbath was a blessed expression of the goodness of God, a day of rest and refreshment. It was made for man (Mark 2:27); we might have expected the Lord to say it was made for God. Religious man turned it into bondage, but the Lord gave it its true character by setting a daughter of Abraham in full liberty on the sabbath—she had never had a real sabbath before. . . .

“The thought of God is that His people should not be bowed down, but here is a daughter of Abraham so bowed down that she could see nothing but herself; she could not lift up her face to see the Lord. Souls in this condition always come under the Lord's notice. He was anointed to preach to those bound (Luke 4:18)” (Coates, p. 170).

13:17. And as He said this, all His oppo-

nents were being humiliated; and the entire multitude was rejoicing over all the glorious things being done by Him.

How are we to interpret this?

“I should like to think that it meant in the finest sense, they were ashamed of themselves. I am afraid it does not mean that. But it is true that the multitude rejoiced in the glorious things He was doing” (Morgan, p. 165).

The people rejoiced in what came to men through Him. They were delighted by His refutation of the senseless restrictions imposed by Judaism. They may not have been broken down personally in the sense of their own sin, but they were glad about good things done for those in physical need; they owned the hand of God in this.

“There is one little word in the narrative, which should be noted. The compulsion that masters the kingdom of evil, and the compulsion that masters the Kingdom of God, are revealed in the word ‘ought.’ The ruler said what ought to be done, and in his ‘ought’ there was utter disregard for humanity in its suffering. The devil must not be interfered with on the Sabbath. Nothing must be allowed to violate the conventionalities of ceremonial and ritual in religion. That is Satan completely unmasked! The ‘ought’ which in the last analysis is callous in the presence of human suffering, is the spawn of hell.

“Now listen to the other: ‘Ought not this woman, who is a daughter of Abraham, be loosed?’ That is the compulsion

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of a compassion that sets man at his right valuation. What is his right valuation? It can best be stated in most familiar, but most sublime words: 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.'

"That is the compulsion of the 'ought' of Jesus, the master-passion, the loosing of those that are bound, the straightening of the woman, the breaking of Satan's power, the giving of liberty to the captives. . . . It depends upon what our 'ought' is, as to whether we are loyal to the kingdom of Satan, or to the Kingdom of God. . . .

"We can, without asking the opinion of friend or neighbor, discover to which Kingdom we belong. We shall find the answer if we discover the meaning of the 'ought' which compels us" (Morgan, pp. 165-66).

The leaders of the people *ought* to have cared. They saw the compassion of Christ. How could they harden their hearts against His love?

But they did.

IV. REFUSAL TO ENTER (13:18-24)

13:18. *Therefore He was saying, "What is the kingdom of God like, and to what shall I compare it?"*

19. *"It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and threw into his own garden; and it grew and became a tree; and the birds of the air nested in its branches."*

20. *And again He said, "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God?"*

21. *"It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened."*

22. *And He was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching, and proceeding on His way to Jerusalem.*

23. *And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?" And He said to them,*

24. *"Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able."*

At this point the Lord gave them two parables about His Kingdom. He set before the people the Kingdom, which He had come both to preach and to bring, in all its freeness, reality, power, and all-pervading energy. . . . He gave this in the two parables He had spoken on an earlier occasion in Galilee (Matthew 13:31-33).

"These were now repeated, as specially suited to the circumstances: first, to the Miracle they had witnessed; then, to the contention that had passed; and, lastly, to their own state of feeling" (Ederseim, Book III, p. 225).

These parables of the mustard seed and the leaven set forth a particular characteristic of the kingdom: **"that of its development and power, as contrasted with its small and weak beginnings"** (Ederseim, Book III, p. 592).

"Thus, as regards the first of these two parables, the seed of the mustard plant passed in popular parlance as the smallest of seeds. In fact, the expression,

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‘small as a mustard seed,’ had become proverbial, and was used, not only by our Lord, but frequently by the Rabbis to indicate the smallest amount. . . . ‘But when it is grown, it is greater than the garden herbs.’ Indeed, it looks no longer like a large garden herb or shrub, but ‘becomes’ or rather ‘appears like’ ‘a tree’—as Luke puts it, ‘a great tree,’ of course, not in comparison with other trees, but with garden herbs. Such growth of the mustard seed was also a fact well known at the time, and indeed still observed in the East” (Eder-sheim, Book III, pp. 592-93).

“This is not really a tree, but under favorable conditions it grows to a height of ten or twelve feet. The birds roosting in its branches are the symbol [in the Old Testament] for the nations of the earth (Ezekiel 17:23; 31:6; Daniel 4:12, 21)” (Morris, p. 224).

“Thus the parable would point to this ... that the Kingdom of Heaven, planted in the field of the world as the smallest seed, in the most humble and unpromising manner, would grow till it far outstripped all other similar plants, and gave shelter to all nations under heaven” (Edersheim, p. 593).

“It may be well to remark that there is nothing in this parable to justify the idea that the visible Church shall gradually increase, till the whole world is converted. The lesson taught is, simply this, that, from a small beginning, the visible Church of Christ shall become very large” (Ryle, p. 129).

“To this *extensive* power of the kingdom corresponded its intensive character, whether in the world at large or in the individual. . . . This formed the subject of the parable of the leaven” (Eder-sheim, p. 593).

“Where home-made bread was common people would grasp the point more easily than we do today. . . . Only a small amount of yeast is needed to make a large quantity of dough rise” (Morris, pp. 224-25).

In regard to interpretation of the second parable, leaven is taken by many to mean “an evil and corrupt principle, and that the object of the parable was to describe the silent entrance and rapid growth of corruption and false doctrine in the Church of Christ. In defense of this view it is alleged that the word ‘leaven’ is always used as an emblem of something evil. The doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees, for example, is called ‘leaven’ (Lk. 12:1)” (Ryle, p. 129).

Ryle also says: “I am quite unable to see the correctness of this view. For one thing, it seems to me very improbable that our Lord would speak two parables in a breath, both beginning with the expression, ‘the kingdom of God,’ and compare this kingdom in one case with that which is healthy and prosperous, and in the other case, with that which is poisonous and corrupting. To my eyes His object in both parables seems one and the same. Had He meant, ‘evil,’ when He spoke of leaven, He would surely have said, ‘whereunto

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shall I liken the kingdom of the evil one?’

“For another thing, I can see no force in the objection that ‘leaven’ is generally used as an emblem of that which is evil, and therefore must be so used here. I do not see why the word is to be rigorously tied down to be only an emblem of evil; and why it may not be in this case an emblem of good.

“The goat in the 25th of Matthew is an emblem of the wicked, yet the goat in the Old Testament is a clean animal, and appointed to be used in some sacrifices, as well as the sheep.

“The serpent is generally regarded as an emblem of evil. Our Lord calls the Pharisees ‘serpents.’ And yet in another place, He says to the disciples, ‘Be wise as serpents.’ In short, I believe that the same word may be used in one place as a figure of that which is good, and in another as a figure of that which is evil. In some places leaven certainly means ‘false doctrine.’ In the passage before us, I believe it means ‘grace’” (Ryle, pp. 129-30).

13:22. And He was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching, and proceeding on His way to Jerusalem.

As He slowly worked his way from village to village, His eye was always toward Jerusalem. It had been since Luke 9:51, “‘And it came about, when the days were approaching for His ascension, that He resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem.’

“But this does not hinder His going on for the present with His labor of

love. . . . He knew right well what was to befall Him there, as indeed is expressly stated at the end of this chapter” (Kelly, p. 232).

As they journeyed along, someone asked Him a question: “*Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?*” (v. 23). Perhaps this was the question of a man who discerned the real attitudes of the people, that all were drawing away from Him in heart. Or it may have been the inquiry of one who wondered if “in the presence of the teaching of Jesus, and the demands of Jesus, if it were possible that he could be saved. . . . His ethical standard was so high that honest men must have trembled, as they tremble still, if they read the Sermon on the Mount” (Morgan, p. 166).

The Lord did not answer the question directly, but He spoke to the conscience of the one who asked. Be sure that *you* stand right before God: “*Strive to enter in by the narrow door*” (v. 24).

“The Greek word rendered ‘strive’ is that from which we take our English word ‘agonize.’ It implies a great exertion and conflict. It is elsewhere translated, ‘labor fervently,’ and ‘fight’ (Colossians 4:12; 1 Timothy 6:12)” (Ryle, p. 135).

“It is not that we are to be saved by our own efforts, for by these we would never be saved at all; but we must be in earnest when the door to life stands open, and we are invited to enter in; we must be sure that we heed the gracious invitation and do not pass carelessly by,

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lest we find at last that we have lost our opportunity. . . .

“The door into the kingdom of God still stands open, but it is a narrow door. None can pass through that door with their sins upon them. But as Christ Himself is the Door, we may find in Him deliverance from our sins, and thus enter into the way of life. The narrow way is that of subjection to Christ—a way that involves denial of self and recognition of our responsibility to live for Him whose grace alone can save us” (Ironside, p. 459).

While the Lord does not answer this question here, “there are several passages of Scripture which I think answer it very clearly. We know that all children who die in infancy will be saved, because our Lord Jesus definitely declared, ‘It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish’ (Matthew 18:14). This, in itself, gives us some idea of the vast multitude of the redeemed.

“But of those who have grown to years of maturity, there have been far more who have spurned the Word of God than who have received it” (Ironside, pp. 458-59).

Salvation to the uttermost is offered to men. All things are ready on God’s part. Christ is willing to receive sinners. How can they refuse to enter in? But they do.

V. THE FINAL SAD REFUSAL (13:24-35)

13:24. “Strive to enter by the narrow

door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

25. “Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, ‘Lord, open up to us!’ then He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know where you are from.’”

26. “Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets’;

27. and He will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you are from; DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.’

28. “There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out.

29. “And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline at table in the kingdom of God.

30. “And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last.”

“Those who strive now enter. Neither here nor elsewhere is there any indication that genuine seekers find themselves excluded from the kingdom. But there is inevitably a time-limit on the offer of salvation. When the door of opportunity is finally shut, it will be too late. Men must strive to enter now” (Morris, p. 226).

“The plea which many will offer in that day will be that of familiarity with Him (vv. 26-27). We know Thee, we sat down and drank in Thy presence. You

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came to our town and taught in our streets. We know all about You. Yes, but Jesus will say, I do not know you. It is a dreadfully solemn word. The issue of individual salvation is not to be decided by familiarity with Him, but by a personal relationship, and such personal relationship as can only be expressed as He says, I know you” (Morgan, p. 167).

Then the Lord indicates that relationship with Him has nothing to do with natural birth privilege. They were depending upon their ancestry, tracing it to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

“Blood relationship means nothing. The thing that matters is spiritual kinship, which shares the faith of the fathers, and obeys the impulse which moved them” (Morgan, p. 168).

13:28. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and the prophets, and you yourselves thrust out!

“The lost will see the happiness of the saved, and that will add to their misery. There is a double mortification: being excluded themselves and seeing the despised Gentiles included (vv. 29-30). The reversal can be complete, as the words about the first and the last amply demonstrate. God’s ways are not man’s ways” (Morris, p. 227).

“One can imagine that these Pharisees were standing by, listening to His answer; and in all probability specially

angered by that part of it which made blood relationship with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob unimportant” (Morgan, p. 168).

13:31. Just at that time some Pharisees came up, saying to Him, “Go away and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You.”

32. And He said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal.’

33. “Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.

34. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!

35. “Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!””

“They pretended to be interested in saving the life of our Lord (from Herod, who threatened to kill Him), but they did not understand that no one could take it until He Himself laid it down” (Ironside, p. 462).

In His reply, the Lord used the most contemptuous term for Herod. He called him a she-fox. He sent him a stinging message of contempt.

MEMORY: (Luke 14:26-27): “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

“Presently Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, and we read that Herod was exceeding glad to see Him. Why? ‘He hoped to see some miracle done by Him!’ When a man wants to see Jesus merely to see Him work a miracle, he is wronging his own soul. Herod was. He wanted some new titillation of his enfeebled personality. When they did thus stand face to face, Jesus refused to speak to him, said never a word. Herod asked Him all manner of questions, and He never answered him. He had nothing to say to him. It is an appalling picture. Jesus evaded Herod; sent him a message of contempt; and when face to face with him, had nothing to say to him. It is a solemnizing story.

“A man may get into such a condition when he yields to the base, that even Christ has nothing to say to him” (Morgan, pp. 168-69).

At this point, Christ did send a message to Herod. “He said in effect to the man who was reported as desiring to kill Him: You cannot kill Me, Herod. Go and tell that fox that My program is arranged, and that nothing can interfere with it. Go and tell him I carry on, casting out demons, performing cures today and tomorrow; and the third day—that poetic way of referring to a consummation—the third day, the culminating day, I am perfected. I carry out to completion My program, and that includes the Cross. . . .

“He did not go to the Cross a Victim. Let us get rid of the unholy word. He went as a Victor in a Divine program” (Morgan, p. 169).

The comments end on a note of irony:

13:33. “For it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.”

“It is in the ‘Holy City’ and not in the territory of Herod that He is going to die, for history has taught that it is precisely the ‘Holy City’ that kills the divine messengers. Also on this occasion Jerusalem is not to be robbed of her ‘privilege!’ ‘There is . . . a bitter irony in the words. Herod must not be greedy: for Jerusalem has first claim on the blood of God’s messengers” (T. W. Manson, p. 569, as quoted in Geldenhuys, p. 383).

“But He had more to say. What next? There are no words in the Bible that I feel more inadequate to read or to interpret than those that follow. There is a heartbreak in them, the heartbreak of God. There is in them the threnody (lamentation) of the eternal pity:

“Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; and I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me, until ye shall say, ‘Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord’ (KJV).

“That was the revealing of His heart. We cannot read it without hearing the tears in His voice; the great Mother heart of God is there” (Morgan, p. 170).

“It grieves the Lord Jesus Christ to

MEMORY: (Luke 14:26-27): “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

see sinners going on still in their wickedness. ‘As I live,’ are His words, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked’ (Ezekiel 33:11). Let all unconverted people remember this. It is not enough that they grieve parents, and ministers, and neighbors, and friends. There is one higher than all these, whom they deeply grieve by their conduct. They are daily grieving Christ” (Ryle, p. 140).

13:34. “I wanted . . . and you would not!”

“In these words He tells us the yearning that is in the heart of God, not only for Jerusalem and for the people of Israel, but for all men everywhere who turn carelessly and indifferently away from His message” (Ironsides, p. 463).

**From heaven His eye is downward
bent,
Still glancing to and fro
Where'er in this wide wilderness,
There roams a child of woe.
And as the rebel chooses wrath,
God wails his hapless lot,
Deep-breathing from His heart of love,
I would, but you would not.**

— Quoted in Ironsides, p. 463.

“And yet, because Jerusalem would not, then the pity and the purpose could

not prevent the punishment. . . . ‘Behold your house is left unto you.’ We need not say desolate, for desolate indeed the house is, if abandoned by God. At the beginning of His public ministry He went into the Temple and He cleansed it, and then He spoke of it as ‘My Father’s House.’ He is at the end, now, and He does not call it ‘My Father’s House.’ He calls it ‘your house.’ It is left unto you. If the Temple of God be left to us, without the God of the Temple, it is desolation indeed!

“But He did not end there. The very last words have in them a ray of hope, a revelation of the deepest thing in His heart . . . the certainty that the day of victory would come” (Morgan, p. 170).

When the Lord comes in glory, Jerusalem, however unwillingly, will recognize Him. They and all the world with them will be forced to bow the knee (Philippians 2:10-11). In the time of His rejection, may we bow the knee to Him today!

“Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him” (Revelation 1:7).

“Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20).

MEMORY: (Luke 14:26-27): “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

XVIII. COUNT THE COST

Questions on Luke 14:1-15:10

FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

REVIEW: Luke 12:54-13:35 by reading the passage and the Lesson 17 Notes, and then answer question 1.

1. What has been the major effect of Luke 12:54-13:35 upon your life? What spoke to your heart from the notes?

READ: Luke 14:1-15:10.

DO QUESTION: 2.

READ NOTES: Pages 150

2. List the main events and topics in Luke 14:1-15:10.

MEMORY: Luke 14:26-27.

I. YOUR STATUS IN THE WORLD.

READ: Luke 14:1-14.

DO QUESTIONS: 3-14.

READ NOTES: Pages 150-155.

READ ALSO: Heb. 4:12-13; Luke 18:14; Mt. 18:4; 23:12; 1 Pet. 5:6.

3. Try to visualize and describe the scene, asking yourself questions like Where? Who? What? Why?

4. Where is Christ and why is He there?

5. Is there a feeling of tension in the place? Explain.

6. What happens in verses 1-4?

7. "And Jesus answered" (v. 3). Had they asked anything? What did He answer?

8. What does Christ observe at the feast?

9. Think about Heb. 4:12-13 and note how Christ asks questions and speaks to the people in a penetrating way to reveal heart motives in Luke 14:7-14.

10. Whom does He criticize? Why?

11. What point is He making in each case (especially verses 11 and 14)?

12. How did the Lord Jesus Himself set the example? (Phil. 2:5-11)

13. Do any of these penetrating words of the Lord speak to you today?

14. Explain what He says and what change this can mean in your life.

MEMORY: (Luke 14:26-27): "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

II. YOUR BUSINESS AND YOUR HOBBIES.

READ: Luke 14:12-24; Matt. 22:1-14.

DO QUESTIONS: 15-21.

READ NOTES: Pages 155-158.

15. Compare and contrast these passages in Matthew and Luke.

16. What were the things that were keeping men from the supper?

17. How do people use the same excuses today? Do you?

18. Think about the interpretation and applications of this parable.

19. What is the supper a picture of? (John 6:35-56)

20. It is dispensational. Who refused the invitation and who has been brought in? (See Rom. 10:20-21; 11:15).

21. Think about the urgency of the invitation. Can this affect your life this week? Explain. (Think about 2 Cor. 4:14-15, 20-21.)

III. YOUR LOVES—PEOPLE AND YOURSELF.

READ: Luke 14:25-31; 9:23; 6:27.

DO QUESTIONS: 22-27.

READ NOTES: Pages 158-163.

22. Note the setting of this Luke passage. Where is Christ? Who is with Him? To

whom does He speak?

23. What phrase does the Lord repeat three times?

24. List the requirements for discipleship laid down by Christ. Explain in terms of your own life what each of these requirements means to you (use places, situations, names of people, etc.). Be very specific.

25. Now analyze how you are meeting each of these requirements. Should something in your life be corrected? Share if you wish.

26. Luke 14:35 concludes with what command?

27. What is the Lord saying in your ears in regard to your life and salt?

IV. YOUR HARD LABOR.

READ: Luke 15:1-10; Matt. 5:13; Col. 4:6; Matt. 18:12-14.

DO QUESTIONS: 28-29.

READ NOTES: Pages 163-165.

28. Compare and contrast the Matthew and Luke parables of the lost sheep.

29. What is the most striking thing to you in the two parables of the lost?

MEMORY: (Luke 14:26-27): "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

XVIII. COUNT THE COST

Don't Be A Drop-out Disciple!

Luke 14:1-15:10

**Lord crucified, O mark Thy holy
Cross
On motive, preference, all fond de-
sires;
On that which self in any form in-
spires
Set Thou that Sign of loss.**

**And when the touch of death is here
and there
Laid on a thing most precious in our
eyes,
Let us not wonder, let us recognize
The answer to this prayer.**

—Amy Carmichael, "The Sign"
Toward Jerusalem, p. 96

"The Lord God has given Me the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple" (Isaiah 50:4).

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me" (Matthew 11:28-29).

Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:27).

Drawers crammed, desks stacked, house and yard strewn with unfinished projects—half-knit sweaters, half-read books, unanswered letters, partly finished Bible studies, old lists half checked-off. Promises I *meant* to keep.

What happens? I always have so much enthusiasm for a new project, but where's my staying power to see it through? I make all those good beginnings. Then come the pressures I haven't counted on. I fail to foresee difficulties, or too easily dismiss them at first. Before starting, I forget to count the cost of finishing. So add my name to the drop-out list . . . again.

Lord, change me. Lord, show me how to break this failure pattern. Your disciples are your learners. Let me learn from You how to follow through, how to follow *You*. Show me how to count the cost of being a Christian. And then show me how to pay that cost. I don't want to be a drop-out disciple!

Neither does Christ want drop-out disciples. That is why here in Luke He is showing us how to count the cost. He is bringing us to the cross. This, He says, is where you learn the answer to your prayer, the price of discipleship. Add it up. It is a costly life. It will cost you everything you are and have:

MEMORY: (Luke 14:26-27): "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

**I. YOUR STATUS IN THE WORLD
(14:1-14)**

**II. YOUR BUSINESS AND YOUR
HOBBIES
(14:15-24)**

**III. YOUR LOVES—PEOPLE AND
YOURSELF
(14:25-35)**

**IV. YOUR HARD LABOR
(15:1-10)**

Count it all up, He says, before you decide to follow. The path of discipleship is the way of the cross. It is the way that He has gone.

The Lord knows all about discipleship. It was the way He chose when He left the glory of heaven. He embarked upon the path of obedience to the Father, taking upon Himself the form of a bondservant and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:6-8). In Luke's Gospel, we have been looking at Him on this pathway.

We have seen Him taking the lowly place of the servant. We have heard Him appealing to the people to forsake their sins. We have seen Him offer Himself to them as their Messiah. We have heard their words of rejection, and we have seen Him weep over their refusal to turn to Him. Suffering and rejection are the way of His discipleship. He knows that path well.

Some words in Isaiah perhaps best describe this way He chose to take, the path He leads His disciples along today:

The Lord *“awakens My ear to listen as a disciple. The Lord God has opened My ear; and I was not disobedient, nor did I turn back. I gave My back to those who strike Me, and My cheeks to those who*

pluck out the beard. I did not cover my face from humiliation and spitting. For the Lord God helps Me; therefore, I am not disgraced; therefore, I have set My face like a flint. . . .” (Isaiah 50:4-7)

His pathway as a Disciple took Him toward Jerusalem. It led more and more into the territory of His enemies. It even led Him into the houses of His enemies, where they set traps to catch Him. We turn to such a scene now in Luke—a dinner party in the house of a Pharisee.

**I. DISCIPLESHIP COSTS YOUR
STATUS IN THE WORLD
(14:1-14)**

- 1. And it came about when He went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath to eat bread, that they were watching Him closely.*
- 2. And there, in front of Him was a certain man suffering from dropsy.*

“In this paragraph we begin a story, the whole of which includes the rest of the chapter, chapter fifteen, chapter sixteen, and the first ten verses of chapter seventeen. It is the story of the last Sabbath day in the ministry of Jesus, of which we have any record prior to His arrival in Jerusalem for the final things. In it we have the account of events in the house of a ruler; events that took place directly (after) He had left that house and His teaching in connection with those events” (Morgan, p. 170).

Because the Lord loved His enemies and desired to bring them to repentance,

MEMORY: (Luke 8:18): “Therefore take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.”

He accepted an invitation to dinner. Indications are that the dinner party was given by one of the rulers of the Pharisees, perhaps a member of the Sanhedrin. It appears that a trap was laid for the Lord again, to see if He would break rabbinic laws regulating work on the Sabbath. They brought in a man with dropsy and *closely watched* to see what He would do.

The first verse of chapter 14 does not include the word “trap,” but we know it was one. All the tenseness of cat-and-mouse strategy took place in the lair of a leader of the Pharisees on that Sabbath day. The Lord knew that they were watching for something that would spring their trap. Were it we who were invited to a dinner party disguising a trap, doubtless we would have refused to go. The Lord was in His element.

“If we want to know how our Lord carried Himself at a Pharisee’s table, we have only to read attentively the first twenty-four verses of this chapter. . . .

“We shall see Him first defending the true observance of the Sabbath day—then expounding to those who were bidden together with Him the nature of true humility—then urging on His host the character of true hospitality—and finally delivering that most apposite and striking parable, the parable of the great supper. And all this is done in the most wise, and calm, and dignified manner. The words are all words in season. The speech is ‘always with grace, seasoned with salt’ (Colossians 4:6).

“The perfection of our Lord’s conduct appears on this, as on all other oc-

casions. He always said the right thing, at the right time, and in the right way. He never forgot, for a moment, who He was and where He was” (Ryle, pp. 146-47).

14:3. And Jesus answered and spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?”

We are not told that the Pharisees said anything, but we read that the Lord answered them. Evidently He answered their thoughts, as He did on other occasions (cf. Matthew 11:25; 22:1; Mark 14:48; Luke 5:22; 7:39, 40). He replied to their thoughts by putting to them a question in order to show up their inconsistency and hypocrisy: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not? (v. 3). Not one of them dared to answer.

“Every now and then, as I listen to the story of these men, I think they did have some lucid intervals, and this was one of them!” (Morgan, p. 171).

14:4. But they kept silent. And He took hold of him, and healed him, and sent him away.

Then the Lord touched the man with dropsy—a kidney failure, which caused fluid retention in the tissues and much discomfort to the patient. The man was healed instantly. Before next turning to reprove the Pharisees, the Lord dismissed the healed man. It was better so, for the guests as well as the man, whose mind would now be filled with **“quite new and blessed Sabbath thoughts, to which all**

MEMORY: (Luke 8:18): “Therefore take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.”

controversy would be jarring” (Eder-sheim, IV, p. 303).

After the man’s departure, the Lord spoke to the Pharisees about their misap-plication of the Sabbath law, **“to which, indeed, their own practice gave the lie”** (Edersheim, p. 303).

It was lawful to rescue a child or an ani-mal fallen into a pit on the Sabbath. They would waste no time in going to its aid. They could see themselves that in cases of dire emergency the violation of ceremonial Sabbath laws was justified. Though they gave no answer to His question, surely they were smart enough to get the point. They were the hypocrites for censuring His heal-ing of a man in physical distress, His re-sponding to a dire emergency.

The motive for the Lord’s violation of ceremonial Sabbath laws was love for the man, genuine concern for his well-being. His critics’ motive for violating Sabbath laws was only greed. They would lose monetarily if their animal perished.

This incident created the tense atmos-phere for what followed.

The Lord had observed the undignified scramble of the guests for the seats of honor at the feast, and He used the occa-sion for a lesson on humility.

“At banquets the basic item of furni-ture was the couch for three, the triclin-ium. A number of triclinia were ar-ranged in a U-shape. Guests reclined on their left elbows. The place of highest honor was the central position on the couch at the base of the U. The second and third places were those on the left of the principal man (i.e. reclining with the

head on his bosom). After this there seems to have ranked the couch to the left, its most honorable occupant being in the middle, with the next places behind and before him as on the first couch. The third couch, with a similar arrangement of its occupants, would be on the right of the first, the fourth to the left of the sec-ond, and so on” (Morris, p. 231).

Picture the scene. Sitting in the dining hall of a leader of the Sanhedrin, the car-penter from Nazareth is giving the social elite a lesson in etiquette. He had observed their rush for the seats of honor as they came into the dining room.

“Do not take the place of honor,” He admonishes them, “lest someone more distinguished than you may have been in-vented.”

They probably drew their cloaks more tightly about them and sniffed the air at His rebuke, but they knew He was right.

If the host had someone else in mind for the seat you had taken, he would come to you and ask you to move to a lower seat in order to accommodate his special guest. To get to that seat, you would have to move over only one seat; but you would be embarrassed by having to do so. He in-structs them to take a lower seat when they come in so that the host might honor and elevate them, and someone else would have to move.

The Lord was not giving a piece of worldly advice. He was teaching people to be truly humble. He laid down the princi-ple of this:

14:11. For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles

MEMORY: (Luke 8:18): “Therefore take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.”

himself shall be exalted.

“He was merely suggesting that others should do as He had done. He who was entitled to the highest place of all came from the Father’s house down to this earth. Here He took the lowest place; but in God’s due time He was given the highest place, where today He sits on the right hand of the Father. It is He who teaches us these lessons of humility, and what a rebuke they are to our pride! We are always looking for recognition, and we feel hurt if we do not have it; but our Lord was ever ready to take the lowest place. Surely this should put us to shame” (Ironsides, p. 469).

“Would we know the root and spring of humility? One word describes it. The root of humility is right knowledge. The man who really knows himself and his own heart,—who knows God and His infinite majesty and holiness,—who knows Christ, and the price at which he was redeemed,—that man will never be a proud man. He will count himself, like Jacob, unworthy of the least of all God’s mercies. He will say of himself, like Job, ‘I am vile.’ He will cry, like Paul, ‘I am chief of sinners.’ (Genesis 32:10; Job 40:4; 1 Timothy 1:15). He will think anything good enough for him. In lowliness of mind he will esteem everyone else to be better than himself (Philippians 2:3). Ignorance—nothing but sheer ignorance—ignorance of self, of God, and of Christ—is the real secret of pride.

“From that miserable self-ignorance may we daily pray to be delivered! He is the wise man who knows himself;—and he

who knows himself will find nothing within to make him proud” (Ryle, p. 153).

Next, as the Lord addressed the host, the one **“who had so treacherously bidden Him to this feast, Christ showed how the principle of Pharisaism consisted in self-seeking, to the necessary exclusion of all true love. . . . This self-seeking and self-righteousness appeared even in what, perhaps, they most boasted of—their hospitality. For, if in an earlier Jewish record we read the beautiful words: ‘Let thy house be open towards the street, and let the poor be the sons of thy house,’ later Jewish practices completely contradicted such advice** (Edersheim, IV, p. 304).

Their guest lists were confined to those who would return the compliment. This is the general practice in the world today. We invite friends over to our house and later they invite us over to theirs. We develop a kind of round-robin where we entertain the same friends over and over, and they us. The Lord is encouraging us to enlarge our giving to include those who do not have the means of inviting us back. He wants us to do something for the people who have nothing. He wants us to give without one thought of what we shall receive in return.

The attitude toward life that expects repayment “cuts the nerve of hospitality. That is never hospitality which is offered with the expectation of receiving again” (Morgan, p. 172).

“It is arresting here to notice how our Lord saw the light of the eternal flash-

MEMORY: (Luke 8:18): “Therefore take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.”

ing upon the present. He said, You will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous (v. 14). Nearly all the dividends of Christian consecration are postponed. We shall be supplied with all necessary things in this world, but all the great returns will come in the life that lies beyond” (Morgan, p. 173).

14:14. And you will be blessed.

“Blessedness consists in acting like God: It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). . . . Many labor, and if they are not appreciated, they feel unhappy as if deprived of their due; but we are to look on to resurrection. One would like what one does to be appreciated in resurrection. We need to live more under the eye of God for His pleasure, not to be approved of the brethren or anyone else” (Coates, p. 179).

Having this mind, acting like God, is becoming the true disciple. It means giving up position and status in this world for lasting reward in the world to come.

Now we consider further the costs of discipleship.

II. DISCIPLESHIP COSTS YOUR BUSINESS AND YOUR HOBBIES (4:15-24)

“Jesus’ reference to resurrection sparked off a pious ejaculation from one of the guests: Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God! Clearly he had no doubt that he would be there, whatever the fate of others. Jesus’ parable challenges his sincerity. When the critical time came, would he

really accept God’s invitation? Or would he be too busy about some activity affecting his more immediate interests?” (Morris, p. 233).

14:16. But he said to him . . .

“The ‘but’ intimates that the penetrating discernment of the Teacher saw that the speaker needed a sharp lesson. . . . The parable will press the solemn possibility that those who had the best of opportunity to enter (the kingdom) will be excluded from it, first by their own folly, and this confirmed irrevocably by the great Inviter and Host” (Lange).

The parable pictures God as a certain man who invited many to a big banquet (v. 16).

“It seems that they accepted the invitation. At any rate none of them is said to have declined. When the banquet was ready, a slave was sent to announce the fact” (Morris, p. 233).

We can bring the application of this forward. The work of redemption for us on the cross of Calvary is completed. Now the invitation is going out to every tribe and nation on the basis of that completion. This final announcement when the dinner was ready was the custom in that day.

“In an age when people had no watches and time was fairly elastic, and when a banquet took a long time to prepare, the precaution must have been helpful to all. We see the double invitation in the Old Testament (Esther 5:8; 6:14), while a remark in the Midrash on

MEMORY: (Luke 8:18): “Therefore take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.”

Lamentations shows that much later the men of Jerusalem took it very seriously: ‘None of them would attend a banquet unless he was invited twice’ (Lamentations 4:2)” (Morris, p. 233).

The parable teaches us, first of all, **“that God has made a great provision for the salvation of men’s souls. This is the meaning of the words, ‘a certain man made a great supper, and bade many’. This is the Gospel. The Gospel contains a full supply of everything that sinners need in order to be saved. We are all naturally starving, empty, helpless, and ready to perish. Forgiveness of all sin, and peace with God,—justification of the person, and sanctification of the heart,—grace by the way and glory in the end,—are the gracious provision which God has prepared for the wants of our souls.**

“There is nothing that sin-laden hearts can wish, or weary consciences require, which is not spread before men in rich abundance in Christ. Christ, in one word, is the sum and substance of the great supper. ‘I am the Bread of Life,’ He declares,—‘He that cometh unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.—My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.—He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life’ (John 6:35-55, 56)” (Ryle, p. 160).

We examine the types of excuses men offer. The first man had *bought a piece of land* and needed *to go and look at it* (v. 18). He **“was either a liar or a fool”** (Morgan, p. 174).

Who would buy land he had never seen? He was putting material things—real estate—in place of eternal riches. After all, in the light of eternity, how *real* or lasting is real estate? The man gave first place in his heart to property instead of to Christ.

The second man said that he had bought five yoke of oxen and was going to try them out (v. 19).

“All I have said about the first man is true of the second. It may be perfectly true that you do not look a gift horse in the mouth; but you do look at the horse you are buying. Imagine a man buying oxen he has not proved” (Morgan, p. 174).

In today’s vernacular, people are saying, “I must make a living.” They are too busy with business and the work of living to have time for God. They don’t realize that when they die their business will go on without them.

These things may represent commercial occupations on the surface, but they also influence recreational activities—like hobbies.

The third man said, I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come’ (v. 20).

This excuse was “certainly original.” The man **“could back it up with an appeal to Scripture, for the Old Testament envisages that a man will be at home during the first year of married life (Deuteronomy 24:5). But that is a regulation aimed at freeing him from military service, not at isolating him from social contacts. This excuse is as transparent as the others”** (Morris, p. 234).

MEMORY: (Luke 8:18): “Therefore take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.”

“Why didn’t he bring his wife with him and come to the dinner? His natural affection kept him away from the dinner. How many times I have heard a man say, ‘I don’t come to church because Sunday is the only day I can spend with my family’” (McGee, p. 172).

The occupations of business, hobbies, and family are not wrong in themselves. But they become harmful when they come between the heart and Christ. They can keep a man from *salvation*.

“How many people today are kept from God because of these things? Well, God has an engraved invitation for you. It is written in the blood of Jesus Christ and invites you to the great table of salvation” (McGee, p. 172).

In the heart of the Christian, too, such things can usurp the place of Christ.

“This is also a test to our souls all through the day. It is not a question of whether a thing be right or wrong, but what savor have the things of Christ to our souls in it? It may be a very small thing. If we find the reading of a book makes the manifestation of Christ to become less precious to us, we have got away from God, and we cannot tell where the next step may take us. . . . If anything comes in and takes the freshness of Christ from your soul, take heed! For if the oxen, etc., are thus catered for, when you have opportunity for the things of Christ, you will have no taste for them” (Darby).

When the slave came back and told of the excuses, the master was *angry* (v. 21). The refusals were really insulting to the host. The implication is one of **“hostility toward the host on the part of those who were bidden. Not liking the host inviting them, they made up excuses for refusing” (Lockyer).**

Then the master became angry. **“Stop there. Does God become angry with men? Scripture tells us God is angry with the wicked every day (Psalm 7:11). When one deliberately spurns His Son, His heart is filled with holy indignation. God loves His Son, and He desires to see men honor the Son even as they honor the Father” (Ironside, p. 471).**

Immediately then the master sent the slave out *into the streets and lanes of the city* to bring to the banquet *the poor and crippled and blind and lame* (v. 21). This he did, and still there was room (v. 22). **“It is dispensational. The message first came to the Jews, and they refused it, and then it was carried to the Gentiles” (Ironside, p. 472).**

“There were commonly no hedges round the fields of the Jews” (Ederheim, IV, p. 251).

“Throughout the centuries there have been millions who have accepted the invitation, but the house is not filled (v. 23) yet. There is still room for more, and the invitation is extended to all who are sin-sick and sad” (Ironside, p. 472).

The instruction to the slave was to invite

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the guests in, not compel them with the force of arms (as has on occasion been the case in Christendom). He was to persuade them to come, to convince them that they needed to come, to welcome them into coming.

“Only one slave is in question and he could not bring force to bear” (Morris, p. 235).

“The meaning of these words can admit of little dispute. They surely justify us in asserting the exceeding love and compassion of God towards sinners. His long-suffering is inexhaustible. If some will not receive the truth, He will have others invited in their stead. His pity for the lost is no feigned and imaginary thing. He is infinitely willing to save souls.—

“Above all, the words justify every preacher and teacher of the Gospel in employing all possible means [except force] to awaken sinners, and turn them from their sins. If they will not come to us in public, we must visit them in private. If they will not attend our preaching in the congregation, we must be ready to preach from house to house. . . .

“The men of the world may not understand such earnest dealing. They may sneer at all zeal and fervor in religion as fanaticism. But the ‘man of God,’ who desires to do the work of an evangelist, will heed little what the world says. He will remember the words of our parable. He will *compel men to come in*” (Ryle, pp. 162-63).

Discipleship is costly. Do we know people who are letting work, hobbies, rec-

reation, or family ties stand between themselves and Christ? Are we praying for them? Are we continuing to lay the claims of Christ before them when God gives the opportunity?

What about ourselves?

“Let us leave this parable with serious self-inquiry. It ought to speak to us in the present day. To us this invitation of the Gospel is addressed as well as to the Jews. To us the Lord is saying constantly, ‘Come unto the supper,—Come unto Me!’ Have we accepted His invitation? Or are we practically saying, I cannot come. If we die without having come to Christ, we had better never have been born” (Ryle, p. 163).

If we are Christians, are we letting things, family, or ourselves stand between us and Christ? In this next section Christ drives home this last question, for being a disciple of His will cost you all that you have and all that you are.

III. DISCIPLESHIP COSTS YOUR LOVES—PEOPLE AND YOURSELF (14:25-35)

After observing the hardness of heart at the dinner and appealing to them with the parable, we see Jesus walking sadly out of the house.

“Try and visualize that scene. Luke emphasizes the fact of the crowd. He says, ‘great multitudes’ (v. 25). By this time in His ministry, wherever Jesus went, He was followed by the crowds; all sorts and conditions of people fol-

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lowed Him, hanging upon His words, watching for His working of miracles, keenly interested in Him, attracted by Him, and evidently inclined towards Him, with some kind of desire to stay with Him to be associated with Him” (Morgan, p. 174).

They watched Him come out of the house of the Pharisee, turn His back, and walk away; and then they started after Him. This is the scene. The rest of the chapter is what He said to them that day.

“The things He said that day were among the most solemn and searching that ever fell from His lips. It is important that we keep in view that eager crowd, attracted by Him, inclined towards Him, all of them feeling they wanted to be with Him in some way, numbers of them feeling they would like to be enrolled as His followers. Jesus turned and faced them, and in what He said, we find perhaps the supreme instance of His statement of the terms of discipleship. In the course of His words there is a thrice-repeated phrase, ‘cannot be My disciple,’ ‘cannot be My disciple,’ ‘cannot be My disciple;’ and in connection with it a revelation of the only terms upon which men may be His disciples” (Morgan, p. 175).

God’s will is that nobody join himself to Him without a clear knowledge beforehand of all that this will entail.

“To a Paul, on the very threshold of his conversion, He will show what great things he must suffer for His name’s sake (Acts 9:16). Ezekiel at his first

commission is told with the utmost plainness to what manner of men, to such as could be likened only to thorns, briars, scorpions, he is sent (Ezekiel 2:6). And to this multitude Christ addressed one of His hard sayings—one after the hearing of which we can hardly doubt that many went back and walked no more with Him (cf. John 6:66). It would be a sad consummation, yet better far than that they should throw in their lot with Him, afterwards to be offended, and to fall from Him, in that day of trial which was sure before long to arrive (Matthew 13:21)” (Trench).

14:26. He turned to them and said, “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.”

Take these words “literally, and they stand in direct contradiction to the whole teaching of the rest of Scripture, in contradiction to the teaching of Moses, of the prophets, of the apostles, of Christ himself elsewhere; they enjoin an immorality; they require of men to hate those whom it is their prime duty to love. And yet Christ spoke the words notwithstanding, satisfied to leave to that interpreting Holy Spirit to put them in harmony with all which elsewhere is commanded in the Scripture, or written by the finger of God on the heart of man” (Trench).

“Discipleship means giving one’s first loyalty. There is no place in Jesus’

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teaching for literal hatred. He commanded His followers to love even their enemies (6:27), so it is impossible to hold that He is here telling them literally to hate their earthly nearest (cf. 8:20ff). But hating can mean something like loving less (Genesis 29:31, 33; Deuteronomy 21:15)” (Morris, pp. 235-36).

Jesus showed this when He “declared that they who did the will of His Father were more to Him than His mother and brothers after the flesh. His tender thought for His mother as He hung dying showed that natural affection and duty were not destroyed but active in Him; which eliminates from this ‘hatred’ the evil, vindictive element found in fallen man (John 19:25-27). Similar are the apostolic injunctions that the husband must love his wife, the mother her children, the child reverence and care for the parents. The force of His words Christ had before given: *‘He that loveth father or mother . . . son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.’*

“Incidentally it is a claim to Deity that Jesus should set up a superior claim to all these God-created relationships. Only God may rightly supersede the orderings of God. Only the God of glory was entitled to require Abram to leave his father’s house as a condition of receiving the promised inheritance. It is simply of the nature of the case that God may so demand. It is His right as Creator.

“He who puts any other being in the solitary place in the heart due to God is an idolator and cannot be a disciple of Christ. For Christ had given this unique

place to God, and no one is His follower who does not follow Him in this and do the same” (Lange).

“It is nothing strange or unreasonable that man’s Creator, the author of his being, the supreme and absolute Good, should demand all this of His creatures (Exodus 32:27; Deuteronomy 33:9); but that Jesus of Nazareth should challenge the same absolute devotedness on the part of all men, should require that every other duty of every other human being should yield to the duty to Him, that every other love should subordinate itself to the love of Him; how could this be, except as He also stood in the place of God, and was God?” (Trench).

“The demand which our Lord makes upon us here is peculiarly stringent and heart-searching. Yet it is a wise and a necessary one. Experience shows, both in the church, at home, and in the mission field abroad, that the greatest foes to a man’s soul are sometimes those of his own house. It sometimes happens that the greatest hindrance in the way of an awakened conscience, is the opposition of relatives and friends. Ungodly fathers cannot bear to see their sons ‘taking up new views’ of religion. Worldly mothers are vexed to see their daughters unwilling to enter into the gaieties of the world.

“A collision of opinion takes place frequently, as soon as grace enters into a family. And then comes the time when the true Christian must remember the spirit of our Lord’s words in this passage. He must be willing to offend his family,

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rather than offend Christ. . . . It can never be true love to relatives to do wrong, in order to please them. And best of all, firmness accompanied by gentleness and consistency, in the long run of life, often brings its own reward. Thousands of Christians will bless God at the last day, that they had relatives and friends who chose to displease them rather than Christ. That very decision was the first thing that made them think seriously, and led finally to the conversion of their souls” (Ryle, pp. 167-68).

To this the Lord has added, “*Yes, and even his own life*” (v. 26).

He has “spoken of the absolute renunciation of all, even of a man’s own life, that last citadel of selfishness” (Trench).

“Now, is there anything a man loves more than his own life? . . . I recall words Satan spoke to God about a man: ‘All that a man has will he give for his life’ (Job 2:4). And then I remember that Jesus asked, ‘What shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?’ These two things reveal a man’s proper estimate of the value of his own life; and give significance to the statement of Jesus that unless, under conditions of His call, a man hate his life also, he cannot be His disciple” (Morgan, p. 176).

This statement is interpreted by the verse which follows in Luke 14:

14:27. “*Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be my disciple.*”

“The former condition is death to all other persons in comparison with Christ; this condition means death to myself as an object of service” (Lange).

It could mean physical death. Certainly those who stood listening to Him speak these things knew of the opposition He was facing from the rabbinic faction as well as the Roman. They also knew the penalty that opposition might exact. Their fidelity to Christ might well result in their being punished along with Him.

In the wider sense, He is talking about death to the flesh—to all selfishness and self-seeking.

“Not that I trim my life of this or that indulgence, but that I put self itself on the cross (by reckoning on my union with Christ there) and deny it any attention or provision. This theme is taken up in Romans 6:6ff; Galatians 2:10-20. . . . He cannot be a disciple of Christ who nurtures self, for that was a principle of conduct completely foreign to Him: “for Christ also pleased not Himself” (Romans 15:1-3)” (Lange).

“Jesus does not want disciples who do not realize what they have let themselves in for. Counting the cost is important. He uses twin parables (a device He employs often) to drive the point home. . . . The two parables are similar but they make slightly different points. The builder of the tower is free to build

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or not as he chooses, but the king is being invaded (the other comes against him). He must do something. Cf. A. M. Hunter: ‘In the first parable Jesus says, “Sit down and reckon whether you can afford to follow me.” In the second he says, “Sit down and reckon whether you can afford to refuse my demands” Both ways of looking at it are important” (Morris, p. 236).

The key to understanding these twin parables is in verse 33: *“So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.”* We must recognize that we do not have in ourselves the necessary resources to “build the tower” or to meet the demands of the king.

“It is the poor, those who, counting up their means, discover that they have not enough to carry through and complete the work, and that of their own they never will have enough, and who therefore renounce all that they have—it is these, and not the rich, not, that is, they who walk in a vain conceit of their own riches (Rev. 3:17) who are able to finish this tower. In the second parable, instead of setting himself against God, the disciple who is face to face with God would not assert himself at all. He would surrender himself and all that he had, thus making peace” (Trench).

We must remember that these parables are not allegories wherein each detail has some kind of symbolic significance. With parables, only their main point contains their explanation. In the two parables we

have been considering, the Lord is teaching that we must consider the ultimate cost before we contemplate an undertaking. In his own natural strength, he certainly will be unable to finish. Whoever follows the Lord Jesus must realize this. He must be prepared to deny himself and to draw upon the Lord’s grace. He never calls us to a task that He will not enable us to complete. The disciple can count on the fact that He who began a good work in him will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6). The responsibility of the disciple is to let God do this.

The Lord emphasized this point with another warning in parable. Salt is good (v. 34).

“It is, of course, impossible for salt (sodium chloride) to lose its taste, but the salt in use in first-century Palestine was far from pure. It was quite possible for the sodium chloride to be leached out of the impure salt in common use so that what was left lacked the taste of salt. It was literally useless. It could not fertilize the land or even decompose usefully on the manure heap. Men throw it away, v. 35” (Morris, p. 237).

“It is no use. Men and women are no use to Me, said Jesus, unless they have the true property of salt. A Scots version renders that, If it have lost its tang. ‘Tang’ is a good biting word. People who look upon Christianity as something pleasant and easy, have no tang, no bite, no aseptic influence in the world, nothing to stop the spread of corruption” (Morgan, p. 179).

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Discipleship means forsaking all other loves for the love of Christ.

“Do not misunderstand that. It does not mean that if you have a home you are to give it away; it does not mean that if God has entrusted you with wealth you have to toss it to the wind; it does not mean that if you have friends you must spurn them: but it does mean that you must hold everything you have as subject to God Himself. David Livingstone expressed it, I think, when he wrote in his diary, ‘I am determined not to look upon anything that I possess except as in relation to the kingdom of God.’ That is what it means to hold everything for Him” (Ironsides, p. 482).

14:35. He who has ears to hear let him hear.

“Have you counted the cost? Jesus did, and He endured the cross of shame. Shall we shrink from the privileges extended to us? Are we more concerned about our prospects here below than we are about hearing the ‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant’ (Matthew 25:23) from His lips when we stand at the judgment seat of Christ?” (Ironsides, p. 484).

IV. DISCIPLESHIP COSTS YOUR HARD LABOR (15:1-10)

There is a close connection between the first scene of this chapter and what has just transpired. Christ has just said, *He who has ears to hear let him hear (14:35).*

And now at the beginning of this chapter, all the tax-gatherers and sinners were coming near Him *to listen to Him (15:1).*

“That is a very revealing connection. The publicans and sinners were drawing near to hear him. The men and women who know their own need, are the men and women who will press close to the King and the Savior” (Morgan, p. 179).

“Whatever the case with the Pharisees and their like, these sinners had been challenged. They knew what discipleship meant. They were called on to hear. And they heard” (Morris, p. 238).

The Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble and to criticize the Lord for receiving and eating with such people.

“These ignorant guides of the Jews could not understand a preacher of religion having anything to do with wicked people! Yet their words worked for good. The very saying which was meant for a reproach was adopted by the Lord Jesus as a true description of His office. It led to His speaking three of the most instructive parables which ever fell from His lips (Ryle, p. 174).

In answer to their criticism, He spoke three Gospel parables about the recovery of the lost: **“in the first instance, through the unwearied labor; in the second, through the anxious care of the owner, and in the third parable, through the never-ceasing love of the Father. . . . At the outset we remark that (the first two parables) are**

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intended as an answer to the Pharisees. Hence they are addressed to them: ‘What man of you?’ (v. 4) ‘or what woman?’ (v. 8) . . .” (Edersheim, IV, pp. 253-54).

To mark “the terrible contrast between the teaching of Christ and that of the Pharisees; to mark also, how directly from heaven must have been the message of Jesus, and how poor sinners must have felt it such, we put down in all its nakedness the message which Pharisaism brought to the lost. Christ said to them: ‘There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.’ Pharisees said—and we quote here literally—‘There is joy before God when those who provoke Him perish from the world’” (Edersheim, IV, p. 256).

The love of Christ is not a static love, an unconcerned love. It is vital; it goes the second mile. The shepherd did not sit, pining in his lodge, moaning over the sheep that was lost. He was up and out, searching the woods and canyons.

The woman did not go to bed and pull the covers over her head as she bewailed the loss of her coin. She got out her broom and moved her furniture around. Just so, Jehovah-Savior laid aside the glory He had with the Father and was born that He might redeem lost sinners and make provision so that all who want to be saved may be saved. “He endured the cross, despising the shame.” He laid down His life for His friends. He demonstrated His greater love (Hebrews 12:2; John 15:13).

Verse 7 is the key to understanding the parable of the lost sheep (15:3-7). Heaven

rejoices when one sinner repents. The ninety-nine do not repent. They don’t see themselves as lost or needing to repent. The Lord calls them “righteous persons.” They are the self-righteous.

In the parable of the lost coin (15:8-10), the Lord speaks of a woman who had *ten silver coins*. This coin was the Greek *drachma*, which was the payment for one day’s labor. The ten coins may have represented the woman’s savings, or they may have been strung together as a wedding ornament, worn as a headpiece. To have lost a part of it was like losing a wedding ring. In such case it was thought “to indicate the wife’s unfaithfulness to the husband” (Ironsides, p. 490).

Whatever the significance, **“the loss of a coin would be a serious matter for a poor woman. So she searched for it determinedly. An Eastern house would have no windows, or very small ones, so the lighting of the lamp was necessary for a close search even in the daytime. The woman sweeps and seeks till she finds it. And, like the shepherd, she shares her joy when she is successful”** (Morris, p. 239).

In each parable, the owner has lost what was of great value.

“It was something for such persons [i.e. sinners] to be told that they were of great value to God. I have often felt that we are very little imbued with the spirit of grace. We tell a man that he is lost and we mean that he is degraded and debased, and in a very unworthy condition; but the word is used in Scripture to show something of

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value. The Lord produced the impression of the interest of God in His creatures; it was a matter of great concern to God that He had lost His creature. It was not merely that the creature is lost, but who has lost him? . . . It is not worthless, but of value; the greater the pains the person takes to get it back, the greater the sense of the value of it. What is emphasized in this chapter is the value of the sinner to God; it is an object of concern to God that He has lost man” (Coates, p. 187).

Finding him is joy unspeakable (Hebrews 12:2).

“When the Lord gives us the moral force of the first two parables, He tells us it is repentance. He says, ‘I say unto you, that thus there shall be joy in heaven for one repenting sinner.’ The sheep found is a repenting sinner. . . . When the lost one is brought to repent, he is found. . . . From that point the Shepherd takes complete charge, puts him on His shoulder, and carries him home rejoicing; He has found His sheep and everything is settled. According to this chapter, repentance is the restoration of the lost one to God; repentance is toward God (Acts 20:21)” (Coates, p. 189).

Think of what was involved in the Lord’s journey to find that sheep. It took Him to Jerusalem and to the cross. It was the way of suffering and rejection. There He bore our sins. Think of the journey He took to bring us to repentance. We can meditate forever and never fully comprehend all that that journey involved for God:

**But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night that
our Lord passed through
Ere He found the sheep that was lost.**

--Elizabeth C. Clephane
“The Ninety and Nine”

The true disciple enters into something of the Lord’s own travail over souls as his Master sends him out to labor in the harvest fields (Luke 10:2). There the Lord finishes the work which He began in His disciple.

It is a costly life. It costs status, occupations, people, self, labor.

It wins Christ, for He is the joy of heaven.

MEMORY: (Luke 8:18): “Therefore take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.”

STUDY AIDS

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